

Make a Place for Peace

Type of activity: A reflective activity, inside or outside.

Who is it for? All the family

What do I need?

- A selection of natural objects eg leaves, flowers, sticks, sand or pebbles, water.
- A flat tray or flat surface.
- A quiet corner in the garden or house where you can sit comfortably
- Creativity and some personal space for calmness



Introduction

A quiet space at some time in the day for peace and calmness is important for our mental and spiritual health. It is difficult to find sometimes when you are at home with family or having a busy day. This activity encourages you to find a small place in the garden or in your house which you can design to encourage calmness and reflection. Let the rest of the family know about it and let them use it too, to unwind and relax.

Here's how to...

1. Agree with your family where would be a good corner - it does not have to be big. Decide where you will sit comfortably.
2. Clearing - remove rubbish or obstacles to make a flat surface or use a tray. Take your time and think of clearing away any worries or fears while you do it.
3. Collect objects that you like and choose a special one to go in the centre.
4. Make a mandala. Mandala is from the ancient Indian Sanskrit and represents wholeness and life. You can find them in many traditions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Native American traditions, Judaism, and more. Mandalas are circles. They exist everywhere around us: in the flowers, in sea shells, in fruits, in snow flakes... everywhere! In everything that has a centre that radiates inside and out, there is this perfection called Mandala. They can be used to help calmness and meditation and are lovely to make. Build up from the centre outwards and use repeating patterns.
5. Now practice some peaceful meditation. Sit comfortably and focus your eyes on the centre of your Mandala - feel your breathing slow down. Move your eyes outwards and leave any worries outside the circle. Let your eyes return to the centre and close them. If thoughts bubble up focus your eyes again on the centre, breathing slowly and gently. Try to do this every day. Refresh your mandala or create another when you need to.





What now? Other things you could make and add to your Peace Place - wind chimes, dream catchers, a small dish of water with floating petals, painted pebble patterns. But the most important thing is to practice some peaceful meditation for at least a few minutes every day!

Peace begins in our homes, families and communities and learning to solve conflicts in peaceful ways is one of the biggest global challenges. World Peace Gardens have been made in cities throughout the world to encourage communities and countries to work peacefully together. The International Peace Garden Foundation <https://www.ipgf.org/> is one example.