



A KIDS YOGA STORIES VALENTINE'S DAY PLAN

Topic: **VALENTINE'S DAY - LOVE**

Age Group: 3 to 8 years old

Time: 15 minutes to 45 minutes. Be flexible to suit the needs of the children.

Intention: To celebrate Valentine's Day through a heart-opening yoga sequence.

Preparation: Gather information about Valentine's Day, love, or opening the Heart Chakra. Use resources such as YouTube clips, newspaper reports, magazine pictures, Internet sites, guest speakers, brochures, and fiction and non-fiction books.

Opening: Explain the intention of the day's experience and ask the children about their prior experience of Valentine's Day. How did they celebrate Valentine's Day last year? What does this holiday mean to them? How do they show love to their friends and family?

Now get ready for the heart-opening sequence.

Start with a Loving Kindness visualization. Ask the children to sit comfortably cross-legged and close their eyes. Take a few deep breaths. Have them imagine giving themselves love. Instruct them to think of things that they like about themselves or that they are proud of. Then they can think of someone special and send that person love. Continue with deep breathing. Next, the children should think of someone they don't necessarily have a good relationship with or someone who needs extra attention. Send that person love. End the visualization by sending love out to everyone in the universe. Slowly open your eyes and begin your heart-opening yoga sequence below.

Journey: You could brainstorm your own list of heart-opening poses or follow the suggested *Kids Yoga Stories* sequence below. There is a combination of backbends, chest openers, and shoulder stretches, all of which are great heart-openers.

The keywords are listed in a specific sequence to create a safe kids yoga experience that encourages flow from one pose to the next. Feel free to shorten or lengthen the sequence to suit your age group by changing the number of poses. Don't forget to practice on both sides/legs. Add in your own breathing and relaxation techniques as appropriate for your students.

Focus on having fun with movement, not on practicing perfectly aligned poses. Engage the children. Follow their passions and interests. Create authentic, meaningful experiences. Cater to their energy levels and different learning styles. Be creative and

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enjoy yourselves, but please be safe. Wear comfortable clothing and practice barefoot. Encourage the children to share their yoga experiences with their family and friends.

Valentine's Day heart-opening kids yoga sequence:

1. **Easy Pose** (Sit comfortably cross-legged and rest your hands facing up on your knees. Take a few deep breaths.)
2. **Crescent Moon Pose** (From Mountain Pose, reach your arms up high over your head, bringing your palms together. Tilt your upper body to one side. Come back to center. Tilt your body to the other side.)
3. **Warrior 1 Pose** (Come to standing in Mountain Pose. Step one foot back, slightly angling it outwards, bend your front knee, and bring your arms straight up towards the sky, and look up.)
4. **Triangle Pose** (From Warrior 1 Pose, turn your upper body and take your arms out parallel to the ground in the direction of your legs. Bend at your waist, tilt your upper body, reach your front hand to gently rest on your shin, and reach your other arm straight up.)
5. **Extended Side Angle Pose** (From Triangle Pose, bend your front leg, rest your front elbow on your thigh, and reach your other arm straight up high to the sky. Look up. Repeat Warrior 1, Triangle pose, and Extended Side Angle pose on the other side.)
6. **Dancer's Pose** (Come up to standing tall in Mountain Pose. Stand on one leg, reach the opposite leg out behind you, place the outside of your foot into your hand, bend your torso forward with your arm out in front for balance, and arch your leg up behind you. Switch legs and repeat the pose.)
7. **Eagle Pose** (Stand tall in Mountain Pose, wrap one leg around the other, bring your bent arms out in front of you, wrap your arms together the opposite way, and slightly bend your knees.)
8. **Chair Pose** (Stand tall in Mountain Pose with your feet hip-width apart, bend your knees, and bring your arms straight up in front of you.)
9. **Standing Forward Bend** (From Mountain Pose, bend your upper body, and gently reach for your toes.)
10. **Pigeon Pose** (From Downward-Facing Dog Pose, bring right foot to rest behind right hand, placing right foot slightly inwards, straighten your arms, and open your chest.)
11. **Cat Pose & Cow Pose** (On all fours, tuck your chin into your chest and round your back. Then look up, open your chest, and arch your back. Repeat the sequence a few times.)
12. **Cobra Pose** (Lie on your tummy, lift your head and shoulders off ground, place palms flat next to your shoulders, and open your chest.)
13. **Bridge or Wheel Pose** (Come to lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the ground. Rest your arms down alongside your body, tuck your chin into your chest, and lift up your buttocks to create a bridge.)
14. **Table Top Pose** (Come to sitting with your palms flat behind you and the soles of your feet flat in front of you. Lift your buttocks to create a table.)
15. **Happy Baby Pose** (Lie on your back with your chin tucked in, hug your knees to your chest, then grab the outer part of your feet with both of your hands and rock like a happy baby.)
16. **Reclined Cobbler's Pose** (From lying on your back, bend your legs and bring the soles of your feet together. Take your arms out to rest at your sides. Let your whole body melt into the ground and take a few deep breaths.)
17. **Resting Pose** (Lie on your back with your arms and legs stretched out. Breathe and rest.)

For images and descriptions of the yoga poses, see <http://www.kidsyogastories.com/kids-yoga-poses>.

Closing:

Have everyone rest on their backs, imagining they are big red heart shapes. Ask the children to close their eyes and think about what love means to them. Ask them to think about all the people they love and adore in their lives. Slowly come up to Easy Pose. Feel free to add your own special ritual to end the session together, such as lighting a candle, saying 'Namaste,' or sitting in a circle.

Books about Love and Friendship:

Froggy's First Kiss by Jonathan London and Frank Remkiewicz

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

Mama, Do You Love Me? by Barbara Joosse and Barbara Lavallee

I Love You with All My Heart by Noris Kern

I Love You Because You're You by Liza Baker and David McPhail

Guess How Much I Love You by Sam McBratney and Anita Jeram

Love You Forever by Robert Munsch

Frog in Love by Max Velthuis

Love is a Handful of Honey by Giles Andreae and Vanessa Cabban

I Love My Daddy by Giles Andreae and Emma Dodd

I Love My Mommy by Giles Andreae and Emma Dodd

Anna and her Rainbow-Colored Yoga Mats by Giselle Shardlow and Emily Gedzyk



Extension Ideas:

- Make a list of random acts of kindness to do together.
- Create Valentine's Day cards to share together.
- Write "I Love You Because..." books for the special people in their life.
- Design a special treat for their parents to show their gratitude (ex. Breakfast in bed or family hike).
- Research the origin of Valentine's Day. Find out how Valentine's Day is celebrated around the world.
- Design a Valentine's Day board game to play with the class or at home.
- Make handmade gifts to share with their friends and family.
- Plant a tree or do something positive to show their love for the environment.
- Give away children's books about love and friendship.
- Do a community service project together.

Kids yoga-inspired books by Giselle Shardlow:

Sophia's Jungle Adventure

Sophia's Jungle Adventure Coloring Book

Anna and her Rainbow-Colored Yoga Mats

Luke's Beach Day

The ABC's of Australian Animals: An Interactive Kids Yoga Book

Luke's A to Z of Australian Animals: A Kids Yoga Alphabet Coloring Book

Good Night, Animal World

Many of the books above are available in Spanish and eBook format.

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Giselle

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