

## The Museum of Amazing Musical Instruments – The Singing Bowl listening activity

Meditation is a powerful way to calm your mind, relax and focus on your breath. It helps to have something simple to concentrate on, like a picture or the sound of the Himalayan singing bowl.

In this exercise, we are going to practice our listening. Listening is a good skill not just for music but also for listening to others and enjoying the sound of world around us.

I am going to stroke the singing bowl, and I want you to listen to the sound as carefully as you can. As the sound becomes quieter, I want you to keep on listening carefully until you can't hear the sound any more. At that point please put your hand up. We are going to do this three times.

So now, please sit comfortably and still.

Now, close your eyes.... and take a deep breath

Here comes the sound, and remember to put your hand up when you can't hear the singing bowl any more.

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Well listened everyone. Now let's try the same exercise again. Listen carefully put your hand up when you can't hear the singing bowl any more.

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For the last time, before you put your hand up, I want you to notice what other sounds are that come into your ears after the sound of the singing bowl has gone. These could be sounds from outside the room, or around you, or sounds from inside your body.

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We have been practicing our listening. Listening is something you can work at your whole life long – and it's well worth becoming a good listener.

So next time you're sitting at your back door, or if you're out in nature, or just taking a quiet moment, close your eyes and just to listen to the world around you. You never know what you might hear!

## Links

Mindfulness for children

<https://mrsmindfulness.com/how-to-teach-mindfulness-to-children/>

<https://www.doyou.com/14-effective-meditations-for-young-children-76520/>

(No. 7 is an extension on this exercise)

<https://www.meditationinschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Mindful-Listening.pdf>

Where to get a singing bowl (UK)

<https://www.soundtravels.co.uk>

<https://www.knockonwood.co.uk/Singing-Bowls>

## Notes for teachers

You don't need a singing bowl to do this exercise, although they do make an excellent sound and focus for the children. There might already be something you can use in school: look in the music cupboard or on the percussion trolley, as many schools have chimes or bells that will work perfectly well for this purpose.

If the visuals are too distracting, just run this with the screen off, audio only. If you would like to read the text yourself, there is a single singing bowl video clip here

After the third part of the exercise, you might like to reflect on what sounds the children may have heard. Some will be unusual, and some sounds may need a prompt to be heard

e.g your heartbeat, your breath, birdsong, wind or other sounds outside the room.

Children may like to work on their listening by 'gather sounds' as homework, during a break, or in nature. Sound recordings can easily be made on most phones, and the best free, easy to learn audio editing software is called audacity

(<https://sourceforge.net/projects/audacity/>).

When asked to gather sounds, it's best to ask children to collect 'natural' sounds, or else you will have a lot of ringtones, gaming sounds and special effects sounds to deal with.

