

## Take a line for a 'micro' hike

### A mindfulness exercise and language generator

**Aim:** To appreciate the micro-world and experience mindfulness.

**Activity:**

- Each pupil selects a small area of grass, vegetable garden, hedgerow, or shrubs - anywhere they can get up close and personal with plants.
- Each pupil has a 50cm long piece of string which they set up as a 'journey' though their selected piece of vegetation, taking it over under though, round plants or grasses in their patch.
- With a magnifying glass they, very slowly, take a 'walk like a snail' along this line, as if they were a snail going on an adventure. As they go, they will observe colours, shapes and textures and be able to smell the vegetation. They might also see insects and other tiny organisms.

This is a mindfulness exercise in itself, but pupils could also collect descriptive language, (adjectives, adverbs) to use later in a literacy exercise.

**Key vocabulary:**

Mindfulness, reflection, positional and other mathematical language, adjectives, adverbs

**Success criteria:**

- ✓ I can imagine I am a small creature in a large world.
- ✓ I can use my 'walk as a snail' to describe how 'I' felt and what I experienced.

**Resources:**

- 50cm of twine, string, or wool for each pupil.
- A range of magnifiers, including A4 sheets, handheld magnifiers, loupes and magnifier tubs.



## Sitting contemplation

### An extension of the Silent Walk Learning Springboard

**Aim:** Pupils take time for introspection and reflection on personal identity and taking responsibility.

**Beforehand:** identify a circular walk in the grounds, that affords places for pupils can sit alone but just in sight of the next child.

Carrying a sit mat or folded newspaper, pupils follow you in single file, completely silently. Using gestures only, indicate the first spot you've identified for the first pupil to sit down, then lead the group onto the next place. The next pupil in the line sits there, and so on until every pupil is seated. Slowly repeat the walk, silently picking up each child again, in order until you have them all back following you in single file. Head back indoors, or onto your next outdoor lesson.

Some children may find this hard and may prefer a degree of 'hiding' within a designated boundary, so they feel hidden and out of sight. In reality you can arrange to see/hear children if you have suitable, visually permeable shrub areas.

- This exercise can be tricky at first, but pupils do get used to it and by repeating it regularly, they gain the benefits of the quietude and immersion in nature.
- It is often pupils with additional needs who struggle to partake in mindfulness activities yet are also the ones that need it most. Plan this activity to be comfortable and unthreatening for them to participate and enjoy resting mind and body.

Sometimes, you might choose to give the children a focus for their contemplation. It is equally beneficial to leave their thoughts open and undirected, and wait to see what is reported back, if they chose to do so. This should be optional too, otherwise children can feel pressured to reveal thoughts that could and should remain private.

