



Fear and Anxiety 2: Recognizing 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: Recognizing Fear

[Facilitator's Note: While we do not want to shy away from facing fears, we also do not want to introduce new fears. This is a soul talk where we highly recommend letting the children provide you with the answers. If you wish to use some of the ones we have provided, please do, but do not feel like you need to read every single one out loud to the children present.]

1. Everyone feels fear at some point in their lives, now we are going to talk about recognizing fear. Fear comes out of the thought that something is going to harm you. A realistic fear is the feeling that people have when a danger is actually present. What are some realistic fears that could put someone in danger?

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

- There are some people who are afraid of an unfamiliar, maybe wild animal coming near them People may be afraid of deep water, especially if they cannot swim
- There are some people who may be afraid of being hurt if they live in an area where there is a lot of violence

- Some people have fear over where they are going to sleep at night or where their next meal may come from
- People may be afraid of serious illnesses, especially if someone they know and love is very sick

2. We have talked about realistic fears, now we are going to talk about imagined fears. An imagined fear is when someone is worrying about something that may happen but no physical danger is actually present. What are some imagined fears?

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

- For some people, darkness can be an imagined fear
- There are some people who are afraid of flying
- People may be afraid of being stuck in small spaces
- There are some people who are afraid of scary things in their room
- People might be afraid of insects, like bees or spiders

3. Now that we have recognized that some fear is realistic and some fear is imagined, how can we tell the difference between the two?

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

- Realistic fears actually act as a warning to do something when we are in danger
- Imagined fears happen when our fearful thoughts take control of our physical bodies
- When our imagined fear produces an repeated panic throughout our body, this is called a phobia

Activity - Option 1: Bag Your Fear

Materials Needed:

Paper bags

Markers

Glue

Colorful paper

Scissors

Googly eyes, pipe cleaners, scraps of fabric (optional)

Directions:

- Give each child a paper bag and some markers.
- Have them use the markers to express their fears on the paper bag in words or pictures.
- After they are done, have the children share what fears they included on their bags.
- The next step of this activity is to turn those fears into something funny. In this case, the funny object is going to be a puppet.
- Have the children use markers, glue, googly eyes, paper (or any other fun craft options you may have) to make their bags of fear into a funny puppet. After their puppet is complete, sit in a circle and ask each child to share a bit about their puppet.

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

Follow Up Discussion:

How did it feel to speak openly about realistic fears? How did it feel to speak about imagined fears? Sometimes, when we are able to share our thoughts and feelings regarding things that scare us, it can give us a sense of comfort and may make us feel stronger. Sharing and talking about our fears can also help us recognize when we are afraid and what kind of fear we are feeling. If it is a realistic fear, this feeling helps us know that we are in trouble. If it is an imagined fear that we are recognizing, this can help us work through the fear before it causes anxiety.

Option 2: Story Time

[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 *Recognizing 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.

Meditation – Recognizing Fear

[Invite the group to find a relaxing position, take a mat or towel, if you are working on a hard floor. They may sit 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 meditation script]* Let's close our eyes and let our muscles relax into the floor. Take a slow, deep breath in, all the way down to your belly. Feel your belly rise as you hold it for 1, 2, 3. And breathe out slowly for 1, 2, 3 ... feeling your belly fall as you breathe out. Breathe in – 1, 2, 3. Breathe out – 1, 2, 3. And you continue to breathe in and out slowly and steadily.

We have talked about fear and anxiety today, and the different types of fear that we can experience. Think to yourself now which of the realistic fears you've had before. Maybe you have felt fearful of an animal you didn't know, or of going into deep water. Maybe you were scared for a loved one who was very sick, or because you thought something or someone might hurt you. We have all felt fear. *[Pause.]* Grown-ups and kids have felt imagined fears ... like thinking there was something scary in the dark or worrying that something bad might happen. *[Pause.]* No matter what type of fear it is, it can feel very scary. But it's good to know which kind of fear you are feeling, because then you can know what to do about it. *[Pause.]* Realistic fears can be a warning to us to avoid doing something or going somewhere we don't think is right. It's good to pay attention to realistic fears and get ourselves to a safe space. *[Pause.]* And though imagined fears feel just as scary as realistic fears, it is important to remember that we are safe — that the imagined fear is just our minds playing a trick on us. With some comforting help, the fear will soon go away and everything will go back to normal. *[Pause.]* And it's so good to know that with practice and help, we can move past our fears. *[Pause.]* Everyone feels fear now and then. The next time you feel fear, take a breath, and think what kind of fear it is. Is it a realistic fear that is warning you about something? Or is it a trick that your mind is playing on you? When you know, you'll be able to take the right action to get back to feeling safe. *[Pause.]* Fears come and go, and no matter what caused your fear, you will soon feel better. You can work out your fears and know that you are safe. *[Pause.]*

Let's take one more deep breath in – 1, 2, 3. And one more deep breath out – 1, 2, 3. 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!