

Stilling

Stilling is a method of developing children's spiritual awareness. The activity of stilling is a lead in to meditation and could thus be an appropriate exercise to undertake when thinking about meditation in Buddhism (although we do NOT suggest that you attempt true meditation in the classroom).



Begin by making sure the children are sitting in an "alert and relaxed position". This means sitting so they are not touching anything or anyone, back against the chair back, feet flat on floor, hands resting in a cup-like position on the lap, or on the knees. The teacher talks the children through the exercise slowly and calmly, leaving appropriate gaps.

A very simple breathing exercise would be :

"Let your eyes gently close...."

Breathe slowly in and out, in and out...

Now begin to listen to sounds outside this room.....

Now listen to the sounds inside this room.....

Now listen to yourself....

Notice the way your breath enters and leaves your body.....

Concentrate on the tip of your nose and feel your breath go in and out, in and out.....

Now feel how hard your chair is underneath you.....

When you are ready, open your eyes and have a good stretch....

The exercise can take as long or as short an amount of time as is appropriate - you will be able to sense the atmosphere in the room and react accordingly. Children who become used to stilling exercises will be able to go for longer and longer periods of time.

Always debrief after a stilling exercise.