

# JOURNEY IN... YEAR THREE

## THE DIVINE WITHIN

### DRAMA

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- 'Practice' implies having the discipline and commitment to do something over and over again until it becomes second nature. Artistic, musical, athletic and language skills are all things that demand practice, as kids know well.
- It takes practice to establish a strong connection to the divine presence within us and in our lives. We call this sort of effort 'spiritual practice'.
- Each person can find a spiritual practice that helps cultivate inner balance and depth. There are plenty of options to choose from, drawing from many traditions and schools of thought.

#### Lesson Materials

- Copies of the short script (attached)

#### TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

Don't put anything else into your mouth, like your projects, your worries, your fear, just put the carrot in. And when you chew, chew only the carrot, not your projects or your ideas.

– Thich Nhat Hanh

Do you have a body? Don't sit on the porch! Go out and walk in the rain!

– Kabir

At the end of his spiritual talks, Gurdjieff said "Amen." When asked to translate "Amen," one of Gurdjieff's closet pupils answered, "Give it a try!"

– Michel Legris

Any act that protects life is sacred. Technology that is dedicated to life-saving purposes acquires sanctity as well, and its use becomes a holy act.

– Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

Every act done in the sunlight of awareness becomes sacred.

– Thich Nhat Hanh

Every time you pick up a piece of trash along the road, say to yourself, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the house of the Lord."

– Edward Hays in *Psalms for Zero Gravity*

This is what you shall do: Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God.

– Walt Whitman

If you keep your practice steady, morning and night, summer and winter, there is nothing you cannot do and nothing that can harm you.

– from the *Upasakashila Sutra*

What is your preferred spiritual practice? How would you describe your commitment to it? What benefits do you reap? Are there any habits or acts in your life that are unrecognized spiritual practices?

Did you understand spiritual practice as a child? Imagine the gift you are giving your students, sharing this idea with them, offering them possible tools to find and keep their balance throughout their life!

### TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

- You might find the word **discipline** a helpful tool, but be sure to clarify that in this sense, the word discipline doesn't mean that we punish ourselves. Discipline comes from an old word that means "teaching". When we commit to a new discipline, it means we're teaching ourselves something new.
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### YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES

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## GATHERING AND FOCUSING

🕒 5-10 minutes

Check in: Who has been involved in a play? Did you have to speak lines? How did you learn them? Did you have to know when to come onstage or go offstage? Did you have to know when to turn the lights on or off? How did you and the other actors ever get it right?

Why is practice so important in drama? How is perfecting a play like living our lives?

### PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE REPLAY: THE DRAMA GAME

🕒 40-50 minutes

This game introduces the children to the practice of memorization and reveals the variations possible in a single practice. We'll learn a short skit and perform it over and over again with different twists.

#### Stage 1: Memorization

Before we can play this game, we have to memorize a script. It's only eleven lines long. We'll memorize it by practicing it over and over three different ways. Distribute the script at first if your class is composed of readers. Go over it once, reading, if you like. However, the three steps below will be the real opportunity for memorization.

1. Everyone get up and stand in a circle. Our brains are more ready to remember when we're moving, so we'll start walking in a circle, slowly. The teacher will read the script line by line. Everyone echo each line together like a chorus. Keep walking the whole time. We'll do it over and over again.  
(Read the script through about six times, allowing the group to repeat every line.)
2. Now, we're on our way to memorizing the script. Next, sit down and we'll practice the two different voices. Use your two hands like talking puppets. Say the lines all together, switching hands when the speaker changes. (Repeat the script in unison four or five times).
3. Okay, for the final practice round, we'll see if you've got it memorized. The teacher will be person ONE and the class will be person TWO. Say your lines on cue in unison. (Repeat this twice). Then switch roles: the class will be person ONE and the teacher will speak the cues as person TWO.

When you've got the script down pat, it's time to play.

### Stage 2: Game Play

With two people acting at a time, players will take the stage and perform our short skit as practiced—but with a twist. Each time the skit is performed, we'll change emotion or setting. The teacher will call out the twist when the actors take the stage.

Teachers may need to plan ahead to pick acting partners and maintain order. The privilege of acting can be earned by being a respectful audience member. You might take turns or assign numbers to kids and draw them randomly out of a hat. Actors **MAY NOT** add or subtract lines or use props, but can only deliver the scene as practiced.

Here are some suggestions for the scene twists:

Perform our skit as if you're:

- Angry
- Hiccapping like crazy
- Shy
- In love
- Cowboys and Cowgirls
- Hiding a secret
- Freezing cold
- Tired
- Total strangers
- Crying
- Having trouble hearing each other over the noise
- Embarrassed
- In a big hurry
- Moving in slow motion
- Giggling uncontrollably
- Undercover spies
- Stuck in fast-forward
- Somewhere really hot
- Watching a tennis game

### Wondering Together

- I wonder what makes this more interesting, the fact that it's the same every time or different every time?
- I wonder how often and how long you'd have to practice to memorize a real play?
- I wonder if acting could be a spiritual practice?
- I wonder what spiritual practices you've seen in movies and on tv? Meditation? Prayer? Yoga?
- If you were committing to do something over and over again, I wonder what spiritual practice you would pick for yourself?

## **CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING**

🕒 2 minutes

Gather in a circle, take each other's hands and speak these words:

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 infinite peace to you.

## Replay Scene

ONE: Hey

TWO: Oh, hi

ONE: What you doing?

TWO: Not much

ONE: Can you believe this weather?

TWO: No kidding

ONE: Well, I have to go

TWO: Already?

ONE: Yes

TWO: Bye

ONE: See you

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