

INNER STRENGTH

Objective: *To stimulate thinking about different ways of being strong*

Key words: *inner strength, protective, marred, inquisitive, adventurous, grumpy*

QUOTATION / THEME OF THE WEEK



HAPPINESS IS AN INNER SMILE

Brainstorm and discuss what this may mean.

SILENT SITTING

Step 1 (*See page 40 of the introduction*)

Steps 2, 3 (*optional*)

Step 5: Imagine a circle on the floor ...

In the middle of the circle is a dot ...

Imagine the circle is the world. And the dot in the middle is you ...

Imagine the dot is full of peace and love ...

You are full of peace and love ...

The peace and love are so beautiful that they start to expand ...

Like a small bud, opening in the sunshine into a beautiful big flower ...

Or a puppy or kitten rolled in a ball, getting up and stretching itself in the sun shine ...

The love and peace grow bigger ...

Watch it expanding out into the world all around ...

Your love and peace stretch out to everyone around you ...

Step 6.

STORY TELLING

MARGARET FINDS INNER STRENGTH AND PEACE

by Winifred Matthews

Margaret and Henry were cousins. Their mothers were sisters. They were born on the same day, Henry being five-and-a-half hours older than Margaret. Much of their nine-and-three-quarter years had been spent in each other's company, living as they did, only a few doors from each other. They were firm friends and often went out for rides on their bikes together exploring the countryside. Henry prided himself on being the elder and was very protective of Margaret who was smaller than he was and quieter, although Margaret's bright eyes sometimes hinted that she was the wiser of the two.

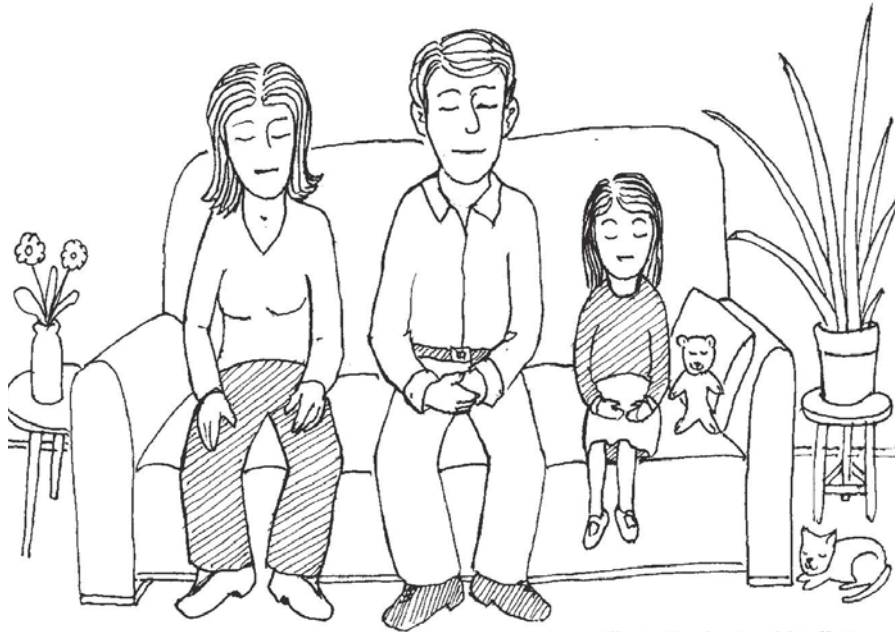
They had a happy life, marred only by the normal ups and downs of growing up. When they were not together, Henry played a lot of sport, while Margaret preferred to read or paint. She liked school and found the teachers kind and patient when she had a problem. Henry was less keen on school generally. He didn't like some of his teachers very much because he often played football after school and didn't always have time to finish his homework. In class he sometimes felt the teacher was getting at him for not studying enough. He loved the games and sports lessons, but apart from that, he didn't care much for school.

Another difference between the cousins was that Margaret's Mum and Dad had taught her that it is good to get up early enough to have plenty of time to shower, dress and practise silent sitting before breakfast. As far back as Margaret could remember, her parents had got up early and sat quietly for a while. She once asked them why they got up so early and then sat down and fell asleep again. They had laughed quietly and hugged her and explained that they were not sleeping, but were practising meditation to keep themselves healthy and relaxed, as many illnesses are caused through stress. They told her about the value of silent sitting and her inquisitive, adventurous mind soon led her on to discover the benefits of it herself and she found she got less grumpy and upset by problems on days when she practised it. Her Mum and Dad said they noticed if she forgot!

Since she had started practising silent sitting, her school marks had gradually improved until she was soon getting very good marks. Her class work was neater too, and she still found time to play out with her friends after finishing her homework which she could do better and more quickly. She was feeling more cheerful, peaceful and happy and so looked forward to the quiet times of silent sitting. Somehow life had become more beautiful and simpler.

Margaret told Henry about silent sitting, but Henry said he didn't have time. He was too tired in the mornings to get up early. Margaret's Mum talked to her sister Sonia, who was Henry's Mum and told her about the classes held

every week where Margaret had learnt silent sitting and the benefits her daughter had derived from it.



Sonia had replied that Henry played football at that time and anyway it was hard enough to get Henry to sit and do some homework. It was hard enough even to get him to sit long enough to eat his meals, let alone doing silent sitting!

Margaret, however, found the more she practised, the easier life seemed, so she encouraged Henry to do the same, but she knew it was Henry's decision.

QUESTIONS:

- 1 What name shall we give this story?
- 2 What things does Henry like doing?
- 3 In what way has it developed his strength?
- 4 What does Margaret like doing?
- 5 In what way has it developed her strength?
- 6 What do they do together?
- 7 What do Margaret's parents do that Henry's do not do?
- 8 Do you think that silent sitting would help Henry? If so, in what way?
- 9 Have the silent sitting exercises helped you?
- 10 How did you feel when you heard this story?
- 11 Does it remind you of anything in your own life?

GROUP SINGING

DEEP PEACE

(A traditional Gaelic blessing)

Deep peace of the running wave to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.
Deep peace of the gentle night to you.
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.
Deep peace to you.
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.
Deep peace to you.
(Repeat)

Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.
Deep peace to you.
(Repeat x 2)

GROUP ACTIVITY

1. Ask the children to find a partner to work with. Each pair then joins with another pair to form groups of four. Each group then spends ten minutes discussing ...

*What it means to have inner strength
What outer strength is
Whether we need both*

Allow time for feedback by volunteers.

2. GAME: Statues - 5 to 10 children play first, the rest observe.

One child volunteers to be Statue Creator and assumes the pose of a statue in front of the class.

One by one the members of the statue group join on making a shape until the whole group forms one big statue.

The remainder of the class then have to decide what the statue represents.

It is not important to get the right answer, but rather to use the imagination. The initial Statue Creator then tells the group what she/he represented.

Extension exercise/Links to Other Subjects: The children are invited to write a poem about Peace and/or their experiences during silent sitting.