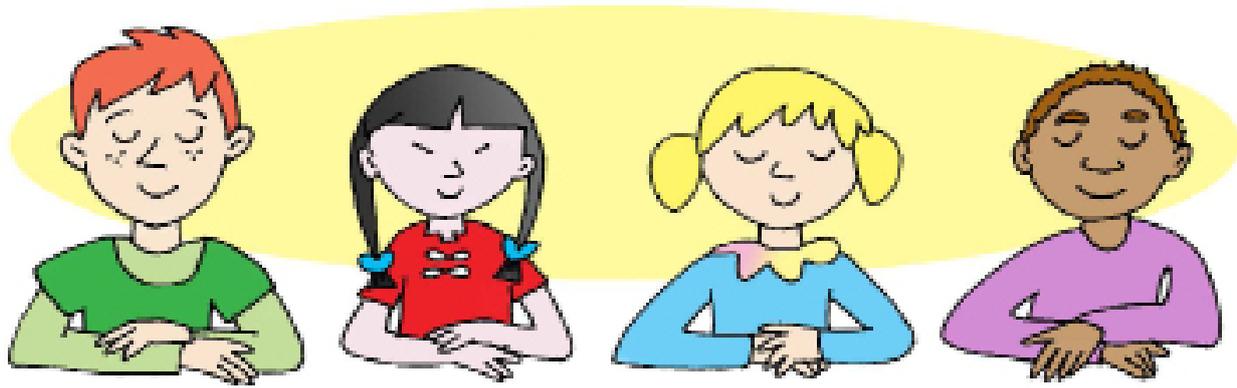


## TEO AND LIGHT MEDITATION



**I**t was Monday morning. Teo and his classmates bustled into the classroom and took their seats. They were eager to begin the school week with the silent sitting exercise. Miss Wilson sometimes called it 'Light Meditation', because they would envision the light of a candle while they did the activity. A few times she had even lit a real candle, which made everything more special, but they had fun visualising the light in their hearts too, which is what light meditation was all about!

Light meditation made the children feel good and helped them be more attentive during lessons. Everyone felt happier and was more cheerful looking afterwards. But that morning the class was looking forward to it for another reason.

"We all know why Maria hasn't come to school." The kids nodded their heads and looked at each other gravely.

"Mom and dad called her parents last night." said Prisca, "They told them that Maria would have stayed home today, she is too upset and worried about her family."

"She has lots of relatives living in the flooded area." said Thomas, referring to the terrible floods that had inundated the southern part of the country the day before.

"Her grandparents are no longer able to live in their home and have to stay in a gym. Who knows for how long!" cried Alice.

"Hundreds of people have been evacuated and some of them have lost their most cherished belongings." said Anna.

"And lots of animals have died in the flooded country land, too!" said Mirko. "And the rain is not stopping!"

"Well, children, civil protection units have gone to the rescue of all the people and a lot of caring volunteers are helping out. We always need to look for the positive side of the difficult challenges we face in life, and this is one. But the situation is naturally painful and precarious for everyone." commented Miss Wilson. "Unfortunately these climate changes are affecting our planet more and more."

The class sat upright. The pupils knew what they would do. Light meditation was a soothing balm for the mind, and you could send its warmth, and good, positive thoughts, to other people, too. They would do so for Maria and her grandparents!

"Sit comfortably, straight, but not stiff!" began Miss Wilson softly as she lit a candle.

"Now concentrate on the light of the candle and when you are ready close your eyes; imagine that the light is glowing in your head. Your mind is full of light and your thoughts will be good today", she said.

The children didn't budge.

"Now take the light for an inner ride: illumine your arms and hands, your finger tips and toes, your feet and legs, your mouth and lips... the steps you will take, the things you will do, the words you will speak, will all be good today", she said. "Now the light

illuminates your ears and nose. All your senses are illuminated by the light. You will be attracted towards everything that is beautiful and good! Now take the light to your heart and envision it opening up like a flower. The light in your heart is brighter still! It illuminates your whole being and spreads out around you.”

The children sat in silence, all of them thinking of Maria. They imagined that the light was embracing her and that it was spreading out to encircle her grandparents and her whole family. The light kept growing, embracing all the people caught in the flood, and it continued to expand. It would be impossible to send it to one or two people, when everyone is connected! Could the sun send its rays only to a few people? Of course not! That’s why the light shining through your heart grows and expands until it unites all peoples, the animals, the elements, the world and the universe!

Teo felt good in that silence. His thoughts seemed to disappear and in their place he perceived something so wide and deep, and so familiar, that all he could do was sit there, in the quiet.

“Focus on the light in your hearts again”, said Miss Wilson softly. “And when you are ready slowly move your fingers and hands and open your eyes.”

The class did as the teacher said and then picked up their markers to make a drawing of how the silent sitting had felt that day.

The evening news reported that the floods had finally subsided and that people were moving back to their homes, and the following day Maria came back to school. Her grandparents were coming to stay with her family and she couldn’t wait to see them! The class talked a lot about climate change that morning and about how they could help the planet and prevent so much suffering for everyone. They made a list of good actions and decided to send light to the planet and to all people every day!

Suzanne Palermo

## STORY TIME QUESTIONS

Who is Marie?

What happened and why didn’t she go to school?

How do the children help their classmate feel better?

Would you like to try light meditation, too? Can you explain it in your own words?

It’s nice to have quiet time during the day. Can you make a list of quiet games?

How does quiet time make you feel?

Does this story remind you of something?

What is climate change?

How can we help the planet be happier and healthier?

Did you like this story?

