



# Expanding Nature Awareness meditation for Children capsules



A wealth of opportunities can be explored to beam a shining light of focus on nature for children. Ways to give them first-hand experiences to witness the wonder and mystery of the natural world ... and gain all kinds of insights and benefits!

A wide range of entry points exist for children of all ages. Discover the palette that will land in the hearts and minds of your students/children!

Einstein said: 'Look deeply into nature, and then you will understand everything'. Help children get to **know** the wonders of nature with first-hand experiences ... and invite them to **care** and commit to being custodians of the environment!



## A Palette of Sensory Opportunities: Mindfully Discovering the 'Extra' in the 'ordinary'

- **Visual:** Use magnifying glasses or make simple cut out tin 'viewing' frames from recycled board to focus on tiny details of flowers, herbs, bark, insects in a glass jar ... inside/outside... and then take children outside to go exploring (dig a hole and discover what can be found in the soil)
- **Sound:** Practice 'nature listening' – notice all the sounds of nature you can hear amongst man-made sounds (use a soundtrack if necessary!)
- **Touch/Feel:** Explore a wide range of natural specimens with the hands: developing a creative vocabulary to describe experiences: bark, leaves, grass heads, herbs, petals etc.
- **Smell:** Collect fresh and dried herbs (get children involved) and meditate on the difference aromas!
- **Taste:** Share 'taste meditations' of fresh and dried fruit. Use touch, sight, smell and taste to fully immerse children in this activity.



## Nature Based Music: from Classics to Contemporary – use for meditations, mindful movement and related activities:

- Bach: 'Air Concerto': Orchestral Suite No. 3
- Beethoven: Pastorale Symphony No 6 in F Major
- Chopin: 'Raindrop' Prelude in Db, Op.28, No 15
- Saint Saens: 'Carnival of the Animals'
- Vivaldi: The Four Seasons

- Rimsky-Korsakov: 'Flight of the Bumblebee'
- Jane Rutter: 'Kodama Tree Spirit'
- Louis Armstrong: 'What a Wonderful World'
- Ken Davis: 'Daintree Rainforest'
- Michael Jackson: 'Earth Song'
- Aurora: 'The Seed'
- Israel Kamakawiwo'ole: 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow'



### Beautiful Nature – based books

- 'An Egg is Quiet' Diana Aston, Sylvia Long, Chronicle Books
- 'Belonging' Jeannie Baker, Walker Books
- 'The Lorax' Dr. Seuss, Harper Collins
- 'Unlikely Friendships: 47 Remarkable Stories from the Animal Kingdom', Jennifer S. Holland, Workman Publishing
- 'Before After' Anne-Margot Ramstein & Matthias Aregui, Walker Books
- 'The Giving Tree' Shel Silverstein, Harper Collins
- 'You are Stardust: Our Amazing Connections with Planet Earth' Elin Kelsey, Soyeon Kim



### Crafty, Creative Nature-based Activities

- **Set up a seed observation window -sill installation.** You could simply use lentils or mung beans. Fill glass jars with different liquids – rainwater, tap water, soft drink, water with added salt, or vinegar, or detergent. Place one jar somewhere in the dark. Regularly invite children to observe which seeds germinate. An alternative is to take mint cuttings (which quickly sprout roots in water) and conduct the same experiment. Relate findings to our choices and actions in everyday life.
- **Construct a Nature-Interconnectedness Paper Chain:** engage young children to cut rectangular strips of recycled paper. Ask them to decorate each strip with symbols, images of nature: rain, wind, sun, fire, soil, seeds, plants, trees, animals, insects, birds and all kinds of people with pencils or crayons. Discuss how colours can be used. Ask children to work out sequences and glue strips together to form a chain of nature-man connections.

- **Create a Natural Web of Connectivity:** engage older children to source 3 long beautiful thin branches from trees. Tie with string in the centre to form a six -point star. Using twine, string or coloured wool, tie a knot at the centre and weave outwards to create a 'web'. Invite children to make symbols (drawn with crayons and pens) with recycled cardboard, fabric, bits of bark, shells, seed pods etc. attached to the web to represent the interconnectedness of life.
- **Create a 'Nature Nest':** using recycled wire, bound with twine or wool, spiral out from the centre, or make a papier mache form from recycled paper to construct a nest. Embellish and decorate with twigs, bark etc. Gather special gifts from nature to place inside (shells, seeds, feathers, leaves, dried flowers). Invite children to deeply reflect and create miniature paper 'scrolls' of their heartfelt wishes and pledges to care for the natural world.
- **Discover a hidden universe:** take an old tin/ plastic lid or piece of board and place it on bare dirt. In a few days, lift the lid to discover what species have found shelter! Repeat over time to see what changes.
- **Cloud Awareness:** gaze in wonder at the ever -changing skyscape! Teach children to recognize cirrostratus, cumulonimbus and lenticularis forms ... as well as finding all the patterns, shapes and forms that clouds reveal.
- **Meditate outside with all the senses:** experience holding awareness of sight, sound, touch/feel, smell and taste in an outdoor natural setting.
- **Meditate on the natural world** inside us, and all around us: the earth contains 70% water ... just like us. Our veins and arteries are like the currents in the sea. Our blood is salty like the sea. The earth has rocks and we have bones. The soil is full of microbes and have our own inner microbes that keep us healthy. And every breath we take connects us to every other living being on this earth. Feel gravity holding us gently in place, as we sit on our cushion or chair, or lie on the floor.