

Imagination Activities for Calming

For Parents and Counselors

SOUR POWER – For Days When Things are Feeling like Lemons

Have the child make some kind of 3-dimensional lemon or use a real lemon.

When things go wrong (sour lemons), rather than immediately making lemonade, learn to hold onto your lemon for a while since feelings are important to think about.

- Hold your lemon in your hand.
- Name a feeling you are having (see *Feelings on page 5*).
- Draw a picture of what your feeling feels like inside your body.
- Explain your picture
- Add something to the picture that makes your body feel better.

Or

- Look around and find a place in the room where the lemon isn't quite as sour.
- Have someone help you stare at that spot until the lemon loses some of its sour power. Sour lemons hate to be stared at.

You have the power to change a bad day.

WORRY CLOUD – For Teaching Children How to Manage Worries

Find a quiet place for this activity.

- Stop and think about where your worries are living in your body.
 - Do you feel them in your stomach?
 - Are they in your head?
 - How about your chest? Do they change the way you breathe?
- Imagine putting a cloud around all of the worries.
 - How big is it when you're done? What shape and color is the cloud?
 - How is it acting in the sky?
 - How fast is it moving?
- When you're ready, take a deep breath in and as you blow it out, imagine blowing some of the cloud out your mouth.
- Keep doing this until the whole cloud feels like it's on the outside of you.
 - Now what does the cloud look like? Has it changed?
 - How does your body feel inside now that your cloud is outside of you?
- You get to decide what you'd like to do with the worry cloud now.
 - Would you like to draw it or turn it into something else in your mind?
 - Would you like to bring the sun out and chase it away?
 - Would you like to lock it up somehow?

You have the power to decide what to do with your worries.

HOT AIR BALLOON – For Calming the Mind and the Body

Have the child design a hot air balloon (see *My Hot Air Balloon* on page 6).

With slow and gentle instructions, you will guide the child through an imagination exercise.

- Close your eyes and imagine the hot air balloon you just designed.
- It's sitting out in an empty field. What does the field look like? What does the balloon look like in the field?
- Slowly walk over to the balloon.
 - What does the basket look like where you will stand? How will you get in?
 - What kind of day is it? Sunny or cloudy? How strong is the breeze?
- When you're ready, climb into the basket.
- If you'd like, invite someone (in your imagination) to join you on your hot air balloon journey. If someone comes, invite them into your balloon.
- Someone else will loosen and hold onto the ropes tying the balloon to the ground until you're ready.
- When you're ready, you'll make the balloon rise with your deep breaths.
 - Take a deep breath in and gently blow as much air into the balloon as you can.
 - Do this again and again to make it rise as high as you'd like.
- What are you experiencing up there in the hot air balloon?
 - What do you see?
 - How small are the things below you?
 - What colors or shapes can you see?
 - What sounds do you hear?
 - What do you feel on your skin?
 - Are there any smells or tastes?
- Where would you like to go? (ask more questions if tolerated by the child).
- As you look around, put your hand on an area of your body that feels happy or calm.
- Take all the time you want up there in the air.
- Take some pictures to show your family when you get back.
- When you're all done looking around, you can gently open the vent that slowly lets air out of the balloon allowing it to float down gently to a safe place on the ground.
- When you touch down, you can climb out and tie the balloon down to the ground. Open your eyes when you're ready.
 - How was your trip?
 - Where did you go?
 - How do you feel now?

You have the power to make your body and mind calm down.

TURN IT DOWN– For Calming Strong Feelings

Have the children draw and decorate a machine that plays music.

- Imagine that your strong feeling (frustration, anger, etc) has just become loud, annoying music.
- Place your hand on the place in your body where the music feels the loudest.
 - What do you feel in your body?
 - What are you having trouble hearing?
 - How do you think the loud music is impacting others?
- When you're ready, go to the volume button on your music machine and start turning the music down, little by little. You don't need to take it away; just turn it low enough that others don't hear it and you can hear things around you.
- When you have the volume as low as you want it, take as many balloon breaths as you'd like until you feel calm.
 - How was that?
 - How did you get the music to quiet down?
 - Is there anything that would have helped you turn it down even more?

You have the power to shrink your frustration or anger.

STRONG TREE – For Building Emotional Strength

Do some research with the children to find pictures of trees with strong roots.

- Stand up and get your wiggles out.
- Raise your branches (arms) up with an inhale, down with an exhale (repeat a few times).
- Imagine your roots (feet) growing through the floor and deep into the ground.
- Imagine how sturdy you are becoming as your roots go down.
- A storm is beginning and your tree is starting to bend back and forth, back and forth, eventually coming back to center.
- Bend forward, backward and back to center several times.
- How strong do your roots feel?
- Lift your arms as the sun come out and let the sunshine come in through your branches and warm you.
- Take in a several deep breaths, letting each breath out slowly like a gentle breeze.
- Feel strong as you stand tall.

You have the power to grow your strong feelings.

I'M IN CHARGE NOW – For Nightmares

After a nightmare, have the child draw the dream in detail and identify the scariest part of the picture.

- What kind of superpower could you give yourself to make that scary part come under your control?
 - The ability to turn ground into quicksand to swallow it up?
 - An imaginary laser gun that can shoot it into outer space?
 - Super strength to throw it into the middle of the ocean without a boat?
 - Shrinking powder to shrink it down to nothing?
- Draw whatever superpower you want into the picture.
- Practice your imaginary superpower every night before you go to sleep.
- If you wake up with a nightmare, instantly use your superpower until the scary part comes under your control and then yell “Ha, Ha, I’m in charge now!” or whatever else you’d like to say.

Addendums

Feeling Faces - pg 5

My Hot Air Balloon - pg 6

Feelings



Happy



Sad



Worried



Angry



Scared



Lonely



Bored



Guilty



Surprised



Confused



Shy



Frustrated



Hurt



Mean



Jealous



Sleepy



Depressed



Sick



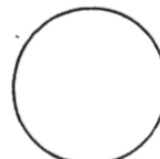
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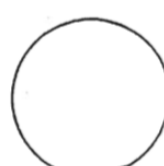
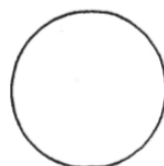
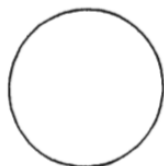
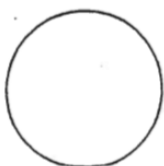
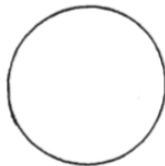
Excited



Confident



Horrible



My Hot Air Balloon

