



# The Joy in Simple classroom inspiration

## Step

## 1

### Breathing

Teachers can gain an overview of this step by watching the following illustrative video: [www.thejoyinsimple.com/joinus](http://www.thejoyinsimple.com/joinus) (This is the third video featured on this page)

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#### Class discussion

Breathing fully can help every aspect of our bodies and can help children to focus, relax and calm down.

#### Questions to ask the class:

- What does breathing fully look like vs not breathing fully?
- What does your tummy do? (Does it fill up with air like a balloon?)
- What happens to the way you sit or stand? (Are you sitting up taller?)
- If you place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly, which hand rises more? (Can you get your belly to rise more?)
- Can you close your mouth and breathe in through your nose and then out through your mouth?
- What does it feel like?

#### Prompts to help the class understand:

- Blow up a balloon and then let all of the air out (This can cause laughter)
- Fill up a bag (Show how it fills up from the base first. This is the goal with breathing, to fill your belly up with air first)
- Fill up a bowl or large cup (Water goes to the bottom first)

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#### Classroom daily routine

Breathing fully is often something we forget to do as adults, however this exercise can be life transformative, especially if learnt early on.

#### Breathing time:

Ask the class to sit or stand up tall. They could imagine they have a piece of string gently pulling them up from the tops of their heads. They could place their hands on their bellies. Close their mouths and breathe in through their noses to fill up their bellies with air, then open their mouths and blow all the air out.

- Take 3 deep breaths after lunch or playtime before starting work to help focus
- Take 3 deep breaths to quieten and calm the class during each day
- Listen to calm music, turn the lights out in the classroom, and breathe fully for a few minutes after a wet playtime to change the atmosphere in the classroom



## Step

## 2

### Thinking

#### Class discussions

How we think can affect how we feel. How can nature help us understand this?

If nature can be heard from the playground, what sounds can the children hear? What do they think about when they hear nature? What thoughts do they have if they close their eyes, take some deep breaths (as practised in Step 1) and listen to the sound of the wind, rain, birds or leaves rustling?

#### Questions to ask the class:

##### *about clouds...*

- Can you look up at the clouds?
- What are the clouds doing? Are they always changing?
- Can you see any pictures in the sky, just like you see things in your imagination?
- How are clouds like your thoughts?
- How often do your thoughts change?
- Can you change your thoughts if you choose to? For example if you're thinking something not good about yourself, someone else or something you have to do, could you let that thought pass by like a cloud and think of something positive instead?
- What kind of thoughts might be like stormy clouds and if you think about them a lot, could cause a thunderstorm in terms of how you feel, and what kind of thoughts are helpful and encouraging and make you feel good?

##### *about flowers, plants and trees...*

- What do you notice about how flowers, plants and trees grow?
- Do they reach up to the sun? What happens if something is blocking them from the sun? Do they move their heads, branches or leaves so that they can still see and feel it?
- Can you reach up tall? What happens if your classmate tries to gently block you? Can you move in a different way or direction to still reach up?
- What can you learn from this in terms of your thoughts?
  - If you are finding something difficult, it's not going the way you would like it to, or you're not feeling good about something or someone, could you try to change how you think about it by seeing it differently?
  - What happens when you try lots of different ways to think about something? Does it help you? If so, why?

#### Class activity / display

Create a class collage of the sky to help the class remember the thoughts that help them most throughout each day. Ask each child to create a cloud and write or illustrate a thought that gives them energy or inspires them. Children could be encouraged to look at the collage if they are finding something difficult.



## Step

## 3

### Feeling

#### Class discussion

Emotions are important because they are an indication of how we feel. We all have wonderful things inside of us that can help us to manage our emotions and we can look to nature for inspiration on how to do to this. Oak trees have roots that go as deep underground as they are tall, and flowers have roots too. Roots help them to stand strong and secure when storms come (Like the stormy thoughts noted in Step 2). What are the things you have inside of you, or close to you, that help you to feel safe, strong and confident?

*PSHE activities to boost self-esteem and self-confidence.*

#### Circle time activity

- What are your gifts? Can you close your eyes and think about all the things you love to do best? Some of these things maybe your unique gifts that as you get older you can share and enjoy more and more with others. One of my gifts is...
- What are you good at? I am good at...
- What do you like that is different about you? I am different because...
- Who do you love and why? I love... because...
- What is love? Love is when...

Children can first say things about themselves and then can also speak about the person sitting next to them. If a particular child finds this difficult, the class could answer questions about them in a positive way as an encouragement.

#### Classroom display and activity

Create a display of large flowers, different shapes, colours and sizes, made by the children, with all the things about them that make them each one of them unique. Include sentences about the things they enjoy and love to do most.

Make seed packets. Ask the children to draw a picture of themselves on the front and instructions for what they need to grow and flourish on the back.

#### Classroom daily routine

Hang a branch with leaf rubbings made by the children. What's on the tree could change each season. For example, green leaves, yellow leaves, fruit or acorns. On each leaf or fruit, the children can write down something about love, symbolising what they feel most helps them to grow and flourish. For example, kindness, patience, understanding, believing the best, humility, trusting. If a child is struggling during the day, ask another child to choose a leaf from the tree to give to them as an encouragement. Keep the love tree topped up! (Faith based schools could also focus here on teachings or scriptures around love, for example 1 Corinthians 13 in the Bible)



## Step 4

### Speaking

Teachers can gain an overview of this step by watching the following illustrative video: [www.take7simplesteps.com/step4](http://www.take7simplesteps.com/step4)

#### Class discussion

The words we speak are very important because we hear our own voices more than anyone else. Positive, kind, encouraging words could be compared to planting seeds that will grow into beautiful flowers or fruit trees. Discouraging, unkind words on the other hand, could be thought of like weeds, that rise up to block the sunlight (which we all need). What are some wonderful things you can say to yourself or others? What are unhelpful things to say?

#### Class activities

- Write poems, rhymes or short songs that you could say or sing to yourselves, or out loud, when you are finding something challenging
- Come up with a class song or rhyme that could be pinned-up in the classroom and said each morning, or before going home each day, that reminds the children of how valuable they are and helps to instil confidence. For example, I am one of a kind. There will never be another me. I am strong. I am valuable. I can always try my best and with practise can do the things I set my mind to.

## Step 5

### Giving

Teachers can gain an overview of this step by watching the following illustrative video: [www.thejoyinsimple.com/joinus](http://www.thejoyinsimple.com/joinus) (The first video featured on this page)

#### Circle time activity

- How does giving make you feel?
- What are you most thankful for

#### Classroom weekly routine

Begin keeping a Thankful/Giving Journal which the children can take turns at writing in at the end of each week. Words and sentences can include the things they are most thankful for, an act of kindness by another child, or something they have done for someone else. The book can also be decorated by the class and revisited and read periodically as an encouragement.



## Step 6

### Valuing

Teachers can gain an overview of this step by watching the following illustrative video: [www.thejoyinsimple.com/joinus](http://www.thejoyinsimple.com/joinus) (The second video featured on this page)

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#### Class discussion

How can you help to take care of the world around you and other people?

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#### Class activities

##### *Recycling and materialism*

- Bury some plastic and paper and see what happens
- Have a collection of objects, natural and man-made and sort them into those that can be recycled
- Create pictures using coloured plastic bottle tops or tin can mobiles
- Weave with plastic bags cut into strips
- Go on a litter picking walk
- Discuss charity shops and ways to upcycle clothing and toys
- Sort items or labels into a 'wants' vs 'needs' pile, and ask the children to explain the difference. For example, food, water, clothing vs toys

## Step 7

### Nourishing

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#### Class discussion

What do you need to flourish and stay strong? How is this similar to nature?

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#### Class activities

- Make smoothies using spinach and other vegetables mixed with fruit
- Look for seeds under trees to plant. Plant a tree in the school grounds and observe how it grows. What is going on beneath the surface before you see it? How is this similar to you and your thoughts, feelings and the things inside of you?
- Plant beans in jars and observe the roots growing
- Plant flower seeds and watch them grow. What do they need? What do you need to grow? (For example, love and care. How does change help you and nature? Are there any similarities you can see between how the seasons, rain and sunshine help trees and flowers to flourish, and how certain activities, changes or experiences help you to grow?)
- Make a garden centre in the role play area to enjoy with your friends

**Please share your stories with us!**  
[www.TheJoyInSimple.com/Contact](http://www.TheJoyInSimple.com/Contact)



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## *Seven simple daily steps to help you flourish...*

1. **Breathing:** Take deep breaths as often as you can
2. **Thinking:** Watch unhelpful thoughts and let them pass by like clouds
3. **Feeling:** Let love make you feel rooted and secure
4. **Speaking:** Use encouraging words when speaking to yourself and to others
5. **Giving:** Treat others the way you would like to be treated and be thankful for the little things
6. **Valuing:** Take care of the world around you
7. **Nourishing:** Look after your unique body and mind with healthy food, fun, friendships, movement and rest

*Always know you are loved.*



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*Seven simple daily steps to help  
you stay so strong...*

1. **Breathing:** Take deep breaths as often as you can
2. **Thinking:** Focus on good things and use your imagination to help you branch out far and wide
3. **Feeling:** Let faith and love make you feel rooted and secure
4. **Speaking:** Use positive words when speaking to yourself and to others
5. **Giving:** Treat others the way you would like to be treated and be thankful for the little things
6. **Valuing:** Take care of the world around you
7. **Nourishing:** Look after your unique body and mind with healthy food, fun, friendships, movement and rest

*Always know love will carry you.*