

## Mindfulness As A Faith Practice

Practice Being Present and Noticing God in Daily Life

Mindfulness is setting an intention to be fully present in this God-given moment, without judgement and with kindness to ourselves and others. It is a faith practice that helps us be here now.

Mindfulness is not prayer, but it helps us be present in this world and be more aware of God's presence. We practice constant distraction, worry and negative thoughts training ourselves to be experts in the wrong things when it comes to our brain. The faith practice of mindfulness trains our brain to choose the more resilient path of stopping and taking notice. Mindful practice prepares our minds to be silent and rest in the arms of God.

### BREATHING

**Stop and Breathe:** A mantra or invitation to prayer, stop and breathe invites those gathered to take three deep breaths. Breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth as if you are fogging a mirror. After some time, youth will know the phrase and just respond with three deep breaths and a posture of prayer.

**4 Square Breathing:** Being present takes some practice. Even breathing takes practice. We do it everyday but mindful breathing is not just breathing, it is deep breathing. We are breathing in the breath of God with each breath, so breathe deep. Four square breathing is a practice we can do anywhere. Focus on a window, book or anything square. Start at the top left corner and inhale four counts. Hold it as you go down the side for four counts, exhale along the bottom for four counts and rest for four counts. Do this four times.



**4,5,6 Breathing:** Breathe in for four counts, hold it for five counts and let it out for six counts.

**Mindful Animal Breathing:** Even youth love to breathe like a bunny or a bear. Michael Phelps deals with his anxiety by breathing like a lion. Practice alongside this video. [Animal Breathing Techniques | Sanford Fit \(sanfordhealth.org\)](https://www.sanfordhealth.org/animal-breathing-techniques)

**Simple Breathing Meditation:** Mindfulness centers around two main practices. Breathing and labeling thoughts. This meditation helps with both. Put feet flat on the floor, back against a chair or wall and hands in your lap. Breathing through your nose, focus on your breath as it moves in and out of your body. Notice your breath as it

enters your body. If physical sensations or thoughts interrupt your meditation, note them and then return your focus to your breath. How deep do you feel your breath? End by taking three deep breaths and open eyes when ready. (this can be 5 minutes to 20 minutes).

## MINDFUL PRACTICES

**Mindful Walking:** Stay within a particular area and keep your eyes open. Take notice of each step. Walk with intention. Go very slow at first with your heel touching the ground first and then your toes. Become aware of the sensations and subtle movements that keep your balance. Notice each toe and bone. Walk a bit faster. And faster. Slower. Really slow. God be with us as we walk beside one another today and everyday. Amen.

**Mindful Walk:** Plan a long silent walk together and take notice of all around you. Offer a challenge to find one item that is ordinary but catches your eye and take time to share at the end of the walk or give each person an olive wood holding cross to carry and to reflect on what it means to follow Jesus.

[Amazon.com: My Caring Cross - Certified Holy Land Olive Wood Caring/Holding Cross \(50, Small Pocket Cross\): Everything Else](#)

**Body Scan Meditation:** Lie on your back with your legs extended and arms at your sides, palms facing up. Guide youth through a slow and focused attention noticing each part of the body from toe to head without judgement. Be aware of any sensations and let gravity do the work of holding your body. Be kind as you take notice. Let some silence settle in and encourage youth to smile at their thoughts that take them away and come back to notice their body.

**2 Minute Guided Meditations:** [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=2+minute+guided+meditation](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=2+minute+guided+meditation)

**Meditation of Loving-Kindness:** [Lovingkindness \(The Mindful Christian\) - YouTube](#)

**Mindful Eating:** (Put out a few options and let youth choose) Raisins are a typical food used in mindful eating because you can smell, hear, feel and taste a raisin. Use Chocolate chip cookies with a little salt, good chocolate or watermelon. Invite them to smell the food first. Look at the food closely and notice it. Put the food to the tip of their lips but do not taste it and see what they feel. Then slowly taste the first bite savoring, noticing all the flavors. What do you notice? What do you feel? What do you taste? Slowly finish the food with your eyes closed but eat every bite slowly. Reflect on the experience. Many of us eat without any notice of what we are eating because we are not in this moment.

**Remember Your Baptism:** Wash your hands and remember your baptism. As water washes over your hands remember the story of Jesus being baptized in the Jordan River. Remember the words God spoke saying “You are my child”. Continue washing your hands and remember you are loved by God. Imagine your faith family that surrounded you at your baptism and feel the love that continues to surround you. Every time you wash your hands, feel that love surrounding you as you remember your baptism.

**Daily Intention:** Whether it is a WORD of the DAY, a Core Purpose, a focus for a retreat, an Epiphany word or FAITH Word for the year, this daily intention can be a guide to help respond to the gift of each day instead of reacting. Everyone wants to be less cranky, scattered and more present. Setting a daily intention is a mindful practice that helps one reclaim the direction of the day. Before you put your feet on the floor for the day, remember your intention. Take a few minutes to reflect on your intention and how that can guide you through your day.

**Understanding Our Emotions:** Youth can track their feelings and learn to be more emotionally present by using the mood meter app here [MOOD METER APP](#) or they can just use the chart to help identify the color of their feeling or name of their feelings in any given moment. [PTF Endpapers 5-7-19 \(marcbrackett.com\)](#) The mood

meter can be used at a youth dinner, a youth conference or as a tool at home with family, to have each person identify how they are feeling in that moment.

**RULER:** Dr. Mark Brackett in his book, *Permission to Feel*, teaches us a practice of knowing where we are emotionally in a crisis, argument or even in a time of depression. Using RULER as an acronym, we learn how to recognize, identify, understand, label, express and regulate our emotions. This is a great mindful practice for all ages.

Recognize the emotion without judgement.

Understand the cause of the emotion.

Label the emotion accurately. This may require digger deeper than the presenting emotion.

Express the emotion appropriately if the opportunity allows.

Regulate the emotion successfully and move forward.

## MINDFULNESS IN FAITH FORMATION

**Curriculum:** *Anxiety as an Opportunity for Spiritual Growth* is a video curriculum where Dr. Curtis Chang uses mindfulness to deal with the anxiety we deal with in our lives. [Homepage](#) | [Redeeming Babel](#)

**Parenting Class or Book Study:** In her book, *Wise Minded Parenting*, Dr. Laura Kastner uses mindful techniques and practices to guide parents through regular and normal situations that parents face.

Jesus came that we might have life and have it abundantly. Abundant is often translated, how much can I do, accumulate or consume. Mindfulness helps us be present to recognize the abundance of each moment. May you have profound joy in those ordinary, everyday moments and feel the abundance of life God offers to each of us and all of us.

## ADDITIONAL MINDFULNESS RESOURCES

[Amazon.com](#) : ◦ [Mindfulness for Beginners: Reclaiming the Present Moment and Your Life\(Book & CD\)](#): Kabat-Zinn, Jon: 9781622036677: [Amazon.com: Books](#)

[Amazon.com](#) : ◦ [Mindfulness for Teens in 10 Minutes a Day: Exercises to Feel Calm, Stay Focused & Be Your Best Self](#): Battistin MA LMFT, Jennie Marie: 9781641524377: [Amazon.com: Books](#)

[Amazon.com](#) : ◦ [Mindful Games: Sharing Mindfulness and Meditation with Children, Teens, and Families](#): Kaiser Greenland, Susan: 9781611803693: [Amazon.com: Books](#)

[Wise Minded Parenting: 7 Essentials for Raising Successful Tweens + Teens](#): Laura S. Kastner, Kristen A Russell: 9780983012856: [Amazon.com: Books](#)

[Andy Puddicombe: All it takes is 10 mindful minutes | TED Talk](#)

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Office of Christian Formation: <https://pcusa.org/formation>

PYWA: <https://pywa.org>

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