



ART BRIDGES: Lesson Plans for Enrichment, Growth and Healing

Put Yourself in a Safe Place: Engaging the Imagination

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Kristina Marcelli Sargent**

<https://kristinamarcelli.wordpress.com>

Objectives:

The participants will:

1. Focus and visualize on a “safe place”
2. Use art and art elements to create a symbolic place where they feel safe and use this place for visualization and calming

Audience:

This activity was designed for use with children but could easily be adapted to any age of individual who has experienced trauma and wants to symbolically gain a safe place.

Supplies/Materials:

- Paper
- Paints, markers, pencils, pens, colored pencils, crayons
- Glue
- Blocks (optional)
- Sand tray (optional)

Process:

1. I have been using child meditation to help children imagine a safe place for a while now and often have the child paint or draw what he or she saw through imagination afterwards.
2. Recently, I have been having the children draw themselves and then put themselves inside the safe space they painted. It just seems to have added a layer of significance for the children I work with.
3. I also talk about imagination and how they have their imaginations with them wherever they go--how imagination is not something they can forget at home or something someone can take from them. It's theirs and theirs alone and they can use it to feel more relaxed and safe wherever they are.
4. If the child doesn't want to paint or draw the safe space, it could also be created with blocks or in the sand tray.
5. I also let children decide if there should be any rules in their space (the answer is almost always "yes") and what the rules would be to ensure it is a safe space for them. Great way to assess children and their needs as well!

Adaption:

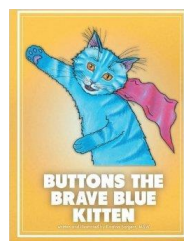
This can also be done with families!

1. Have the family work together to paint or build a safe space and come up with the rules.
2. Talk about how to make home feel more like the place they created!





Heartfelt thanks to **Kristina Marcelli Sargent (MSW)** who graciously gave permission to Hildegard Center to re-post this activity from her website <https://kristinamarcelli.wordpress.com> . Kristina is a mental health therapist (living in Cincinnati, OH) who works with children and their families. Her blog is a place where creative expression and social/emotional well-being can become one, offering creative interventions, activities and inspiration for all ages—please visit it! Kristina has her undergraduate degree in art and creative writing and has written and illustrated her first book, “**Buttons the Brave Blue Kitten**” a story



about separation anxiety intended to help children develop empathy and give adults the skills to reinforce its development. The book is available to order on Kristina’s website or on Amazon.com.

If you have used this activity, we'd love to hear from you! Please send questions or comments through our website www.hildegardcenter.org .

Hildegard Center for the Arts is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Arts Organization whose mission is to unite people of all beliefs, cultures and traditions to inspire humanity through the Arts. Also check out Kristina's newest book: "Ursula Unwinds Her Anger" which teaches children mindfulness-related skills and offers adults tips on encouraging these skills in children. You can purchase this great book at <http://www.amazon.com/Ursula-Unwinds-Kristina-Marcelli-Sargent/dp/1499073003> .

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