LESSON VIII: 'TIS THE GIFT TO BE SIMPLE-
THE TESTIMONY OF SIMPLICITY

Opening

A life centered in God will be characterized by integrity, sincerity and simplicity...its activities and expressions should be...directed toward the simple, direct purpose of deepening one's communication with God open and unencumbered by that which is unessential.

Faith and Practice, p. 19
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1972 revision.

Songs: Choose from "Dona Nobis Pacem", in *A Hymnal for Friends*, or "'Tis the Gift to be Simple", in *Songs of the Spirit*.

Questions
1. What does the word "simple" mean? In the song we just sang it has a special meaning; can you figure out what that meaning is?

2. Why do you think Friends try to keep their lives simple or uncluttered? How do you feel when you have too much to do or too much going on at one time?

3. What does it mean to tell the truth? Is it hard to be truthful sometimes? Why? How do you feel when you tell a lie?

LESSON VIII

For the Teacher
We consider two things here: telling the truth and finding beauty in simple things. Truth for this age is a slippery concept. The difference between fantasy and reality is not clear. Therefore keep your examples very clear and concrete.

Supplies needed

Paper bags	White paper
Glue	Nature pictures
Markers	Boxed water colors and brushes if it is rainy

Opening and Song
Sing "Magic Penny", from *Songs of the Spirit*. Tell the children: One way to show love for one another is it be careful to tell other people what is really happening. If you take a cookie from the kitchen without asking your mother or father and then your mother says "Who took the cookie?", you can say, "I did " or "I don't know" or "My sister did". Which answer is true? Which tells what really happened? If you tell a lie (say what is not true), how do you feel? Does it feel better to tell the truth or to lie?

Story
Read either *The Berenstain Bears and the Truth*+ by Stan and Jan Berenstain, Random House, 1983, or *The Adventures of Obadiah*+ by Brinton Turkle, Viking, 1972, or tell the Aesop fable of the "Boy Who Cried Wolf". Try using a flannel board for the "Boy Who Cried Wolf." Ask questions such as these (tailored to fit the story you choose):
- Who tells a lie in this story?
- What happens because of that lie?
- What does the character(s) who lies learn?

Nature Walk and Project

Take the children on a walk outside. Give each child a small paper bag. Ask them to collect objects as they walk - leaves, twigs, flowers, stones, etc. When you come back inside, give each child a large piece of paper. Have glue available. Make montages with the found objects, gluing them on the paper. As they work, talk about finding beauty outside in natural things. They can name natural things they like - sunshine, rain, butterflies, rainbows. Have some nature photographs from magazines.

A rainy day alternative: Talk about natural things the children enjoy. Bring in some pictures. Then ask them to make a picture of one of those things. Use small boxed water colors (one box for every two children) and nice white paper. If you did not make rainbows last week, that activity would be appropriate here.

Game

Play a game the children have enjoyed from a previous lesson. See Lessons VII and IV.

Closing

Gather in a circle. Tell the children: "For the last few weeks we have been talking about ways God wants us to act - working together, accepting each other, settling arguments, telling the truth, appreciating nature. Meeting for Worship and our quiet times here give us a chance to think about these things. Now listen to this story. Try picturing the scenes in your head." Read *The Runaway Bunny*+, Harper, 1977, or *Goodnight, Moon*+, Harper, 1977, by Margaret Wise Brown; a story from *Owl At Home*+ by Arnold Lobel; Harper & Row, 1982, *Play With Me*+, by Marie Hall Ets, or another descriptive story. Give each child paper and one marker. As you sit quietly, ask them to draw, if they wish, what comes to mind.

Close with "As We Leave This Friendly Place" and a handshake.

+Available from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library