



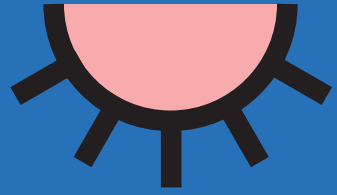
# A MOMENT OF SILENCE

TEACHER'S GUIDE



MEANINGFUL  
MOMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

School systems have traditionally focused on imparting knowledge, “hard data” and other practical tools for students to become self-sufficient adults. While these disciplines are no less important, innovative teachers and curricula have begun to explore the idea of “whole person education” - an approach that combines so-called book knowledge with an emphasis on who and how to be in the world, on mindfulness, on kindness, on social responsibility and the opportunity to make a difference. The Moment of Silence is a forward-thinking tool in this ever growing movement.

“What school districts have found out through a culmination of research-based trials is a program known as the Moment of Silence. This unique approach allows each student to take advantage of a one to two minute quiet interval letting anxious moment be taken over by the logical thinking of the brain. While not traditional therapy, this concept can alter a child’s perceptions of the fretful, jangled, and panicky moments in school, replacing those thoughts with grateful, appreciative, and nurturing feelings. Over time, anxious moods change into positive and more relaxed thoughts. This program, or a program similar to this, is mandated for all schools in the state of Florida. ☺

-Paul B. Safran, Ph.D.

Educational Psychologist

Fellow: Psy Chi National Honor Society in Psychology

# IMPLEMENTATION

It is important to note that the school district does not tell the child what to think. Each child is directed by their parents and/or themselves as to what is pertinent to their own internal worlds. Thus, as a teacher you only need to encourage the children to be quiet and to think about what their parents instructed. On a practical level, the MOS can be implemented through a school-wide announcement via a speaker system and/or smart-board. A letter to parents can be beneficial informing them about this new practice. Demonstrating that you care about this initiative is important—you believe the Moment of Silence has importance and value, this can “rub off.”

Regardless of what the child thinks about the day begins with a quieting down and an increase in clarity, purpose, and peace of mind. The MOS is not a religious practice and takes but one to two minutes each morning, providing a safe space for students (and teachers) to meditate. Whether it's thoughts of inspiration, collecting one's ideas for the coming day, or simply pondering a problem or notion, this quiet repose is a counterbalance to the hustle and bustle of the modern world.

“When we're frazzled, our fight-or-flight response is on overload causing a host of problems. We can use calm, quiet moments to tap into a different part of the nervous system that helps shut down our bodies' physical response to stress.”

-Cleveland Clinic Medical Center



# DOCUMENTED BENEFITS

## •ENCOURAGING VALUES

Modern society prizes fame and fortune. Social media influencers compete for followers. The news, television, movies can often channel our lesser angels. Caused by the world around us, the inculcation of values begins at a young age, and quiet contemplation is a perfect foundation for a child to grow their own values to guide their life. Are not such considerations as important as the circumference of a circle or the point where pi repeats? In this morning meditation, students can put aside concerns of popularity, problems, and the world around them and focus on their own development.



“ One study reported that just two minutes of silence a day can – for some– be more relaxing and helpful than listening to relaxing music. Another study found that increasing periods of silence helps the brain generate new brain cells that can positively support mental health. ”

-Bill Howatt,  
The Globe and Mail



## •GETTING PARENTS INVOLVED

The MOS is a cumulative practice and necessarily involves close parent/guardian interaction. When wondering “what to think about”, the adults who care most about each individual student are bound and beckoned to enter the conversation. Kids can collaborate them about what they may have thought about that day or what might be on the agenda for tomorrow. These conversations can also lead to closer familial bonds and ties.

## •HEALTH BENEFITS

Beyond the very intellectual benefits of a MOS, there are proven physical and psycho-somatic properties associated with quiet practice.

### **Being still and silent can help you:**

- Lower your blood pressure.
- Decrease your heart rate.
- Steady your breathing.
- Reduce muscle tension.
- Increase focus and cognition.

“ Silence is a source of great strength. ”

-Lao Tzu

“ It’s rare that we experience true silence. We all experience the constant chatter of our minds, the 60,000 or so thoughts per day that impact our attitudes our moods, and the tone of our day. Silence can decrease levels of stress, help regulate emotions, increase personal insights, and help us to communicate. Silence might also mean turning inward to quiet our inner world to find stillness and peace. ”

-CommunityForwardsf.org



# THE MOS AND TODAY'S WORLD

Today's complex world presents challenges to children of all ages. A sense of alienation and "placelessness" is a byproduct of the virtual/video game age. Despite what may seem like a torrent of bad news, our schools are on the forefront of new ideas evinced by rejections of bullying, acceptance, honesty, and love. A moment of silence allows students teachers, and parents a brief second in a hectic day to reflect on these quintessential principles. A return to archetypal ideals may be one remedy for our socialills. A moment of silence is a place to start.



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“While some people dislike a silent environment, equating it with being alone and lonely, others look forward to spending time with just their thoughts, seeking silence with eagerness, as if anticipating a gift. Indeed, silence offers profound benefits, many of which we aren't even aware of.”

-PsychCentral.com

“We just started a thing called the moment of silence and this is my opinion. My thought about the silent moment is that it is a good time to think about things like stuff you haven't done or something you want to do. But one thing I wish about the silent moment is if it was like five minutes for more time to think. I hope we don't end the moment of silence.”

-Chandler, Gr 6.

# TESTIMONIALS

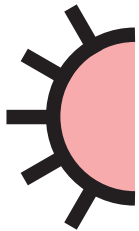


Quiet Moment  
Sienna D. - Grade 2  
I think the quiet moment is  
a sum. because we ned it. because we  
are lawd wun we com in frum  
nases. evry day. yes evry day  
so I do not like it I Love it  
alot. ps. thank you.



**Moment of Silence means that I can think of people in Trinidad that don't have shoes and clothes.**

-Tyriq Hughes, PS91 N.Y.



When I have sixty seconds or one minute to think, I wait for the direction and pray for everyone.



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