



Story and play

The Monkeys and the Hermit

Traditional Buddhist tale



Long, long ago, in the great forests of Asia, there lived an old hermit. He was a yogi, and he would sit meditating in perfect posture under the trees for hours and hours... days and days... months and months... years and years.

In the same forest there also lived a group of monkeys. They were very lively and would never sit still for a moment.

What they enjoyed most was jumping about from tree to tree. The monkeys were very playful, and again and again they would try to play with the old hermit, but he always remained completely still.

One day, the leader of the monkeys decided he would play at being a hermit. He looked carefully at him, and then pretended to sit still, just like him. He would look at him again to check the posture, and then sit again.

As this monkey was their leader, all the other monkeys began to copy him, and in no time they were all sitting still, pretending to be like the hermit.

Day after day, the monkeys sat and sat, and what happened? They completely changed. Just by sitting still, over and over again, their restless minds became gradually quiet. They may not have been meditating like the hermit, but the simple act of sitting still helped to quiet their minds.

Sometimes our minds are rather like monkeys too, and jump about restlessly, but if we learn to sit, they naturally become more peaceful, quiet, and happy.



Theatre Play: The Monkeys and the Hermit

Roles:

Hermit, the tree behind the hermit, monkey leader, a few children who are monkeys who try to distract the hermit.

Note for teachers:

It is nice to bring a turban and cloak for the hermit to wear, and it's nice if you can give a few of the children a turn at being the hermit.

Below is the website reference for the template for paper monkey finger puppets, if you would like the children to colour these in, cut them out and use them to try to distract the hermit.

<https://www.dltk-teach.com/t.asp?t=https://www.dltk-kids.com/members/images/cfingermonkeys1.gif>

