

Study Guide for Teachers

Bobby Beecut *Your Life is a Work of Art*

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Your Life is A Work of Art, uses music to immerse students in motion, rhythm, and mindfulness. Mixing live looping, beatboxing, multiple instruments, singing, dancing, and interactive play with basic principles of mindfulness, meditation, and creative visualization, this program teaches students how to view their life as a work of art and create the life of their dreams.

LEARNING GOALS

The primary goal of this program is to teach students the basic principles of mindfulness and to empower them to use the tools of focus, setting intention, and visualization to create their ultimate work of art, their life. Students learn the basics of beat boxing and provide the beat for a number of songs. Students also learn how a song is crafted. They learn how the parts fit together to make something larger, the complete song. They start with the beat and learn about the components as each is added. The first to be added is the bass line, followed by chords. Melody and harmony are introduced finally the lyrics are added.

This program also explores the role of art; students will shift their perspectives to see they are already artists. They learn that all artists use tools, and the tools of music making are explained and explored.

Throughout the program students are introduced to mindfulness tools, breath, focus, and visualization as they learn how these tools can help shape and create their life. They are introduced to the idea that they possess a 'tool belt' and add tools to that tool belt throughout the program.

Students learn practical skills to engage their focus through deep breathing and experiential demonstrations. The students engage in coordinated movements which is fun and fosters a sense of community, of being part of something larger than themselves. Students also learn about the power of their words and choices through experiential demonstrations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Any prior knowledge of mindfulness is reinforced through the program and if no prior knowledge exists, this is an excellent introduction.

This program identifies focus as one of the most important life skills and aims to give students practical ways to be aware of and strengthen their focus. Any prior knowledge or practices that strengthen focus are relevant.

The basic principle of mindfulness is paying attention to what you are doing or watching. The program identifies this as one of a person's greatest powers.

Using breath as a tool builds on something all humans know, however breath's ability to help regulate our physiology is often overlooked. The program introduces deep breathing as a tool to control focus. By pausing to take a deep breath and becoming aware of where one's focus is, the students enter the present moment. From there they can concentrate on whatever they are doing from a more relaxed and focused place. The repetition of this simple action enough times to instill it as a habit can be a life changing addition to the tools that students are learning in school.

There are a number of quick activities that teachers can use to cue their students into mindfulness practice. It will be much more effective if the teachers can incorporate a few of these quick and simple techniques to make their classrooms more mindful, and to help each student be more mindful and present in any situation.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

Teachers can introduce the students to the concepts they will need to appreciate the program.

Introduction to Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.

A moment of mindfulness can be added to any activity. Simply cue the students to pause to take a deep breath. In through the nose deeply, and slowly out through the mouth like blowing out a candle. Instruct the students to bring their awareness to the center of their head. Then have the students say quietly to themselves "I am focused". This exercise takes about 10 seconds, and can be a segway to any activity or lesson. Doing this many times throughout the day is a mindfulness practice that teachers can use to help the students become more focused, relaxed and centered. Adding this practice to any activity will help the students be sharp and will promote the idea that mindfulness is a practice. The more one focuses, the stronger it gets. It is something that happens repeatedly and develops into a habit. Once the habit is developed, the student will experience the benefits of mindfulness.

AFTER THE PROGRAM

An activity that uses focus, visualization, imagination and promotes mindfulness is:

The teacher instructs the students to imagine a peaceful quiet place that they would like to visit. The teacher instructs the students to make a drawing of this place, including as many details as possible. Give the students an appropriate amount of time to complete the drawing. Next the teacher instructs the students to take a deep breath, to relax, close their eyes, and in their imagination to go the place they just drew.

The teacher cues the children take a deep breath and to look around in this scene of their quiet place. Where is it? Ask them to look at all the details. The teacher cues them to immerse themselves in the scene, and to imagine that they are really there. Invite them to use each of their senses, to smell what it smells like, listen to the sounds, if appropriate to feel the warm sun on their skin, or to feel the sand or water if they are at a beach. Wherever their peaceful place is, encourage as many details as possible.

Then the teacher cues the students, breathe in slowly and breathe out slowly, look to your right. What do you see? Breathe in slowly and breathe out slowly. Look to your left, what do you see? If your mind starts to wander, bring it back with your breath and be in your quiet place. Breathe in slowly, breathe out slowly. Observe as many details as you can.

The teacher then cues the students to return slowly to the room by taking a few deep breaths, and slowly opening their eyes.

Questions: Were you able to see, hear, feel, smell the imaginary place? How did it feel? How do you feel now?

This exercise promotes a number of mindfulness goals.... Deep breathing, use of visualization, use of imagination, noticing details, being present, being relaxed.

VOCABULARY WORDS

Art- Using creativity and imagination to make something

Vision- the ability to think about or plan the future with imagination or wisdom.

Intention- an aim or plan.

Focus- an act of concentrating interest or activity on something

Tool- a device or implement, used to carry out a particular function.

Encouragement-the action of giving someone support, confidence, or hope.

Rhythm- a strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound.

Beat- a rhythmic movement. Rhythmic patterns played on a drum

Bass Line- the lowest part or sequence of notes in a piece of music.

Harmony- the combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions having a pleasing effect.

ARTIST INFORMATION

Bobby Beetcut is a musician and educator who has toured nationally playing original music in a number of successful projects. He has written and recorded six albums and is currently working on his seventh. His main instruments are singing, piano, organ, guitar, bass, and drums. Bobby has a passion for songwriting and for teaching students to write songs. He released his first Family Roots album in 2013 *Beetcut and the Magic Box* which was distributed by Sony Music International. He followed that up with *Up in a Tree*, in 2015 also distributed by Sony Music International.

Bobby has been teaching mindfulness and basic meditation to students for 18 years. It has been shown that mindfulness education for students helps to reduce anxiety, increase focus and contribute positively to school environments and students' lives. Bobby has worked with children of all ages through his own brand of music and music education called Family Roots. An essential ingredient in raising healthy balanced humans is rooting them in healthy and nourishing music, messages and practices. His philosophy of Family Roots is an approach that includes music, music education and mindfulness training for kids. The Family Roots philosophy gave rise to the show *Your Life is a Work of Art* which is presented in collaboration with Young Audiences of New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania..

RESOURCES

Link to the Effects of Mindfulness on Psychological Health : A Review of Empirical Studies... <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3679190/>

Link to Mindfulness goes to School Things Learned so far from research and real world experience... <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5405439/>

Link to Impact of Mindfulness Training on the Behavior of Elementary Students with Attention-Defecit/Hyperactive Disorder <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15427609.2013.818487>

Link to Ted Talk on Bite-sized Mindfulness an Easy Way for Kids to be healthy and happy. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOlldmMK_zM&t=156s

Websites:
Positivepsychology.com
Mindfullittles.org
Niroga.org-- Dynamic Mindfulness