

# Y3

LESSON 3  
YOUTH  
V.1



personal

# MANDALA MINDFULNESS

## YOUTH LESSON 3: PERSONAL PEACE 2

### TIME REQUIRED

45 minutes

### TEACHER PREPARATION

To prepare for this lesson...

- Read the “[5 Spheres of Peace](#)” NPA Framework focusing on the personal peace sphere
- Read the [Teacher’s Guide](#) for preparation and reflection questions

### MATERIALS

- Markers, colored pencils, crayons, pencils, pens
- Paper with a circle drawn in the middle

### LEARNING GOALS

- Students will learn what a mandala is and how they can use it as a tool for self-reflection and mindfulness

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Through self-reflection students will create a mandala that embodies their present thoughts and feelings
- Through inquiry students will reflect upon the process of creating a mandala and think about whether or not this practice would help them build a sense of personal peace

### INTRODUCTION

Sustaining personal peace is an ongoing process of being mindful of our thoughts and feelings and consciously acting upon these feelings in ways that uphold our values and relationships. The practices of self-reflection and mindfulness are essential skills in building personal peace. Creating a mandala can be an excellent tool for students to begin thinking about and expressing their thoughts and feelings in a safe and contained space. Mandalas have been used for thousands of years in the Buddhist and Hindu traditions as meditational tools to clear the mind. They have also been used in many therapeutic settings to help individuals uncover feelings that need to be expressed. The process of creating a mandala can help students become more conscious of their inner thoughts. This awareness can facilitate reflection on how the individual chooses to act upon these thoughts and feelings. This process can be very empowering, helping young people make positive changes in their lives through building clarity and consciousness.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Have you ever heard the phrase “think before you speak” or “think before you act”? What do you think these phrases mean? Is this an important practice? Why?
- Is it difficult to “think before you act” in everyday life? What do you think gets in the way of us thinking before acting? What are some ways you’ve tried thinking before acting?
- Do you think reflection is important to sustaining personal peace? Do you think reflecting before you act would have an impact on your own sense of peace and well-being?

## OPENING DISCUSSION

Use the guiding questions to open up a class discussion on reflection and mindfulness. Give students ample time to respond and discuss the importance of reflecting on their lives and the methods they may have used in the past to accomplish this task. As student responses are wrapping up, inform students that today they will be given the opportunity to try another method of reflection. Today they are going to make mandalas.

## ACTIVITY 1: CREATING MANDALAS

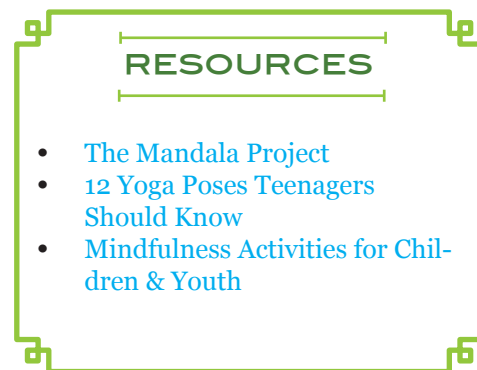
1. Ask students if they have seen or made a mandala in the past. What did it look like? Why did they create one? Tell students that a mandala is a special or sacred circle, a circle that for our activity today represents this moment in their lives, their thoughts, feelings, and actions. They can use this circle to create their moment on paper and afterwards they can decide if they want to let this moment go or hang onto the feelings present in this moment. The circle on the paper acts as a place for expression. It holds your thoughts and feelings on paper, expressing your joys, anxieties, fears, and triumphs. Tell students that sometimes we can be surprised by what we express on paper and the process of drawing within the circle can reveal feelings we were not conscious of before. This process is an opportunity to gain clarity about feelings surrounding the events occurring in your life. This can help you think about how you want to act upon these feelings.

2. Tell students that mandalas are traditionally used as a meditation tool and often pictures of deities or patterns are created within the circle. The repetition of these patterns over and over again helps clear the mind from any unwanted thoughts. Tell students that today they can use this process to draw anything they like. If you want to clear your mind you may want to draw repeating patterns. If you seek clarity, you may want to draw whatever comes to your mind. You may use colors, words, images, symbols, or patterns to express how you are currently feeling or what you are thinking about.

3. Pass out paper and markers to students. Instruct students to draw a circle in the middle of their piece of paper.

4. Give students 20 minutes to complete their mandalas.

5. As students are nearing completion ask them whether or not they want to keep these thoughts and feelings or whether they want to let go of these thoughts. For students who want to let go tell them they are free to rip up their paper and put it in the recycling bin. For students who want to keep their mandala, ask if anyone would be willing to share their work and their thoughts about the process of creating their project. What did they express with their drawings? Were any surprises or insights gained from the experience?



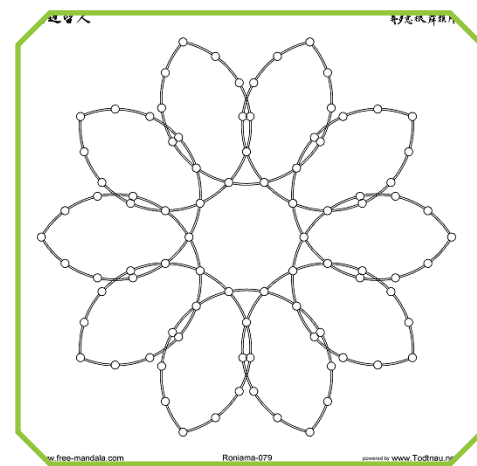
## CLOSING

In closing, ask students the following questions:

- Was this process useful in clarifying their thoughts and feelings?
- Did anyone recognize a change or action they want to take in life?
- For those students who chose to throw out their mandalas, how did it feel to release their thoughts?
- Would this practice be useful in building a sense of personal peace? Why?
- If not, what other processes are helpful in gaining clarity and reflecting?

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Create a group mandala by drawing a large circle on butcher paper and giving each student time to contribute to this mandala. When complete have students reflect together on the many different thoughts and emotions that occur at any given time within the group. This activity can build a sense of community and awareness for the needs of others within the class.



A research project on the history and use of mandalas could be an excellent complement to this activity. This research should examine the different uses of mandalas and other mindfulness activities.