

Introducing 8 Limbs to Children and Youth through Yoga Activities On and Off the Mat

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The 8 Limbs are not typically addressed clearly during most yoga classes. Either they are simply overlooked or embedded so deep in practice that it is not easy to recognize, and as a result, they become an esoteric addition to class and are viewed as unattainable. The 8 Limbs of yoga typically stir up thoughts of the deeply philosophical side that include, but are not limited to, meditation, breath control, asanas, turning our attention inwards, and withdrawing of the senses to achieve a focused state of oneness. However, these 8 limbs are the same as the expectations prescribed to us as Christians through the messages of Jesus.

If we, as adults, think these 8 Limbs can be complicated on and off our mats, imagine how overwhelming it is for children or youth to comprehend. But in all actuality, it is surprising how easy the applications are for children and youth.

This example helps to break down each of the 8 Limbs using a Bible scripture to accompany a yoga activity and an application off the mat.

8 Limbs	Yoga Activity (on the mat)	Application off the mat	Scripture Component
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yamas (ethical considerations) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Ahimsa: don't harm ◦ Satya: don't lie ◦ Asteya: don't steal ◦ Brahmacharya: don't philander ◦ Aparigraha: don't be greedy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Centers Meditation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Seated in an easy cross-legged pose ◦ Inhale drawing arms up through your sides bringing palms together overhead ◦ Bring hands to the forehead and pause, heart and pause and core and pause 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being kind do your friends, pets, classmates. • Being honest in your words, actions, deeds, especially academic integrity. • As a teen in the dating world, be committed to one person. • No need to ever take more of anything than you need. 	<u>Luke 6:31</u> Do to others as you would have them do to you.



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8 Limbs	Yoga Activity (on the mat)	Application off the mat	Scripture Component
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niyamas (self-observation/discipline) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Shaucha: be pure ◦ Santosha: be content ◦ Tapas: show self-discipline ◦ Svadhyaya: keep learning ◦ Ishvarapranidhana: surrender to a higher power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge Yourself! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Chair pose with heels lifted ◦ Eagle pose ◦ Crow ◦ Headstand (assisted at wall) ◦ Plank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain cleanliness at all times on yourself and your surroundings; this includes your room! Be pure in thoughts, actions, and deeds. • Be disciplined in your academics and extracurricular activities • Be open to new learning even if you struggle with "When am I ever going to use (insert academic content such as algebra!)" • Especially in times of struggle, give it up to God, surrender to God 	<u>1 Corinthians</u> <u>14:40</u> But all things should be done decently and in order.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asana: Posture 	<p>Six Degrees of Freedom for the Spine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round spine in cat pose • Arch spine in cow pose • Side stretch right • Side stretch left • Twist right • Twist left 	<p>Practice yoga poses regularly if its just one or two throughout the day. In-between classes, before and after sports.</p>	<u>1 Corinthians</u> 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pranayama: Breath Control 	<p>Double Exhale Breathing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhale - 2 Counts • Exhale - 4 Counts • Inhale - 3 Counts • Exhale - 6 Counts • Inhale - 4 Counts • Exhale - 8 Counts 	<p>Have a big test coming up? Simply breathe. Practice breathing techniques to settle your nerves before a test, presentation, or athletic event.</p>	<u>Job</u> 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.



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• Pratyahara: Withdrawing Your Senses	Explore your edge: Fixing your gaze and closing your eyes in an easy, intermediate, and challenging pose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childs Pose • Mountain Pose • Tree Pose 	Sometimes, middle and high school can be overwhelming, especially at larger schools. Pep rallies, dances, and football games can produce sensory overload. Take a few moments throughout your day to close your eyes and remove the external distractions of your day.	<u>Proverbs 4:25</u> Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you.
• Dharana: Focus	Standing & Balance Poses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warrior II  ◦ Fixing your gaze over the front middle finger ◦ Staying rooted and strong • Dancers Pose ◦ Long reach with the forward arm with the oppositional pull of back leg 	If a class is boring and daydreaming begins, far too often there is a lack of being in the present moment. Focusing on the task at hand even if there are doubts about how useful it is or interesting. Practice one-pointed focus, which goes with tuning out distractions.	<u>Colossians 3:2</u> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
• Dhyana: Meditation	Easy cross-legged pose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring with palms up and down • Closing eyes and meditating for anywhere between 3-5 minutes  	Take a moment to apply God's word to your task, a few minutes beforehand. Take those extra few minuets before a test or game to be fully present with the Lord, and select a scripture that will guide you through a challenging time	<u>Psalm 49:3</u> My mouth will speak words of wisdom; the meditation of my heart will give you understanding.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samadhi: Oneness 	<p>3 Centers Meditation in seated cross-legged pose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While in a seated cross-legged pose, draw palms of the hands together and place them in front of the forehead and then to the heart. Then to the core, connecting self to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit 	<p>Being connected to the holy trinity of Jesus, God, Holy Spirit.</p> <p>Always put God at the center of your thoughts, actions, words, deeds, and decisions.</p>	<u>John 17:21</u> ...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

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