

LESSON I: ENTER IN THE MEETING HOUSE- MEETING FOR WORSHIP, PART 1

Opening

We have found it true that the spirit of man can come into direct contact with the Spirit of God.

Christian Faith and Practice, #233,
London Yearly Meeting, 1959.

Songs: Choose among: "George Fox Song", "Enter In the Meeting House", or "Special Silence" found in *Worship in Song: A Quaker Hymnal* or *Songs of the Spirit*.

Questions

1. When you hear the word "Quaker" what words or impressions come to mind? List the responses on chart paper; participants may wish to add to or subtract from this list in future weeks. If you have newcomers, you may need to explain the words "Quaker" and "Friend".
2. What is Quaker worship time called?
3. Describe Meeting for Worship.
4. Why do you think your family comes to Meeting for Worship?

Lesson I

For the Teacher

In this first lesson we look at the physical setting of Meeting for Worship. We talk about benches, sitting, the people there, the building itself. Children need to feel comfortable just being in the meeting room - a place which may seem large and scary to them - before they can think about what is happening there.

Supplies Needed

Nametag

Chalkboard or large newsprint pad

Doll patterns copied onto white paper or onto lightweight white fabric. One boy doll and one girl doll per child.

Markers

Glue, cardboard, scissors for paper dolls, or pillow stuffing and fabric scissors for fabric dolls.

Opening

Give each child a prewritten nametag. Gather in a circle and play one of the following get-acquainted games (omit if your children are well acquainted):

- To the tune of "Frere Jacques" sing:
Where is Mary, where is Mary? (use names of your children)
Where is John, where is John?
Here we are, here we are? (stand as name is called)
Now sit down together, now sit down together,
Now sit down.
- The teacher sits at one end of the room, children sit at the other end. Select one child to be "It" and ask him/her "Bring me...(describe a child and give his/her name)." "It" brings the child described. That child becomes "It". Repeat until all the children are with the teacher.

Circle Time

Sing the chorus of "Enter in the Meeting House" in *Songs of the Spirit*, p 13, then ask the children to sit quietly for a few minutes. Read the chorus aloud. Ask the children how many have been in the meeting room. Let them describe the room. See how complete a picture you can get. As the children talk, make a simple drawing of the room on a chalkboard or newsprint pad.

Visiting the Meeting Room

If possible take your class into the meeting room. (If you cannot do this set up chairs or pillows in your classroom in a configuration similar to that of the benches in your meeting house and ask the children to pretend they are in the meeting room.) Tell the children that during the week the room is usually empty, but on Sunday people come together there for a quiet time called Meeting for Worship. Describe what happens on Sunday. Include people arriving, greeting one another, sitting down quietly in different parts of the room, rising to speak, and finally shaking hands.

Listening Exercise

Ask each child to find a special comfortable place to sit in the meeting room (or in your reconstructed meeting room). Ask the children to close their eyes and listen quietly. Ask them to listen for sounds outside the room, then for sounds in the room, and finally for sounds inside themselves. Ask them what they heard. Explain that people in Meeting are listening - especially to the sounds inside themselves. You might describe these sounds as the sounds of thinking or in the words of one four-year-old, "What goes on behind my eyes." Return to your classroom.

Possible Extension of this Exercise

1. Read *A Little House of Your Own* + by Beatrice Schenk de Regnier, Harcourt Brace, 1954, or *A House is a House for Me* + by Mary Ann Hoberman, Puffin Books, 1982. Each describes finding a special place of one's own.
2. Go on a quiet walk. Ask the children to concentrate on sights, or colors, or sounds. Stress the idea of being quiet for a reason. You can walk outside or inside. When you get back, make a list or draw pictures of what you heard and saw.

Listening Game

Play "Simon Says". Emphasize the importance of listening in this game. Use "shake hands" and "sit quietly" as two of the directions. A child might like to be the leader.

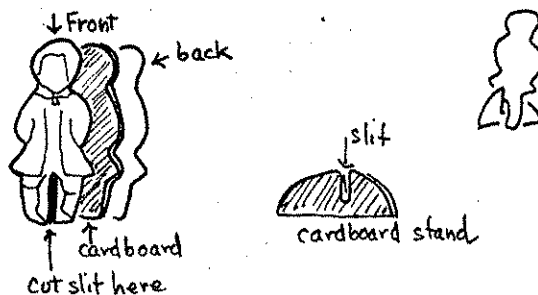
An Alternative Listening Game

"Listening With a Word" - Children stand in a circle. Choose a word or phrase and, as they go around the circle, ask each child to say the word louder than the child before. Then, as they go around the circle again, say the word softer each time.

Art Activity

Using the patterns following this lesson, the children will make Quaker dolls. First show the children pictures of Quakers in old fashioned, plain dress. The Obadiah books by Brinton Turkle, especially *Obadiah the Bold* +, have good illustrations, as does *Thee, Hannah!* + by Marguerite De Angeli. Give each child the outlines of a girl doll and of a boy doll. Two possibilities:

1. Photocopy the patterns onto white paper. The children color and cut them out. Place a piece of cardboard, precut to the doll's shape, between the front and back of the doll before gluing the front and back of the dolls together. The cardboard will make the doll sturdier. Pre-make



stands for these paper dolls. Cut a slit in the stand and a slit in the base of the doll. Insert the stand into the doll so it will stand up.

2. Trace the patterns onto white fabric. Use a laundry marking pen for tracing. To trace, the fabric must be light enough to see the pattern through. The children color the fabric dolls with markers. The teacher cuts out the fabric pieces and takes the dolls home to sew together and stuff. If you have a large group, divide this task up among several adults. You could also bring a portable sewing machine to class and sew the dolls there. The children can then help stuff them.

In either case label the dolls with names and keep them in the classroom until next week.

Story or Game

Gather in a circle. Ask the children what it means to be "as quiet as a mouse." When we are in Meeting we are "as quiet as mice." Then do one of the following:

- Read "The Mouse", pp. 3 & 4 in *Where's God* + by Katherine Hunn Karsner. A little stuffed mouse or mouse puppet will help as you tell the story.
- Do the following Finger Play (adjust to your class size):

MICE

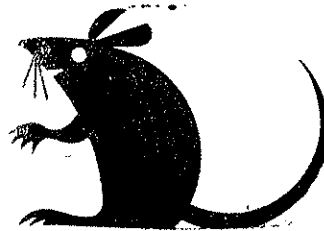
Three little mice on padded feet
Softly walk, quietly ear. (do appropriate motions)
No one hears them ("shhh") pitter, pat (creep)
Softly not to waken cat. (whisper slowly)
No one sees them (thumbs and forefingers over eyes)
In the night
Nibbling cheese (chew) with great delight!

Ask the children to tiptoe around being as quiet as mice while you read:

BE A MOUSE

(Do appropriate movements for mice)

Quiet and small, be a mouse,
Tiptoe and whisper in the house.
Talk very softly here in class,
Listen as the big folks pass,
Slowly creep without a peep...and hide!
And run and scamper when outside.

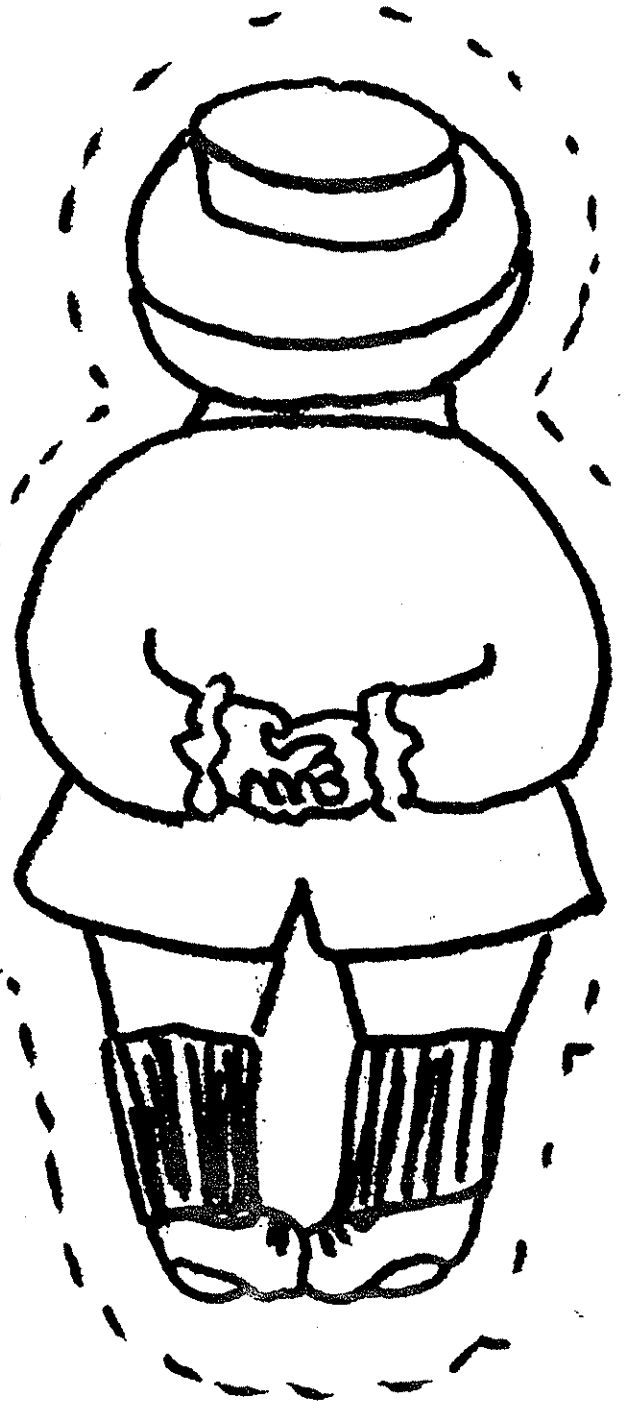
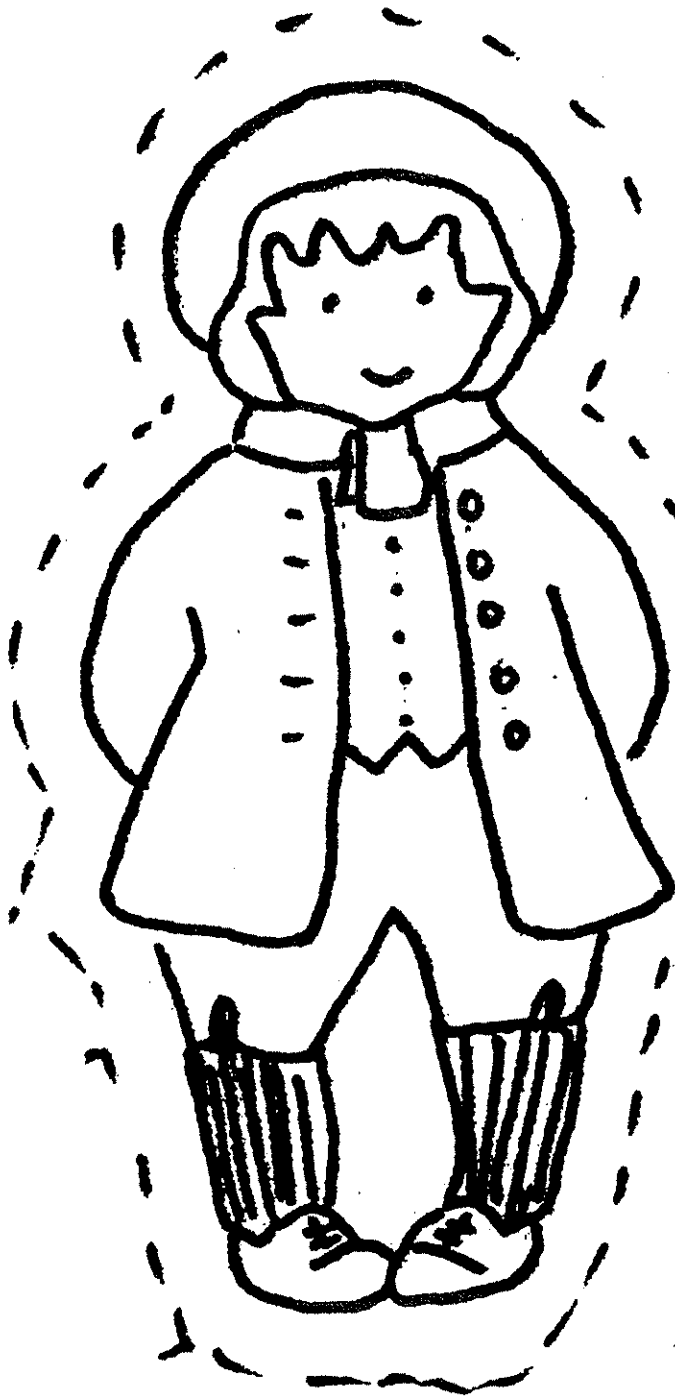


Closing

Re-gather in a circle. Teach the song "As We Leave This Friendly Place", #7 in *A Hymnal for Friends*. Sit quietly for a short time, then break the silence with a handshake.

+ Available from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library

For cloth dolls; cut on dotted lines; sew on outside lines (tight sides together), leaving about 2" open for stuffing; clip curves.



Our thanks to Rebecca Robinson for these patterns.

