



Fear and Anxiety 1:

What is Fear?



Opening Affirmations:

Before we begin our Soul Talk, we want to remind you that we are coming together to learn from one another. This means that this is a safe place to share our ideas and questions. Please take the hand of the person to the right and left side of you and share one of two possible affirmations.

“I am happy to share my ideas with you.”

[or]

“I respect and honor you and your beliefs.”

The Heart of the Soul Discussion: What is Fear?

1. What are some things that you are afraid of?

[Go around the circle and have everyone take a turn answering the question]

- A lot of people are afraid of things, like bugs, animals, water, darkness or heights
- Some people are afraid of death
- There are some people who are afraid of people who are different than they are
- Some people are afraid of feelings they may have inside their mind or body
- Most people are afraid of war, violence and weapons

2. Everyone has fear. How do people express their fears?

[Go around the circle and have everyone take a turn answering the question]

- Some people may express fear by screaming and crying
- There are some people who express fear by running away or hiding

- Some people avoid their fears, so they don't have to deal with them
- Some people can express their fears internally, this can feel like their body and mind are in a panic. This feeling is called anxiety
- Some people may express their fear by acting out in anger

3. Some fearful feelings are bigger than others. How do some big fears feel to you? How do smaller fears feel to you?

[Go around the circle and have everyone take a turn answering the question]

- There are some people who think big fears can feel overwhelming and never ending, like they just won't go away
- Some people think smaller fears can sometimes feel more temporary, this may cause a person to worry for just a short time before the fear fades away
- For some people, both big and small fears can be related to changes in their lives

4. It probably feels a little better to know that you are not alone and that everyone has times when they feel afraid. Are there ways we can help support each other when we are feeling this way?

[Go around the circle and have everyone take a turn answering the question]

- Some people may choose to support others through their fears, perhaps with kind and encouraging words, conversation or simply their presence
- There are some people who may not like to talk about their fears and would more appreciate having someone there to take their mind away from the fear to focus on other things
- Some people may just appreciate space and alone time when they are dealing with their fears

Activity - Option 1: Popping Your Fear

Materials Needed:

A package of balloons (2-6 balloons per person)

Pin (or something else capable of popping a balloon)

Markers (That will draw on a balloon)

1" x 4" strip of paper per person

Directions:

- Have the children take some time to think about one or more fears they may have.
- Once they have thought about their fears, have them use the small piece of paper to write a new thought about their fear(s). This thought should be working as an opposition to their fear. (For example, if they were afraid of bees they could write something like: "The bees are afraid of me." Or they can write a simple affirmation like "I am strong" or "I am safe.")
- Once this piece of paper is prepared, roll it up and place it inside the deflated balloon.
- Blow up the first balloon. *(A grown up may need to help with this)*
- Once the balloon is filled, using the marker, draw a picture of the fear or write the fear on the balloon
- Once everyone has a fear drawn on a balloon, take the time to go around and let the children talk about what fear their balloon represents
- After every child has had a turn to share, take turns having each child pop their balloon, letting those fears go and holding on to those affirmations
- *NOTE: If there are kids who don't like loud noises, you can let the air out of the balloon and watch it fly around.*

[Feel free to play one of our recommended songs while the kids work on this activity]

Follow Up Discussion

How did it feel to take the time to think about the things you fear? How did it feel to think about the things that help you fight that fear? Did it make you feel less nervous or afraid? Sometimes when we talk about our fears with others, it can help some of those feelings feel less scary or even more manageable. Popping our balloons, or popping our fears is a way of us facing those fears and deciding to let them go. This is sometimes easier said than done, but the more we acknowledge those fears, the less control they have over us when it comes to living our day-to-day life. Replacing the popped balloons with a positive affirmation or an opposing thought to the fear, helps us to recognize that we do have some ways to cope or deal with our fears by shifting our thoughts

Story Time – Activity Option 2

[In order to complete this activity, your group will need a copy of one of the suggested books. Our library has a collection of books dedicated to each Soul Talk which is updated constantly! You can visit our library at the link below. Search for the Fear &

Anxiety section.] https://spiritualplaydate.com/spiritual_playdate_library

Since our Soul Talk was about *What is Fear?*, we are going to read a book out loud. As you listen, start to think about how this story relates to what we just spoke about.

Calming Exercise - Meditation:

[Invite the group to find a relaxing position, take a mat or towel, if you are working on a hard floor. They may sit on the floor or lie down to be comfortable. Speak slightly slower in a soft, soothing tone throughout, pausing briefly between sentences. You may play soft, instrumental music in the background while reading the meditation script]

Welcome to our Meditation Time: The time where we relax and connect to the spirit in and around us. I invite you to lie down on a mat or towel and make yourself comfortable. Quietly do that now. *[Wait until the group is settled, then read the meditation script]*

I am going to guide you through our meditation to help you relax. Let's close our eyes, and let's start by putting our hands on our bellies, and taking a deep, long breath in. Feel your belly rise as you breathe in – to the count of 1, 2, 3. Then feel your belly fall, as you slowly breathe out – to the count of 1, 2, 3. Now breathe in – 1, 2, 3. And slowly breathe out like a tire losing air – 1, 2, 3. Continue to breathe in and out slowly and steadily. Relax your body into the floor beneath you. Keep breathing.

While we hope we don't feel fear or anxiety, it's good to talk about them, because we all feel fear at some point in our lives. It's natural. *[Pause.]* Sometimes we can be afraid of being in a new place with new people. Or maybe we know a person or a pet who has died, and the idea of dying makes us fearful. People can fear being alone, or in the dark. There are many things that cause fear in people young and old. Think quietly to yourself about the ways that you've experienced fear. *[Long Pause.]* Fear affects each person in different ways. One might cry. One might hide under the covers. One might fight the way they feel. And one might pretend that they are not feeling fear. Some might feel their bodies tense up. There are as many ways of reacting, as there are types of fear. However you react when you get scared, know that you are never alone, and your fearful feelings won't last forever. *[Pause.]* Think about how you deal with fear and anxiety. Do you like to work it out yourself, or get help from someone? Maybe you've been a help to someone who was afraid. Did you offer them some kind words or give them a hug and let them know they'd be okay? *[Pause.]* Fears are passing things ... some go away as we get older and know more about the world. Some go away as we work on not being afraid. Just remember that we all have fears. They will come and go, and we can help each other feel safe and secure. You are safe right here and now.

Doesn't that feel good? *[Long Pause.]*

Now let's take one more deep breath, and slowly let it out. Now slowly open your eyes and slowly roll to the side and sit up to end our time of meditation.

[Optional: Turn off music] [Optional: Say: Please return your cushion to its starting place]

Closing - Choose One:

Closing Affirmation - Option 1

Turn to the person to your right, look them in the eye and say "I am happy I could share this time with you and hear about your beliefs."

Closing Prayer - Option 2

The light of god surrounds us
The love of god enfolds us
The power of god protects us
The presence of god watches over us
Wherever we are, god is and all is well!