



**Green
Generations**

Nurture · Grow · Thrive · Achieve

**Toolkit
of
Mindfulness Activities**

Authors:

Kathie Arseno, Lead Facilitator and Designer

Joelle Charles, Contributor and Editor

Adrienne Heim-Vener, Founder & Executive Director

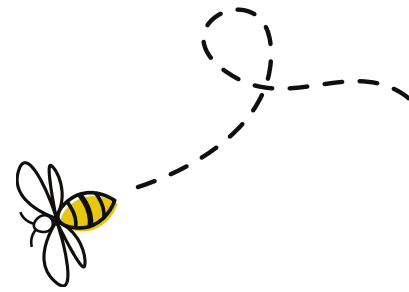




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About the Authors



Kathie Arseno, B.S.Ed. **Lead GG Facilitator**



Kathie has extensive experience working with diverse communities of at-risk children and youth, adults, and professionals in the social service field. Her practice has included youth development, mental health and substance abuse intervention, and holistic guidance for those navigating the judicial system. In recent years, she has been a spirited activist for her community and an advocate for meditation and self-enlightenment. She has used her work and personal life experiences as a platform to spread positive vibes and inspire others to become a greater version of themselves.

Kathie currently teaches self-awareness and healing through various eastern spirituality practices such as meditation, yoga, and the manifestation of intention, incorporating her love of the arts into her social work. Kathie is excited to bring her skills and wisdom to Green Generations. She is very passionate about working with children and truly believes in Green Generations' mission to nurture and empower children with emotional health and life-skills education.

Adrienne Heim-Vener, M.S.Ed. **Founder & Executive Director**

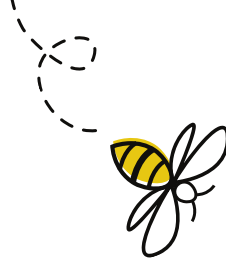


Adrienne is the founding executive director of Green Generations. She began teaching in the South Bronx in 2002, determined to support social and emotional qualities of learning, and offer her students loving-kindness. Green Generations represents her belief that educators must help children realize their potential and care about social change.

Adrienne worked as a bilingual elementary classroom teacher for Teach for America Corps, then transitioned to Lead English teacher and Administrative Coordinator at The Living School, an award-winning Ashoka school in Paris, France. She has always been passionate about transforming public education and putting holistic, whole-child-centered education into practice. Green Generations is now a thriving in-school and after-school program serving hundreds of children annually, with partnerships across four boroughs of New York City. Adrienne has a Master's of Science in Education with an extension in bilingual education and is a certified yoga teacher for children. She is also a New York State certified elementary teacher (Pre-K – 6), holds a certificate from New York University's George H. Heyman, Jr. Center for Philanthropy and Fundraising, and participated in NOAA's Teacher at Sea program.



Co-Author's Note



Dear Reader,

We are thrilled to welcome you to our Green Generations Mindfulness Activities Toolkit.

This project was written with love. Created through a trauma-informed and healing-centered framework, the activities here have been effective and enjoyable throughout more than ten years of Green Generations workshops. Our lessons have evolved to meet the various needs of the children we have encountered in our school communities over the years.

This toolkit is ideal for any age; however, we encourage leaders to differentiate the activities as needed because, indeed, you know your child(ren) best. We have made special notes to acknowledge the moments when we feel leaders may need to adjust accordingly.

We believe that this toolkit will help you and the young people you guide facilitate thoughtful conversations around mindfulness, kindness, leadership, and earth-centered topics.

Again, thank you for choosing our toolkit. Whether you're a parent, guardian, educator, or educational facilitator working with children, we hope that this becomes a helpful resource for you. Together, we empower children by nurturing them with self-esteem, mindfulness, and leadership education to become thoughtful leaders in their communities.

With grateful and inspired hearts,
Adrienne and Kathie



About the Organization

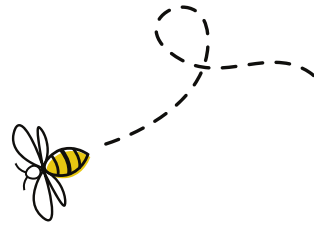


Our Mission

Empower children with the tools to build self-esteem and mindfulness so they grow to be thoughtful contributors in their communities.

Our Vision

For every child to love who they are, thrive in their community, and contribute to a more just and compassionate world.



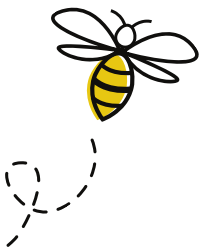
About Us

Green Generations, founded in 2012, partners with New York City schools to provide in-school and after-school programming for children, along with professional development for school-based staff. We also offer workshops for parents and families.

The name of our organization reflects the intergenerational, inclusive, and whole-family approach we take in our programming. Our programs allow children to grow in a safe space and thrive in their classrooms and communities.

Green Generations provides them with the tools they need to achieve their dreams in school and in life.

We offer an innovative curriculum with hands-on experience rooted in self-esteem and mindfulness activities. Our approach is holistic and heart-centered, integrating body and mind.



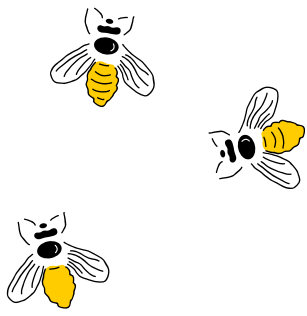
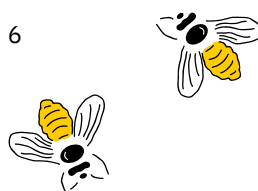
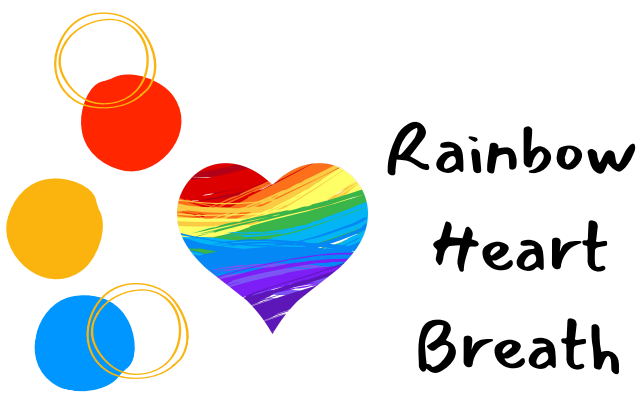


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NYS SEL Benchmark(s):

1. *Develop self-awareness and self-management skills essential to success in school and in life.*

Goal: Visualize our emotions as colors, and practice breathwork.

Materials: None

Duration: 5 -10 minutes

Procedure:

1. Prepare the space by making the Rainbow Heart Breath worksheet (Index) available to students. It may be projected on the board or printed for each child.
2. Reflect on the colors of the rainbow, and ascribe certain qualities and emotions to each. For example,

Red = Energy
Yellow = Happiness
Green = Renewal
Blue = Serenity
Purple = Creativity
Pink = Peace

2. Invite the children to place their hands on their hearts. Ask them to connect with their minds and hearts to ask themselves what color they are “feeling”, or the color/emotion they want to welcome into their day.
3. Ask kids to keep their emotion color in mind, and place one finger on the outline around the heart.
4. As they trace clockwise, invite kids to take a deep breath in thinking of the color they chose, and say “I need ____ (energy).”

5. Have kids exhale as they use their fingers to trace the heart upwards. Repeat two to three times, then invite them to color their hearts according to the colors and emotions discussed.





GG Ball Toss

NYS SEL Benchmark(s):

- 1B.1a. Describe one's likes, dislikes, needs, wants, strengths, challenges, and opinions.
- 2B.1a. Describe the ways that people are similar and different.
- 2A.1b. Use listening skills to identify the feelings and perspectives of others.

Goal: Use the GG Soccer Thumbball to engage in a group setting and stimulate emotionally-centered discussions among players.

Materials: GG's soccer ball thumbball; A permanent marker

Duration: 5 - 15 minutes

Procedure:

1. Prepare the space by having kids stand or sit in a circle. Use the GG Soccer Thumbball to engage in heart-centered discussions among the kids.
2. Explain that the kids will take turns circulating the Thumbball by passing, rolling, tossing, and catching the ball to each other. Their job is to respond to the prompt under their right or left thumb.

Facilitators Note: The GG Thumbball may not be prefilled with prompts. We invite you to fill the soccer ball with these questions and sentence starters:

- What brings you joy?
- Where in your body do you feel anger?
- My feelings are hurt when _____.
- What are you struggling with right now?
- What are you most proud of?
- I feel loved when _____.
- I show love by _____.
- What angers you?
- What scares you?
- What motivates you?
- What frustrates you?
- Right now I feel _____.
- When I am feeling angry I can _____ to feel better.
- When I am feeling sad I can _____ to feel better.
- Name 3 things you are thankful for.
- I feel successful when _____.
- I calm my stress by _____.
- Describe a time you felt shy.
- I practice self control by _____.
- I am most happy when _____.
- I feel nervous when _____.
- _____ makes me laugh.
- I share my joy with others by _____.
- Describe a time you had to practice patience.
- Where in your body do you feel tired?



Pass the Pinecone

NYS SEL Benchmark(s):

1. *Develop self-awareness and self-management skills essential to success in school and in life.*
1A.3c. *Demonstrate the capacity to maintain concentration on a task.*

Goal: Use natural artifacts to understand our living environment.

Materials: Pinecone(s), Cinnamon sticks (optional for stronger scent)

Duration: 5 -15 minutes

Procedure:

1. Explain to students that if we pay attention, pinecones can tell us a lot about our outer and inner environments. The scales on the pinecone actually respond to the humidity present! When the weather is warm and the air is dry, seeds are released as the scales open. When it is humid and cold, the scales close. If the pinecone is wet, it expands, and when it's dry it shrinks. Leaders include any other relevant pinecone facts, especially about the trees specific to your geography.

2. Share that this activity requires them to pass the pinecone around the room. When they receive the pinecone, they should take a moment to take a deep breath in and out. Invite them to notice any smells from the pinecone--Notice if the smell has any effect on their mood or energy level. Consider what scents can do to trigger our memories. Does the smell of hot cocoa make them think of the holidays? Does the smell of lemons and lemonade remind them of Summer?

3. Ask children to use their sense of sight to study the pine cone and to notice its scales. After their breath, allow kids to take a moment to see how they are feeling. They may share their one-word emotion out loud before silently passing the pine cone to the next person. Those who do not wish to share an emotion do not have to, and can simply pass the cone to the next person.

Talking Prompts:

How else do we use natural artifacts to study our environment?

Consider water and air collection to study pollution intensity, or melting icebergs that indicate climate change.

Reflections

Leaders, use this page to journal your thoughts on our exercises.

1. Which mindfulness activity is your favorite? Why?

2. Select 3 mindfulness activities that you're interested in trying.

3. What inspirations or questions do you have?

Additional Reflections:



Additional Resources:



New York State Education Department Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks. Available on NYSED.gov

"All SEL Should be Trauma-Informed" (2019), via The Phi Delta Kappan Journal. Available on Google Scholar.

"Is Social-Emotional Learning Really Going to Work for Students of Color?" (2017). Written by Dena Simmons. Available on Edweek.org

Hope and Healing in Urban Education: How Urban Activists and Teachers are Reclaiming Matters of the Heart (2015). Written by Dr. Shawn Ginwright.

The World Becomes What We Teach: Educating a Generation of Solutionaries (2015). Written by Zoe Weil.

Social-Emotional Learning and the Brain: Strategies to Help Your Students Thrive (2020). Written by Marilee Sprenger.

Mindful Arts in the Classroom: Stories and Creative Activities for Social and Emotional Learning, (2018). Written by Andrew Jordan Nance.

Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators (2018). Written by Elana Aguilar.

Wisdom: The World of Emotions Game.
Created by BetterKids

The Emotional Backpack Project
Created by Mental Health America of Greater Houston.





Thank you!

For more information and to purchase this
complete toolkit, and more, please visit:

www.greengenerations.org/virtual_camps

or write to us at

info@greengenerations.org.

[@greengennyc](https://www.instagram.com/greengennyc)

