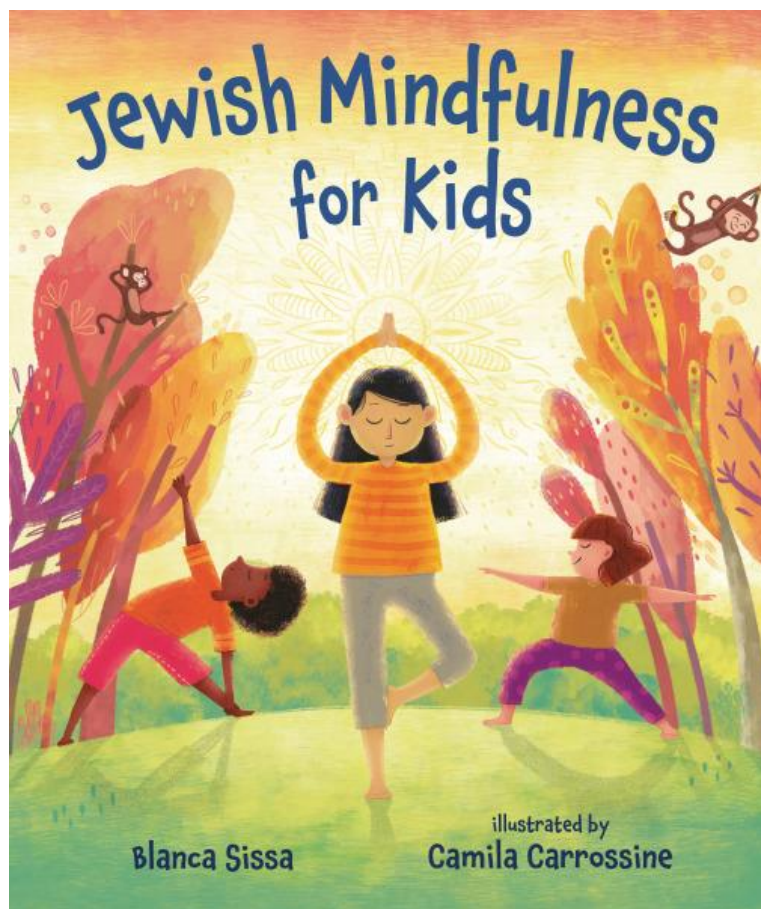


KAR-BEN PUBLISHING

Iconic Jewish Children's Books

Educator Guide



© KAR-BEN Publishing, an imprint of Lerner Publishing Group
This guide may be downloaded for free at www.karben.com
This guide may be used expressly for educational purposes only and cannot be sold.

Lesson Plan by Blanca Sissa
HC: 978-1-7284-8644-4

To purchase the book, call 1-800-4KARBEN
or visit www.karben.com

About the Book

This book is designed as an aid for teachers. As teachers and parents of young children, we have a great responsibility on our shoulders: to lead these little people in their development, education and discovery of who they are, and how they want to live their lives. Our role is to provide stimulating, rich and healthy support for these discoveries.

With the book you will be able to build a space to practice mindfulness and yoga. We allow children to explore their body, mind, and spirit in a Jewish context.

That's where the magic begins.

The simple act of breathing becomes a tool to awaken consciousness and empowerment through the discovery and practice of emotional self-regulation. New feelings arise in the body and mind.

Meditation and yoga give us balance and relaxation to support our well-being. They are great tools to help children to grow up healthy and happy. We are going to delve deeper into these practices to introduce mindfulness and yoga resources in the classroom and at home. These activities help children relax and handle stress.

About the Author

Blanca Sissa Capon is a certified kids yoga Instructor and teacher trainer. She teaches classes to kids of all ages and is the author of children's books on these topics. She is dedicated to spreading mindfulness and yoga to the classroom by training teachers and creating fun educational videos and resources. She co-founded Kef Yoga with the goal of bringing wellness to children and their families. Originally from Mexico City, she lives in Madrid, Spain.

About the Illustrator

Camila Carrossine has been drawing since she was a little girl, first on the walls of her bedroom and today creating illustrations for children's books. She studied Fine Arts and Art Direction and has illustrated more than fifty books. She likes to drink tea while the rain falls outside. She is a lifelong resident of São Paulo, Brazil. To see more of her work visit: www.camilacarrossine.com

Concepts

Kids and Mindfulness

Children live in a hurried and stressful world. If you have this book in your hands, you are aware of the importance of children learning to self-regulate, calm down, and acquire the healthy habits to create well-being.

Mindfulness in childhood focuses on developing attention and consciousness, being present in the moment, here and now, learning to stop for a minute, pausing before reacting, and allowing kids to feel any emotion that comes to the surface. They will learn to get out of the reactive autopilot mode that we adults sometimes put them in.

With mindfulness, children learn to accept things as they are. They learn to observe and accept what is happening around them and within themselves on an emotional level.

Jewish Mindfulness

We call our take on mindfulness "Yishuv Hada'at." Yishuv means settling, and Daat means the mind. It is considered one of the ways to acquire the wisdom of the Torah. It puts our external level of consciousness and inner being in harmony.

Somebody who has "Yishuv HaDa'at" is one who is calm and rational with their thoughts. It makes children aware of their own body, helps them connect emotions and thoughts, and encourages concentration, memory, and emotional validation.

Teaching Jewish Mindfulness to Kids

As a concept, mindfulness it is not easy to grasp and the benefits are not immediately clear. The best thing we can do is help kids recognize how emotions feel in their bodies and how to relax.

Just like learning any other skill, such as playing the piano or riding a bicycle, the secret is to practice Yishuv HaDa'at. The earlier we start this teaching, the easier it will be for children to master it.

A very useful image to share is that of a forest filled with noisy monkeys, as we do in the book.

Recommended Uses For This Book

The book has been designed as an easy and fun introduction guide to mindfulness for kids. In class, you can build several "mindful breaks" around it.

For the first mindful break, start with a complete reading of the book. After reading, you can have a talk about the importance of stopping, breathing deeply, and being attentive to the here and now.

For the second mindful break, read about the monkey forest and the mind. Lead the kids in making the connection with their own experience. Go around and listen to what they have to say about their own monkey mind. Let them express themselves freely about what they think and how they feel.

On the third mindful break, and onward, work on the exercises provided in the book (and the extra ones in this guide) one by one, each one in a different session. Give the children enough time to understand and enjoy the exercises.

You can go back to review the parts of the book you think are needed by the class and repeat any practice they have found soothing, valuable, and enjoyable.

Activities In the Book

Challah and Chicken Soup

Deep breathing is good for our health. It helps us manage our emotions and centers us. But we cannot explain these benefits to children and expect them to know how to use their breathing to calm down.

To do this, we are going to lead our kids in a breathing exercise using their imagination.

Ask the children to sit comfortably at their desk as we share the book and ask the kids to imagine smelling the challah and blowing slowly on the chicken soup.

Blow the Shofar

Another way to learn and practice deep breathing is blowing. We can release the air fast or slow changing how long it takes.

Play acting blowing the shofar is a lot of fun. Ask the students to close their eyes and imagine a big shofar, then we will ask them to take in a lot of air and release it very slowly to be able to make a long sound like that of the shofar.

Breathe Like a Dove

In this exercise we are going to work on breathing in different ways, with different speed and intensity. This will help our kids achieve breathing control.

These skills help the child become aware of their breathing and enables them to consciously regulate it when needed.

Breathing reassures us. It makes us feel as peaceful as a dove. To start the exercise, ask your students to imagine that they are like a dove that spreads its wings to fly.

Wander Through the Desert

This exercise is based on the body scan meditation. It involves a systematic sweep of the body with the mind. Lead the children on a walk through their body, from head to toe, observing their bodily sensations and relaxing each part. They will become aware of the sensations present at that moment.

It is not uncommon that while performing this exercise, the sensations in the body will be perceived more intensely, including more pain or greater sensitivity in certain regions. In body exploration, kids are developing awareness of sensation in its purest form.

The children can sit or lay down for this exercise. The book guides you through the main “stops” in the body, you can add or skip them depending on how the group is doing. One great variation is to stop for a little while before coming back and opening our eyes.

Light the Shabbat Candles

This meditation is designed to be done at home with mom after lighting the Shabbat candles, but it is so beautiful and beneficial, that it can also be done in the classroom. Always be very careful and keep the children away from fire.

Looking at a candle flame has been found to help increase our ability to concentrate while reducing feelings of stress and anxiety. Candle meditations are best done in a dark space. Close the curtains and turn off the lights when is time to focus on the candle. It’s best if the candle doesn’t flicker much, so place it in a location with little or no draft.

To star this meditation, ask the students to sit on their chairs or on the floor with their back upright and looking at the candle. Place the lit candle where it is safe and can be seen by all in a straight line, perhaps in the center of the classroom.

Tell the kids to fix their eyes on the flame of the candle while we breathe for a little while. Then we can close our eyes, keeping the image of the flame in our mind for a few minutes.

Sing Shalom

A very useful tool in meditation is anchoring, which helps us recall our meditative states. In Judaism, we have nigunim, chants and words that are used to help with meditation.

Any word or short phrase that helps to recall meditation is good. We suggest using the word “shalom” with intonation that lengthens each sound of the word. For children whose minds are particularly busy, a nigun may be the quickest way to calm their minds.

At first it is best to repeat “shalom” softly out loud, as this helps to establish it in the mind. After a while, and with older children, ask them to repeat it silently.

Children should continue to be aware of their breathing, although now the focus of concentration shifts from the sensation of the air in the nostrils to the awareness of the sound when the breath is exhaled.

Extra activities

Here are some useful and fun worksheets that are not in the book.

Here & Now

In this worksheet, we are going to help the children be more aware of their mental state in the present moment. This activity helps kids learn how to focus on the present instead of ruminating on the past or worrying about the future.

Research shows that being more aware of the present moment reduces stress, improves memory and attention, and releases endorphins. One of the best ways to help children become more mindful is to teach them to focus on their breathing.

This exercise helps children develop attention, patience, trust, and acceptance. The sooner they gain these skills, the better for their development. It may ease the transition through adolescence and lead to healthier and happier adults.

Give each kid has copy of the worksheet and guide them as follows:

“Let’s close our eyes for two minutes and breathe deeply. When you open your eyes, pay attention to how you feel right now. Write or draw your sensations on the sheet.”



Here & Now הנה & עכשיו

Let's settle our thoughts, just what **הנה** means. We'll close our eyes for 2 minutes while we breath deeply.

When we open our eyes we'll look inside ourselves and catch what we are up to here and now.

Here & now
I see



Here & now I hear



Here & now I smell



Here & now I feel
through my skin



Here & now my
feelings are



Yoga & Mindfulness Educational Resources

kefyoga.com - Family fun with Yoga and Mindfulness



Youtube.com/kefyoga



Gratefulness Tree

Being grateful has many health benefits; reducing stress, depression and anxiety, and contributing to greater happiness. There is also scientific evidence that expressing genuine gratitude daily can improve sleep quality, heart/cardiovascular health, and immune function.

Gratitude promotes optimism and helps us develop a more positive attitude. It allows us to pause for a moment to reflect on all the good things we have in our lives.

Gratitude can be taught with this exercise.

The idea of this worksheet is to build our “Tree of Gratitude.” Every day, try to remember one good thing that happened and that made you feel grateful. The important thing is to make children think about gratitude and not take things for granted. They don't have to be big things. For example, playing with my best friend in the yard, getting French fries at lunch, or having grandparents visit.

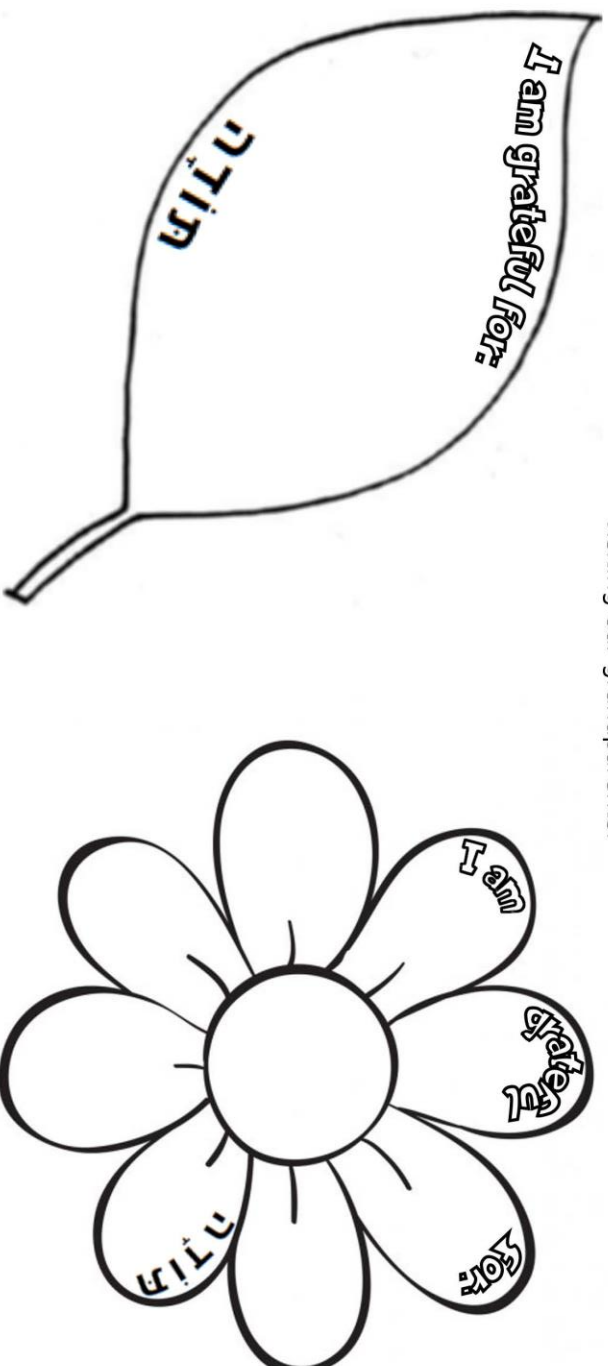
Little by little, our gratitude tree will grow and we will become more aware of being grateful.



Gratefulness Tree עץ הכרת הטוב

With these leaf and flower cut outs you can build your own "Gratefulness Tree" at school or home.

Each day we can write down, in our leaves or flowers, one nice thing that happened to us and made us grateful. It does not have to be a great big thing, we can be grateful for playing with our best friend, having a tasty knish or visiting our grandparents.



Little by little our "Gratefulness Tree" grows, day by day we are reminded of the many things in our lives that make us grateful.

Yoga & Mindfulness Educational Resources

kefyoga.com - Family fun with Yoga and Mindfulness



Youtube.com/Kefyoga



Hamsa Breathing

The idea of this exercise is to give the little ones a simple way of remembering to breathe when they feel nervous, scared or sad.

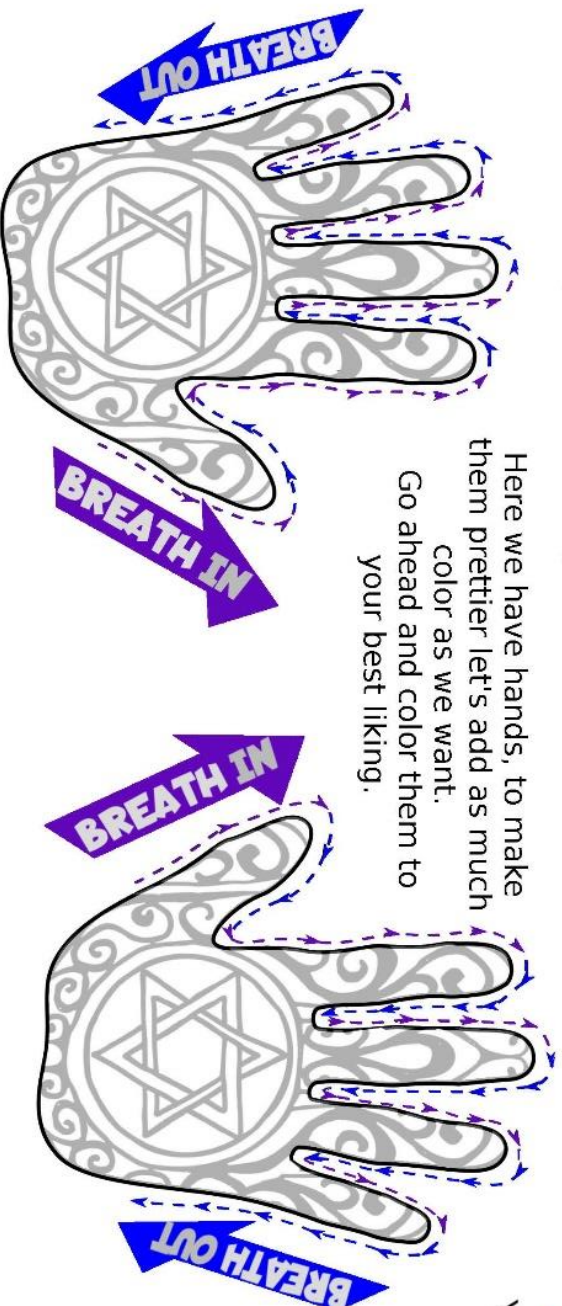
First, decorate your paper hands. Use lots of colors to make them super pretty.

Then make a circle and practice deep breathing with your paper hands, following the arrows. Breath in when purple and out when blue. After doing it a few times, switch to using our own hands.

Hamsa Breathing הַמְּסָא הַנְּשָׁמָה

Breathing is very important and deep breathing can help us calm down, so let's learn how to do it. We are going to help ourselves with our hands and call this activity Hamsa breathing.

Here we have hands, to make them prettier let's add as much color as we want. Go ahead and color them to your best liking.



Ready? now let's do some deep breathing. Follow the arrows, when the arrow is **purple** breath in and chase it all the way to the top of your finger, once there the arrow switches to **blue** and we start to breath out until we switch again. We do this slowly, no hurry at all, just following the edge of our hands. How nice it feels to do our Hamsa breathing.

Yoga & Mindfulness Educational Resources

kefyoga.com - Family fun with Yoga and Mindfulness



Youtube.com/Kefyoga



Additional Information and Tips

The exercises in this book will help children learn to calm themselves, using the most powerful tool of all: breathing.

Scientific studies have shown that the practice of mindfulness brings:

- Less anxiety, depression and stress
- Greater self-regulation
- Richer and more satisfying relationships

Staying quiet is one of the hardest things for kids to do. With these relaxation exercises we learn to relax the body and to lower the energy level. We learn to have moments of calm.

Teaching children to relax and take short breaks during the school day is of great help for their lives. For more teachings and information, visit kefyoga.com. Find more videos for kids at youtube.com/@kefyoga.

Thank you very much for your interest in bringing Yishuv Hada'at to your kids. It is my hope and dream that we will make the world a healthier, more relaxed, better place by spreading our practice and helping each other.

Blanca