

Mind in a Jar

- Purpose:
 - To teach children that they can calm their bodies and minds with deep breathing
- Supplies needed:
 - Jars with lids (suggest: Ball canning or baby food jars)
 - Water
 - Glitter (preference given to fine glitter in my experiments)
 - Glue (to seal the lid on the jar)

Mix water and glitter. Seal lid with glue once you have the glitter combination you like. There are many versions of this Mind Jar on the internet. Some use other ingredients in addition to the ones listed above, even putting small legos in with the glitter. Experiment with the variety and use what suits your needs.

Using the Mind Jars

After the Mind Jars are made, ask your group to think about a time when they were really mad or upset. Ask them how it felt. Then have everyone shake up their jar really fast. Explain to them that this is what our minds are like when we're really mad. Those angry thoughts when we are mad or upset are like the glitter swirling around. We can calm down those angry thoughts and calm our bodies. Instead of acting or talking in a way that would hurt people's feelings, we can use our breath to calm our thoughts and calm our bodies. Now have the children breathe deeply holding their jar still. As you breathe, watch what happens to the swirling glitter.

Reinforce the message to children that it's okay to get mad ~ that's just part of life, and there will always be things and people that upset us. What is important is how we respond. We can take some deep breaths, and then instead of hitting someone, or calling them stupid, we can calmly talk to them about what has frustrated us.

Making it a Practice

- Practice deep breathing when children are already calm: Shake the jars, and then breathe calmly while watching the glitter settle.
- Keep the jars available in a quiet area where children can get them if they need to use them to calm down.
- When they get upset, encourage them to remember this practice.

This recipe and Mind Jar is adapted from Sarah Rudell Beach at leftbrainbuddha.com