



## Summary of Lesson One

In this lesson, students learn what stress is, how it feels in their bodies, and simple ways to calm themselves when they feel overwhelmed. Through movement, breathing, and storytelling, students explore how to recognize stress signals and use a calming strategy called Box Breathing. The story of Tia and the labyrinth helps children reflect on emotions, build self-awareness, and learn to make thoughtful, mindful choices.

### **At Home Practice: Mindful Breathing**

Mindful breathing is like giving our brains a little break. First, find a comfy spot to sit or stand. Take a deep breath in through your nose, as if you're smelling your favorite flower. Now, slowly breathe out through your mouth, as if you're blowing up a balloon. Let's do it together a few times.

Inhale, smelling the flower, and exhale, blowing up the balloon. Feel your chest and belly go up and down with your breath. It's like a little game for our minds! If any thoughts or feelings come by, just let them float away like clouds in the sky.

Remember, mindful breathing helps us feel calm and ready for whatever comes our way. Give it a try whenever you need a moment to relax and feel happy!

## What is a Labyrinth?

- A labyrinth is a special path that you can walk or trace with your finger.
- It has one way in and one way out, and it twists and turns in a special pattern.
- Unlike a maze, you can't get lost in a labyrinth. It is one path in and the same path out.
- It is a path that helps you focus and be present in the moment.

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## Why are labyrinths Important?

- Labyrinths have been used for thousands of years by people all over the world.
- They help us calm our minds, relax our bodies, and be more aware of our thoughts and feelings.
- When we walk or trace a labyrinth, it's like taking a little break from the busy world around us.

# History of Labyrinths

- Labyrinths have been found in various cultures dating back over 4,000 years. The oldest known labyrinth design is the "Classical" or "Cretan" pattern, which was found on a clay tablet from Pylos, Greece, dating back to around 1200 BCE.
- In Greek mythology, the labyrinth was famously associated with the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. King Minos of Crete had Daedalus build a labyrinth to contain the Minotaur, a half-man, half-bull creature. Theseus, with the help of Ariadne's thread, navigated the labyrinth, slayed the Minotaur, and found his way out.
- During the Middle Ages, labyrinths became popular in Christian churches and cathedrals across Europe. The most famous example is the labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral in France, which was built around 1200 CE. These labyrinths were used as a form of spiritual pilgrimage and meditation.
- Many Native American cultures, such as the Hopi and Pima tribes, have used labyrinth designs in their basket weaving and art for centuries. These designs often held spiritual significance and were used in ceremonies and rituals.
- In the late 20th century, there was a resurgence of interest in labyrinths as tools for meditation, stress reduction, and personal growth. The work of Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, played a significant role in popularizing labyrinths in modern times.
- **Held annually on the first Saturday in May, World Labyrinth Day** is a global event that celebrates the labyrinth as a symbol of unity, peace, and wellness. People around the world walk labyrinths at 1 pm in their local time zones, creating a "rolling wave of peace" across the globe.

# Using a finger labyrinth for mindful breathing

1. **Provide a Finger Labyrinth:** Print out a finger labyrinth for both you and your child.
2. **Demonstrate Tracing:** Show your child how to trace the labyrinth with their finger. Start from the outer edge and move slowly toward the center. You can do this together to model the process.
3. **Encourage Deep Breathing:** As you trace the labyrinth, take slow, deep breaths. Invite your child to do the same, breathing in deeply through the nose and exhaling slowly through the mouth.
4. **Pause at the Center:** When you both reach the center of the labyrinth, pause for a moment. Notice how your body feels and take a moment to enjoy the stillness.
5. **Trace Back Out:** Begin to trace the path back out of the labyrinth. Continue to breathe slowly and deeply, maintaining a calm and relaxed state.
6. **Gently Refocus:** If your mind or your child's mind starts to wander, gently guide your attention back to the breath and the movement of tracing the labyrinth. Remind each other that it's okay for the mind to wander, and gently bringing it back is part of the practice.
7. **Reflect on the Experience:** After completing the labyrinth, take a few moments to reflect on how you both feel. Discuss any changes in your emotions or thoughts and how the exercise helped you feel more centered and calm.

# Finger Labyrinth

