

Ten Helpful Hints for the Teacher

In leading children to meditation it is important to remember that we are on a journey with the children. We are pilgrims along with them on the journey toward God. We share our faith with them and offer them the opportunity to pray in silence.

Here are some suggestions, based on the writings of John Main that might help you as you lead children in meditation.

1. Ask students to sit in a comfortable position. But do not be so comfortable that you fall asleep!
2. Ask students to quiet their bodies. Then quiet the mind. Become aware that you are in God's presence. God is around you now in this room. God is also inside of you.
3. Ask students to close their eyes. Continue to sit straight with your spine upright, relax the muscles of your body. Breathe normally from your stomach. Breathe slowly in and out.
4. When the students have become quiet, you may ring a bell, or chime or simply say, "*We begin our meditation now*". This signals the children to say their mantra silently. Advice to students can be, "*Say the mantra until you can no longer say it and as soon as you realise you have stopped saying it, start saying it again*".
5. The students are to repeat the mantra prayerfully throughout the meditation period. As the teacher, you keep track of the time and ring the bell when the period comes to an end. Remind students that they can pray silently with a mantra whenever they want throughout the day or at home on their own.
6. Do not look down on their faith. It may be simpler than yours, but it is most likely sincere. Their faith may be very deep and so be a source of inspiration.
7. Do not impose your own prayer guidelines on the children. Furthermore, do not do anything that would limit their concept of God or extinguish their spontaneous expression of their relationship with God.
8. Do not give the children the impression that they can only pray at certain times or in certain places. And do not give the impression that meditation is the only way to pray or even the best way to pray. There are many ways to pray, and they can all lead us to genuine communication with God.
9. Do not over-explain or meditate for the child. Instead, invite the children to discover God's love for themselves. Let their prayer be their own, not yours.
10. Always show respect for the children and take their religious questions seriously. When it comes to prayer and meditation, also respect the child's privacy and dignity.