

Teaching Primordial Sound Meditation to Children

Primordial Sound Meditation (PSM) can be introduced to children as early as 5 years old but it is more commonly taught to older children. When parents use mantra meditation, they sometimes like their children to also use a mantra to learn how to meditate.

Below are general recommendations for the amount of time children are encouraged to meditate. Other factors such as, cultural background, parents, siblings, religious affiliation, lifestyle, peer groups, health, and preferred activities, also play a role when advising whether a child is ready to meditate and the amount of time suggested for each meditation.

Summary of age appropriate times for meditation

6 years and under	one minute per year old. Up to 5 minutes.
6-9 years	one minute per year old. Up to 10 minutes
9-12 years	10-15 minutes
12-14 years	15 minutes
15 years	20 minutes
16-17 years	25 minutes
18 years and older	30 minutes

In addition, just as the appropriate time each child should meditate is dependent on various factors, so is the amount of detailed information shared with the child during PSM instruction. Teach the material in a language and fashion that the child can relate to and understand. Note that young children should not be required to attend the adult course.

Children ages 6-9:

Session 1

Keep it simple. Tell the child that meditation helps keep you healthy and happy. Tell them you are going to give them a special word that will help to make them outstanding, exceptional, and special. It is called a mantra. This word does not mean anything. It is the sound the universe was making when you were born. This word is sacred and should be kept quiet. Because of this, it is important to not tell anyone your sacred word. Explain to them that they will sit down and close their eyes and think this word silently to themselves for a few minutes in the morning after they get up and again in the afternoon when they get home from school. Ask them if they think they will be able to do this and would they now like to learn meditation.

Session 2

Take them into the instruction room with the parent and explain what is going to happen—the chant, you'll tell them their sacred word, etc. If they are comfortable, ask the parent to wait outside and begin instruction. Follow the standard format but modify the language if necessary to make sure the child understands your directions. Children under 9 should only be instructed with the Bija part of the mantra. Write down the mantra and tell them to keep it in a safe place in case they need to look at it again. Praise them and tell them how well they learned meditation. You may want to give them a small token for them to remember their experience and anchor them to the memory of learning to meditate for the first time—i.e. a rock, poem, special coin, etc. Have them meditate on their own for their prescribed time and then come back and see you again before they leave so you can make sure everything is okay.

Explain to the parent the child's time of meditation, when they should do it etc. Tell them they can increase the time by a few minutes as they get older. Tell the younger ones they can increase the time on their birthdays if it is comfortable and interesting to them. When they reach 10 years, they should come back for a new instruction (the full mantra can be given at that time). Tell the parent it is okay to encourage the child to meditate but never force them to do it.

Session 3

Have the parent bring the child back the next day – or during the time that has been arranged. Make sure everything is comfortable. Ask them about their experience. Remind them to think the mantra very gently and that it is okay to have other thoughts but to always come back to the sacred word. Check their pronunciation of the mantra in private. Go over the main points of perfecting your mantra meditation practice in session 3 of workbook. Tell them that there are 4 experiences they can have in the meditation and each of them is correct.

1. Repeating the mantra. 2. Lots of thoughts. 3. The "Gap" 4. Sleep. Ask them if they had one or more of those experiences. Tell them to have their parents or guardian contact you if they have any questions.

Session 4

Ask the child about their meditation experience—What did you notice? Did time seem short or long? Did you meditate in the morning and afternoon? Encourage the child to have a regular and consistent meditation practice. To ensure comfort for them as they continue on their personal journey in meditation, discuss experiences, using metaphors and stories, which they may have as they progress in their practice.

- Meditation helps desires become fulfilled, so you may get what you want or need easier. Therefore you want to make decisions that are good for you, for others, and the environment.
- Allows you to be more creative and you may think things that you never thought before.
- Have more confidence and will be more comfortable with who you are.
- Might have more energy and be focused when studying.
- May feel more love and the desire to express love.
- Life seems to become more effortless and joyful.

If applicable, depending on dynamics of group, briefly describe 7 states of consciousness. Mention to the children that there is much more to our lives and our existence than sleeping, dreaming, and being awake.

Higher States of Consciousness:

1. Sleeping.
2. Dreaming.
3. Waking
4. Transcendence. “the gap” It is a peaceful and happy place.
5. Cosmic-Recognize that you are playing all kinds of different roles and are not overshadowed by that. Able to witness. We can experience miracles.
6. Divine. Just how you know that you are not the roles you play, you also recognize and see that other people are not the roles they play either. There is appreciation at a refined level and an understanding that the world is sacred. We can create miracles.
7. Universal. We are all the same universal being expressed as unique individuals. Uni—one verse-song. All singing the same song. Everything is a miracle.

If you haven't already, pass out journals or papers to the children to record their meditation time. Ask the child--Who are you? What do you want? Why are you here?/What is your purpose? Ask these questions with the children placing their attention in the area of the heart. Explain to them the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of living.

Thank them for coming to the course and taking a smart and brave step to learning meditation.

Children Ages 10 and over:

Children may or may not want their parent in the room for the initial sessions. Ask and decide among the child and parent what is most comfortable for them.

Session 1

Discuss stress and how it affects the mind and body. Explain that meditation helps keep mind and body healthy. Talk to child about where and when they feel stress in their body. Briefly explain the mind/body connection. Tell them that we practice meditation to be happy and healthy. Explain to them some benefits of meditation in terms that they can relate to— gives them energy, help them focus on their schoolwork, play sports better, help with their memory, etc. Around this age, children can relate and identify with mythical archetypes and heroes, both past and present. Draw upon characters from movies, books, historical figures, etc to tell stories about meditation and a peaceful quiet mind. It engages interest to mention successful and famous people that practice meditation.

Session 2

Take them into the instruction room, possibly with the parent, and explain what is going to happen—the chant, you'll tell them their sacred word, etc. If they are comfortable, ask the parent to wait outside and begin instruction. Follow the standard format but modify the language if necessary to make sure the child understands your directions. Instruct them with the full mantra. If this is a child who has been practicing PSM, tell them now they are older you are going to make their mantra longer (the Bija part will remain the same). Take extra time with each individual child, in case they didn't want to ask a question in front of the whole group.

Write down the mantra and tell them to keep it in a safe place in case they need to look at it again. Praise them and tell them how well they learned meditation. You may even want to give them a small token for them to remember their experience—i.e. a rock, poem, special coin, book, etc. Have them meditate on their own for their prescribed time and then come back and see you again before they leave so you can make sure everything is okay.

Explain to the parent the child's time of meditation, when they should do it etc. Tell them they can increase the time by a few minutes as they get older. Tell the parent it is okay to encourage the child to mediate but never force them to do it.

Session 3

Have the parent bring the child back the next day – or during the time that has been arranged. Make sure everything is comfortable. Ask them what their experience was like. Remind them to think the mantra very gently and that it is okay to have other thoughts but to always come back to the sacred word. Check their pronunciation of the mantra in private. Go through the main points of perfecting your mantra meditation practice in session 3 of workbook. Briefly tell them that there are 4 experiences they can have in the meditation and each of them is correct. 1. Repeating the mantra. 2. Lots of thoughts. 3. The "Gap" 4. Sleep. Ask them if they had one or more of those experiences. Tell them to have their parents or guardian contact you if they have any questions.

Session 4

Ask the child about their meditation experience—What they are noticing? Did time seem short or long? Did you meditate in the morning and afternoon? Encourage the child to have a regular and consistent meditation practice. To ensure comfort for them as they continue on their personal journey in meditation discuss experiences, using metaphors or stories, which they may have as they progress in their practice.

- Meditation helps desires become fulfilled, so you may get what you want or need easier. Therefore you want to make decisions that are good for you, for others, and the environment.
- Allows you to be more creative and you may think things that you never thought before.
- Have more confidence and will be more comfortable with who you are.
- Might have more energy and be focused when studying.
- May feel more love and the desire to express love.
- Life seems to become more effortless and joyful.

As the child grows in maturity (junior high age, approximately 12-15 years), a more detailed account of the information can be shared. A broad overview and mention of the 7 states of consciousness is valuable at any age, however, the depth of the discussion depends on the experience and knowledge of the child or group. Remember to always make it comfortable for the child. Mention to the children that there is much more to our lives and our existence than sleeping, dreaming, and being awake.

Higher states of Consciousness:

1. Sleeping.
2. Dreaming.
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4. Transcendence. “The gap” - It is a peaceful and happy place.
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If you haven't already, pass out journals or paper for the children to record their meditation time. Ask Children. Who are you? What do you want? Why are you here? What is your

purpose? Ask them to place attention in the area of the heart. Explain to them the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of living.

Thank them for coming to the course and taking a smart and brave step to learning meditation.

Children ages 16 and older

These children can attend the adult course. Spend a few extra minutes with them during instructions to answer any questions they may have.

The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success

During the PSM course, you may want to introduce the Seven Spiritual Laws, regardless of the age. Tell the children that there are seven simple sayings that can have a profound impact on your life. These principles can be found in *Seven Spiritual Laws for Parents* by Deepak Chopra.

- Everything is possible. (Law of Pure Potentiality)
- If you want to get something, give something. (Law of Giving)
- When you make a choice, you change the future. (Law of Karma)
- Don't say no—go with the flow. (Law of Least Effort)
- Every time you wish or want, you plant a seed. (Law of Intention/Desire)
- Enjoy the journey. (Law of Detachment)
- You are here for a reason. (Law of Dharma/Purpose)

Teaching PSM to Teenagers in Group Homes

(courtesy of Donna Miesbach)

Besides teaching PSM to children through private lessons recommended by parents, PSM has also been taught to teenagers in group homes and other group settings.

When working in group homes, PSM training can be divided into three sessions, instead of the customary four, depending on their schedule. These sessions vary slightly based on the age group and generally they can last up to one hour when children are 11 years old and up.

For younger children, use only the bija. For teenagers, give them the whole mantra (om-bija-namah) and ask them to keep the mantra sacred.

Keep groups small with no more than 7 or 8 students in a class so they can get personal attention. The three soul questions can be incorporated at the beginning of the meditation as usual. In addition, videos by Deepak Chopra and David Simon may be incorporated into your presentation depending on how mature the children are and how much they are interested in learning.

Session 1 - Introduction

- Ask their name and whether they have any previous meditation experience.
- Explain what mantra meditation is. If possible relate to what they have just said.
- Explain that silence is always there. They can find it with just a simple shift of attention. It's the safest place.
- Explain ocean/wave concept – how they will be diving below the storm.
- Explain how PSM works: the Gap diagram.
- Explain how silence / peace are always there.
- Do listening exercise and ask what that was like: that's you! That's what we connect with when we meditate.

- Explain how there is a part of you that always knows and communicates with you through two signals: yuk, yum.
- Cover the *Benefits of Meditation*:
 - For teens, explain how drugs can get you high, but they can't get you free. Meditation frees you.
 - You find a happiness no one can take away.
 - It becomes easier to make healthy choices, easier to know what feels right to you.
 - You feel better physically, mentally, emotionally.
 - It becomes easier to use your challenges to help you grow instead of feeling overwhelmed by them.
 - You have more fun in life.
 - It becomes easier to get along with others.
- Give them the *Meditation Basics*:
 - Think the mantra gently.
 - Keep mantra private.
 - Sit comfortably, eyes closed.
 - No music, pets, phone, other distractions.
 - Meditate twice a day.
 - Instead of jumping up at the end of meditation, come back gradually.
 - Explain the things that can happen.
 - Explain how it is best to have no expectations.
 - Meditate for whatever length of time is comfortable for them. Suggest a time, but leave it up to them.
- Ask if there are any questions.
- If there is time, do a breath meditation together. If they are restless, do a floor meditation instead.

Session 2 – Private Instruction

- Provide the personal meditation instruction.
- After the meditation practice, talk to each child about how it went and whether they have any questions.
- Give them their written mantra and a copy of the PSM workbook.

Session 3 – Follow Up

- Review the basics.
- Do a group meditation – it may include the heart sutras.
- Always speak with each child individually to see if they have any questions they want to ask privately.
- Finish with some enrichment on whatever they have expressed an interest in:
 - Talk about the chakras, teach chakra mantras, use chakra chime.
 - Do something on Sanskrit – perhaps bring their names in Sanskrit.
 - Bring some of Deepak & David’s books on topics they are interested in.
 - Give them the tri-fold card on the Seven Spiritual Laws of Success (usually boys like this one) or the tri-fold card on the Seven Spiritual Laws of Yoga (usually girls like this one) – discuss/teach the mantras.
 - The pictures in the book *Sacred Mirrors* by Alex Gray can be used to illustrate the subtle energy body.

The pictures in the book *Love Thyself: the Message from Water III* by Masaru Emoto ties in well with a discussion on being the choice maker and how the thoughts and feelings we entertain affect us, even at a cellular level.