

Side of Raja

How do we teach the Science of Yoga to kids?

Your class is full of interesting ways. Here are a few more:

- **Time to teach!** Just after the Secret Garden when the kids are laying on their sides nice and CALM... they are like sponges now, open and eager to learn. It can be from any world religion or it can be from The Yoga Sutras. Only YOU can know what is the most important thing to teach the kids you are with. Teach Karma Yoga by sharing with them while they are on their sides that Karma Yoga is “selfless service” and that you do something nice for someone else without expecting anything in return. Suggest that they either go home and do some Karma Yoga OR a great exercise for them is to have each kid roll up the mat of the child next to them. It’s amazing to see how much prettier they roll them up when they are doing this as a service to their neighbor.

- **Purchase the book: Enlightening Tales –Sri Swami Satchidananda**

It’s THE BEST! There are MANY great stories in this book. While the kids are laying on their sides read a short story from the book. The book gives you discussion ideas. Or use the two samples here to get started.

The Key to Enlightenment

A very selfish, dishonest and greedy man is given the opportunity to change his ways. He visits a spiritual teacher asking for the way to know the Self and experience peace and wisdom. The teacher tells him it’s too late. He has only 10 days to live. However, sometimes he makes mistakes, so if the man should live longer, he is to come back and he will then begin to teach him. The man is very depressed and ashamed of his past behavior. He begins to forgive debts, renew broken relationships, give to charities and become tolerant of all faiths and religions. His reputation begins to change from a mean miser to a beloved member of the community. When the 10th day comes and goes and he has not died he returns to the teacher asking to begin learning. The teacher says, “I have already taught you. See how you behave now thinking you were about to die. Live the way you have been living the past 10 days.”

This can lead to discussion of Karma Yoga, selfless service, and non-attachment.

Questions and Discussion: What is the Golden Rule? How can you personally improve? The Perfect Yogic Act is one that benefits someone and brings harm to no one.

The Saint and the Scorpion

A Holy woman notices a scorpion caught in a rushing river. She realizes it will die. She reaches down to help it out. The scorpion stings her. She drops it back in the river. She repeats her action and gets stung again and again. A friend observes this and questions her behavior and common sense. She says it is my nature to feel pity and be compassionate, try to save the scorpion, as it is the nature of the scorpion to sting and he cannot change.

This can lead to discussion about the 4 Locks and Keys specifically Unhappy/Compassion and Wicked/Disregard. Focusing on not mistaking the behavior for the person or thing. Practicing unconditional love.

Other great ideas:

-LIVE IT! If you live it, it will come. If it comes they will see it. You are a powerful teacher. Learn about the science of Yoga and it will naturally come through in everything you do!

****** Have a KAY Karmaval**

The KAY Karmaval is HANDS DOWN THE best way to teach the Science of Yoga to kids. We do this at our sleep over camp. Our focus is not for the kids to remember the names of all of the branches or limbs. That's too confusing. Your focus is for them to understand that everything we do in the Karmaval is YOGA. And, of course, TO HAVE FUN. Below is exactly what we do at camp. It was challenging to come up with an activity for the Yamas and Niyamas so we used a sign in board as the "entrance fee." The kids had to read them out loud and sign before entering. Have a counselor/helper at every station.

Rules: Kids can go wherever they want whenever they want. They earn ONE Mardi Gras necklace for each single activity they do. Our Karmaval at camp lasts for 45 minutes and then we have a party. Someone mans the PRIZE BOOTH that has candy and cheap party store prizes in it and the kids can turn in their beads for these prizes. This is a great activity for the appropriate environment.

Post this as a reference:

1. Yamas

Asteya: No stealing

Satya: Always speak the truth,

Ahimsa: Do no harm in your thoughts and your actions

Aparigraha: Don't take more than you need. Food, Clothes, etc.

Brahmacharya: Respect your body and the body of others... what does that mean to you? Eat right? Do Yoga? Exercise? Never touching people in inappropriate places?

Post the following on a large poster board with room for everyone to sign it:

"Read out loud and sign:

I will do my very best to do the right thing to contribute to the health and happiness of myself and society by not stealing, always speaking the truth, doing no harm in my thoughts and actions, not taking more than I need in any aspect of life, and respecting my body and the body of others."

Post the following as a reference:

2. Niyamas

Saucha: Cleanliness of body and mind

Santosa: Be content, trust in the big picture

Tapa: Accepting the negative things

Svadyaya: Study spiritual books

Ishvara-pranidhana: Paying attention to the Supreme Being or Energy in all parts of your life

Post the following on a large poster board with room for everyone to sign it.

“Read out loud and sign:

I will do my very best to keep my body and my mind clean, to be content and trust that everything happens for a reason, to accept even the negative things in my life, to study books that help me to become a better person, and to pay attention to the Supreme being that guides all aspects of my life.”

Below are some suggested booths. This is what we do at camp. But feel free to get creative.

3. Asana Alley (poses): Have a counselor welcoming the kids into the KAY studio and teaching poses, play a KAY activity song, have a CROW OFF, or just do Salutations to the Sun.

4. Pranayama palace (breath control): Pompom basketball, Brahmari breath, Blow feathers up in the air and have them try to keep them up there!! Etc.

5. Pratyahara Party (sensory awareness): Pompoms, trust walk with partners, box with all the senses (taste/sight/touch/smell... bags with fragrant things inside), tingshas, and rain makers.

6. Dhyana Drive (single pointed focus): Tightrope boogie with beanie babies, Tratak picture, staring contest.

7. Dharana Dugout (concentration): Mandala coloring, meditation, matching game with card decks (put together smaller decks of matching cards).

8. Samadhi Sanctuary (union with the divine): Secret Garden, play OMMM music, seated meditation, mala beads.