

Habits of Learning



Concentration

I can focus my mind, body, and heart.

Dear Parents and Teachers:

The Habits of Learning lessons are meant to be taught over a 5-day period. Lessons are scripted and require little preparation time. Notes to you, the teacher, are given in dark blue. The script is written in black. Before each lesson, gather or print any materials listed. Then, simply read the lesson aloud and follow the blue instructions.

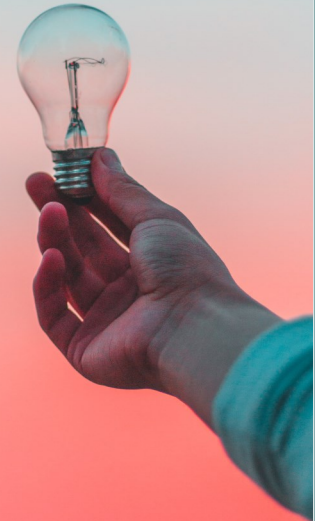
DAY ONE: INTRODUCTION

*Before we get started today, please grab a stuffed animal.

I am so proud of your progress as we have learned together over the last few weeks. I have seen great progress in your Habits of Learning. We will start our next habit today. This habit is called Concentration. Can you say that with me? **Concentration**. Nice. The mantra for concentration is “I can focus my mind, body, and heart.” Will you say that with me? **Repeat mantra**.

Excellent. Let’s learn together a bit more about what that means. Can you look at these two pictures. **Display the picture sheet that has one fuzzy picture and one clear picture**. What do you notice about these two pictures? **Let the students answer, guiding their comments as needed to notice one is out of focus and one is in focus**.

That is right! One picture is blurry and one picture is focused. A focused picture is clear and sharp. We are the same way. Concentration is when our mind, body, and heart are clear from distraction and focused on what is important.



MATERIALS BY DAY:

1. Blurry picture and focused picture, three identical cups and a few small candies, a small stuffed animal for each student.
2. Nature study printout, pencil and crayons, and clipboards. Optional read aloud: *The Listening Walk*.
3. Bible video (optional)
4. Dealing with distraction cards.
5. Copy work or illustration paper (optional).

NINE SIMPLE WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S CONCENTRATION

- 1) Play games that involve concentration. Memory, Simon Says, crosswords, puzzles, sudoku, brainteasers, etc.
- 2) Play outside. Being outside improves planning, organizing, prioritizing, troubleshooting, and burns off extra energy. It is a brain reset that will allow the student to refocus.
- 3) Encourage unstructured, make-believe play. Educators and play-therapist agree that when children role-play they are more thoughtful, flexible, and creative. They can think ahead and deal with frustration before it happens.
- 4) Break large tasks into chunks to avoid getting overwhelmed. Eat the frog first and STING anything that is getting in your way. (see the Habit of Time Prioritization)
- 5) Practice mindfulness. Simply paying attention to your breathing for a minute will reset the brain and improve focus.
- 6) Set a timer. It is easier to get really focused if you know when you can take a break. To really improve concentration, pair this tip with number four, breaking things into chunks.
- 7) Use a fidget. Some people need to fidget, just a little bit, to keep their mind focused. For kinesthetic learners, this is key to concentration.
- 8) Do one thing at a time. The research is clear: multitasking reduces concentration and diminishes performance.
- 9) Take a break. Plan in breaks. The mind, body, and heart need time to reset.

DAY ONE: CONTINUED

We are going to play 3 short games to work on focusing our mind, body, and heart. Would you like to play these games with me? **Yes!**

The first game will work on focusing our mind. I have three cups here. I will put this small treat (**choose any treat or small coin**) under this middle cup. Now really focus your mind on what I am doing. Look with your eyes and think with your mind. **Move the cups around, sliding them into different orders and changing the position of the cup with the treat.** Okay, what cup has the treat underneath? **Let one student choose a cup. If it is wrong repeat the activity. You may also repeat the activity to allow for more turns and participation.**

Well done. When you look with your eyes and think with your mind you are using Concentration in your mind. Now, let's try using Concentration with your body and your mind. We will play a game called Simon Says. I will say an action to do with your body. If I say "Simon Says" then you should do that action. If I don't say "Simon Says", don't do the action. Really try to keep your body still when you are using your body to concentrate. **Play the game. Correct the students as needed in a playful manner.**

That was fun! So now we have talked about Concentration in our mind and body. We talked about looking with our eyes, thinking with our mind, and keeping our body still. What about our heart? Our heart can concentrate when we feel peace. We can help ourselves be peaceful by being mindful our breathing.

Everyone lay down and put our stuffed animal on our tummy. Please use all the skills we have talked about: look at your stuffy with your eyes, focus your mind on your stuffy, and keep your body still. Now just breathe. Watch your stuffy go up and down on your tummy. Let's do this ten times. **Count ten breathes with your students.**

WOW! You are wonderful at concentration. I could tell your hearts were concentrating because you were so peaceful. You can do this mindful breathing anytime you need to strengthen your Concentration! Let's end now by saying our mantra. **Repeat mantra.**



DAY TWO: NATURE STUDY

I am so glad we are able to spend a few minutes together today doing Habits of Learning. If you remember from yesterday, we are working on Concentration. Let's say the mantra together! "I can focus my mind, body, and heart."

Great! One of the best ways to build your ability to concentrate is to spend time in nature observing, studying, and recording. Today we will do a short nature study together so that you can experience this for yourself. **Hand out nature observation sheet. If you want to read the optional read aloud: *The Listening Walk*, do so here, before you start your nature study. If you have time, I HIGHLY recommend reading this book. A video link is available on the website.**

On this nature study sheet we will record in words or drawings the things outside that we hear, see, smell, and feel. In order to do a really good job on this short project we will go outside, sit quietly and observe what is going on around us. We will take our pencil packs (**or whatever item you can bring outside that has basic art materials**) and clip boards so we can record our experience as we sit outside. I will set a timer and then we will come back together and share what we have observed. Let's head outside.

Head outside, if at all possible, to complete this activity. Set the timer for anywhere between 5 to 15 minutes, depending on the age of your students and their ability to focus.

Wonderful work. I like how you were quiet and used all your body senses to observe nature. Let's share what we have noticed. **Call on students to share what they recorded during their nature study. Also ask how they are feeling. Are they feeling more focused? Do their hearts feel more peace? Reflect your own feelings back to them.**

I am so glad I was able to share this experience with you. Being outside is a great way to increase your Concentration. Let's end by saying our mantra one more time. "I can focus my mind, body, and heart."

If possible, display the nature study sheets for the rest of this week.



DAY THREE: MARY AND MARTHA

It makes my heart happy to be learning about Concentration with each of you. It is such an important skill. Let's say our mantra one more time. "I can focus my mind, body, and heart." Well done.

Today we are going to be talking about focusing our heart. This is a really important part of Concentration. It is really easy to let our heart get distracted from the things that are most important.

I want you to imagine with me for a moment. What if someone really famous came to our home/classroom? What would we do to prepare. [Talk about cleaning the house, getting food ready, getting things to do with and show your guest, etc.](#)

Those are all nice things to do. It is important to do those nice things. Now, when that famous person arrives, what would you do. [Talk about both being with the person and serving the person.](#) [If you are in a secular environment, you may want to skip down in the lesson and pick up after the Bible story. \(*\)](#)

You have some really good ideas. Now, I want to tell you a Bible story. Two sisters, Mary and Martha, had a similar situation. Can you guess who came to visit them? [Jesus](#). Yes, Jesus came to visit. Let's read in the Bible/watch this Bible video and see what happened when Jesus came to visit.

[Read Luke 10:38—42 or view the corresponding video.](#) [Students may also enjoy looking at the painting above as the Bible verses are read.](#)

Thanks for listening. Both Mary and Martha loved Jesus, but Martha was Concentrating on housework and hosting when she might have been Concentrating on matters of the heart: Jesus. We can seek the ONE needful thing, Jesus, when we allow our heart to Concentrate on Him.

*Practicing prioritization, like we have learned about before, helps us keep our hearts Concentrated on things that matter most. A heart focused on the most important relationships in our lives gives us a strong, balanced Concentration. We will not be distracted by things that are not important or don't matter in that moment.

What's our mantra this week? "I can focus my mind, body, and heart." Great job!

LUKE 10:38-42

³⁸ Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

⁴⁰ But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

⁴² But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

WHEN DISTRACTION IS A PROBLEM: USE A SELF-MONITORING SYSTEM!

A self-monitoring system is an easy-to-use behavioral intervention strategy to help students increase a desired behavior across settings with independence.

Self-monitoring can equip students to assume great responsibility and become a more active part of their own learning.

This is an evidence-based strategy that has shown great outcomes, especially with students who have ADHD, emotional disorders, behavioral disorders, and learning disabilities.

HOW TO SET UP A SELF-MONITORING SYSTEM?

- 1) Choose a behavior. Make sure it is clearly defined. Often it is best to talk about or role-play examples and non-examples of the behavior.
- 2) Create a self-monitoring form. (See the table to the right.) Make sure it is simple, lists the target behavior, and reminds the student of the reward.
- 3) Teach the student how to use the self-monitoring form.
- 4) Begin the intervention and work towards the reward.

DAY FOUR: DISTRACTION... WHAT TO DO!

Today is going to be opposite day during Habits of Learning. Before we begin opposite day, let's review our skill and mantra. "Concentration: I can focus my mind, body, and heart."

Yesterday we talked about focusing our heart, today we will talk about our mind and body. Sometimes it is easy to get distracted.

Distracted is the opposite of concentration. We are going to learn together today what to do when you get distracted... the opposite of Concentration!

There are many different things you can do to help yourself get re-focused. We will draw a card here from our Concentration deck and act out together each strategy.

Using the cards from the resource section, act out each idea with your students. Have fun and be a little silly! Take some pictures and share them on social media!

Skills included:

- Do belly breathing (learned on Monday)
- Do your favorite yoga pose
- Go for a short run
- Play with a fidget toy
- Set a timer
- Use the STING strategy
- Have a healthy snack
- Put on white noise or instrumental music
- Sit on an exercise ball or cushion
- Make a list of the things you need to do.

Excellent. Different types of activities help different kinds of people regain their focus when they get distracted. You will find things that work well for you.

Let's wrap up by saying out mantra one more time! "I can focus my mind, body, and heart."

| | | |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Name: Sam Smith | *Sticker for each day goal is met. | Date: March 28, 2020 |
| Goal: I will stay on task (eyes on book, hand writing, mind thinking of my task) 75% of the 20 -minute reading block. | | |
| Time Check | Yes | No |
| 5 minutes | | |
| 10 minutes | | |
| 15 minutes | | |
| 20 minutes | | |

DAY FIVE: POERTY

I am so glad we have had a chance to learn about Concentration this week. Let's say our mantra: "I can focus my mind, body, and heart."

As our final exploration into Concentration, I would like to share a poem with you. I will read the poem to you. As I read I want you to listen for your favorite part.

Read the poem given on the sidebar on the next page.

Okay, what were some of your favorite parts of that poem? What did you like about the poem? What do you think this poem means? How can you apply this poem to your schoolwork?

You may use some or all of these questions. You might have some specific questions you would like to ask. Guide your students to the realization that when they focus their mind, body, and heart they will be able to achieve things others without focus cannot achieve.

DAY FIVE: CONTINUED

Great discussion. [If you have time, you may want your students to copy some or all of this poem.](#) [You could also have them illustrate this poem.](#) Thank you for learning all about Concentration this week. Let's all say the mantra one more time "I can focus my mind, body, and heart."



*"Always remember you focus determines
your reality."
-George Lucas*

EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

- ⇒ Copywork pages
- ⇒ Quote memorization (or complete as copywork)
- ⇒ Scripture memorization (or complete as copywork)
- ⇒ Memorize the included poem
- ⇒ Read and then narrate from one of the books on the reading list
- ⇒ Play one of the "concentration games"
- ⇒ Do the recommended yoga poses on the website link
- ⇒ Complete the progressive muscle relaxation (link on blog website)

[Detailed instructions and needed worksheets for each exploration activity are given in the resource packet.](#)

Focus

By Robert Longley

The light on the horizon
The bull's-eye on the wall
The strength to do impossible
When others simply fall

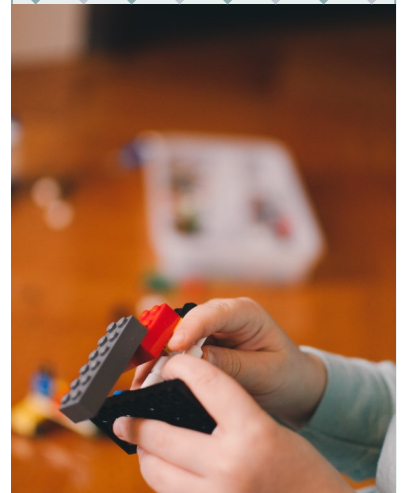
What creates the difference
Between those who succeed or
fail

What creates a future
To which all others pale

Do you have the focus
To bring it all on view
To do what is required
That others fail to do

This one course draws us for-
ward

And brings success to light
It's there we meet our future
Magical and bright



A ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE

The Habits of Learning © program was inspired by the formation of *A One-Room Schoolhouse: A Hybrid Homeschool Academy*. As the Schoolhouse program took shape, the founder, Genevieve Peterson, knew the program needed a proactive habit training curriculum to help shape her children and those that would join them. Her desire to instill fundamental, lifelong learning habits with simple, daily instruction and practice inspired The Habits of Learning © program.

Follow our journey on Facebook & Instagram @aoneroomschool

Genevieve blogs weekly at www.aoneroomschoolhouse.com

A One-Room Schoolhouse
A Hybrid Homeschool Academy

Building Faith, Knowledge and Character

www.aoneroomschoolhouse.com

E-mail:
info@aoneroomschoolhouse.com



HABITS OF LEARNING ©

Education is more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. Although a basic understanding of curricular objectives is important, it is also imperative to develop the lifelong habits needed to learn. In order to continue education beyond the classroom habits of learning must be developed and maintained.

This curriculum has two parts: direct, scripted lessons of ten Habits of Learning to be used in the home or classroom and a progress monitoring grid of these ten habits. The lessons are “open-and-go” with little preparation and few materials. They are designed for ease of use with high efficacy in implementation. The lessons can be taught over a ten-week period, but are designed to be repeated as often as needed. A nondenominational, Christian view is intertwined throughout the lessons. All scripture references are taken from the King James Version of the Bible. Lessons and activities are designed to be used in a multi-age classroom setting but can also be done one-on-one.

The progress monitoring grid is used to help students and teachers/parents reflect on the child’s habits of learning. Stages of habit development are given with specific criteria to monitor growth. Students first learn, then explore the habit. Then after practicing the habit, move on to become motivated in that area of growth. Finally, the student moves to mastery of the habit. Once mastery has been accomplished, the student is encouraged to become a mentor to others to promote mastery in all students.

This program of personal development is based on the most current research in behavior intervention, historical wisdom of great educators, and years of practical experience in both the educational and therapeutic settings of the author. Specifically, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) heavily influenced this work as it provides a process to understand and develop positive behavior in students that is based on both values and empirical research. Both the model of classical education and the work of Charlotte Mason are melded together when considering teaching methods and behavioral development. Finally, the author’s years of professional experience as a school physiologist, education director, and special education teacher honed this curriculum.

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