

## Lesson Plan:

### Handy Reflections – Supporting Emotional Awareness & Mental Health

The “**Handy Information**” activity is directly connected to **children’s mental health** because it is a **simple, developmentally appropriate reflection tool** that helps children process thoughts, emotions, and experiences in a safe, structured way.

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#### How This Supports Children’s Mental Health

##### **Thumb – “What is something new that opposes how you previously thought or acted?”**

This builds **cognitive flexibility**, helping children learn that it’s okay to change their thinking—an important skill for resilience and emotional growth.

##### **Pointer Finger – “What is something new that was pointed out to you?”**

Encourages **self-awareness and receptivity to guidance**, helping children reflect on feedback without shame or defensiveness.

##### **Middle Finger – “What is the biggest new idea?”**

Helps children **identify and prioritize key takeaways**, strengthening focus, insight, and meaning-making.

##### **Ring Finger – “What is something that rings true?”**

Invites children to connect learning to their **values, beliefs, or emotions**, which supports identity formation and emotional grounding.

##### **Pinky Finger – “What is a small change you can make that will make a difference?”**

Promotes **empowerment and agency**, teaching children that small, manageable steps can lead to positive change—crucial for mental health and confidence.

**Grade Level:** 3rd–5th Grade (adaptable)



**Time Needed:** 15–20 minutes

**Setting:** Classroom, counseling group, or faith-based school

##### **Materials:**

- Paper or journal
  - Pencil or crayons
  - Student’s hand (no special supplies required)
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## Adaptations by Age

- **K–2:** Use faces and colors
  - **3–5:** Add sentence stems
  - **6–12:** Journaling and peer empathy
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## Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Reflect on emotions and experiences in a structured way
  - Practice self-awareness, emotional regulation, and problem-solving
  - Identify one small, positive behavior change they can apply
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## Educator Preparation

Before the lesson, decide on the **context for reflection**, such as:

- A recent classroom conflict
  - A lesson about kindness, respect, or self-control
  - A transition after recess or lunch
  - A devotional or character lesson
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## Lesson Steps

### Opening (3 minutes)

**Educator says:**

“Sometimes we have big feelings or new thoughts after things happen at school. Today we’re going to use our hands to help us think and calm our minds.”

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### Explain the Handy Reflection (3 minutes)

Explain that **each finger represents a question**. Students may write, draw, or think quietly.



### Guided Reflection (7–10 minutes)

Read each question slowly, allowing time for reflection.

**Educator prompts:**

- “There are no wrong answers.”
- “You don’t have to share unless you want to.”
- “This is about learning, not getting in trouble.”

**Students may:**

- Write sentences
  - Draw pictures
  - Reflect quietly
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### Optional Sharing (3–5 minutes)

Invite volunteers to share **one finger response** (not all).

Model respectful listening: “We listen without judging or interrupting.”

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### Closing & Regulation Moment (2 minutes)

End with a grounding activity:

- Three deep breaths
- Stretch fingers and hands
- Quiet moment of gratitude

#### Faith-Based Option:



“God helps us grow in wisdom. When we pause and reflect, we make space for peace in our hearts.”

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### Assessment (Informal)

- Student participation
  - Quality of reflection (written or verbal)
  - Ability to identify a small, positive change
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### Why This Activity Supports Children’s Mental Health

- ✓ Makes emotional reflection **safe and concrete**
  - ✓ Reduces overwhelm by focusing on **small steps**
  - ✓ Encourages internal processing instead of reactive behavior
  - ✓ Builds lifelong emotional skills through repetition
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