



NORTON SIMON MUSEUM

COUNTING BREATH MEDITATION

GRADES K-5

Studies show that cultivating mindfulness in children can help them develop resilience, improved attentiveness, social and emotional skills and empathy while also reducing stress. Counting breath is a foundational mindfulness practice that gives children the tools to pause, focus and avert negative thoughts in their daily life. Through mindfulness, children can grow to respect themselves and others and learn to slow down and appreciate the world around them.

Explore mindfulness through art by looking carefully at *Heavy Circles*. Vassily Kandinsky (Russian, 1866–1944) loved the expressive nature of the circle. He liked how circles could be opposites—both loud and soft—like the way a balloon can make a loud “pop!” sound but can also float softly into the sky. Here, we see colorful circles of different sizes floating in space. Some circles overlap, some group together, while others float on their own.

Count how many circles you see.

Close your eyes and for each circle, count your breath.

One circle, breathe in and breathe out.

Two circle, breathe in and breathe out.

Three circle, breathe in and breathe out, and so on.

Now, imagine these circles floating up and out of the picture and into the sky.

Keep counting until they disappear, and you feel a sense of calm.

ABOVE: Vassily Kandinsky (Russian, 1866–1944), *Heavy Circles*, 1927,
Norton Simon Museum, The Blue Four Galka Scheyer Collection