

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

Songs: Choose among: "George Fox Song" Songs of the Spirit #3
 "Enter In the Meeting House" Songs of the Spirit #13
 "Special Silence" Songs of the Spirit #6

Questions:

1. When you hear the word "Quaker" what words or impressions come to mind? - Record responses on newsprint; participants may wish to add to or subtract from this list in future weeks. You may need to explain the words "Quaker" and "Friend", if you have newcomers.
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 lesson the main goal is to find out what the children think is happening in Meeting for Worship. It is very important to accept what the children say on this topic. Quakers see worship as an experience, an experience which grows and changes as we do. As adults we can answer children's questions from our experience, but we cannot make our experience theirs. This lesson also helps children get to know the meeting room itself.

Needed:

Pencil and paper

Supplies for making a model of the meeting room (listed in lesson)

Get Acquainted Game (Omit if your group is well acquainted)

Choose one:

Gesture Name Game - Sit in a circle. Each person in turn, without hesitating, makes a gesture while saying his/her name at the same time. Name and gesture go together in some sort of rhythm. Then the group together repeats the name and gesture twice. The second person takes a turn. The visual, non-verbal action helps associate names and faces. Keep the pace lively and quick.

Meetings: Record player needed. When the music starts, players walk around quickly in all directions, avoiding contact. When the music stops, each player shakes hands with the nearest person and discovers as much personal information as possible until the music restarts (5-7 seconds). The process is repeated; each time the child must greet someone new.

Both games from For the Fun of It! by Marta Harrison, Nonviolence and Children Committee, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Song and Sharing Circle:

Sing "Enter In the Meeting House", Songs of the Spirit #13. Gather the children in a circle. Tell the children you are going to have a "Sharing Circle". The process is very simple, really a form of worship sharing. The teacher asks a question or states an incomplete sentence; she/he will ask each child in turn to respond to the question or to finish the sentence. No child has to answer, but by accepting what is said, the teacher can encourage responses. If the teacher answers first, that answer often has too much influence on the children's answers. Instead, ask a confident child to answer first. Discourage discussion during this process; the idea is to hear what each child has to say, not to evaluate what is said. After each child has a chance to speak, if children seem to have more to say, allow time for open discussion.

For this lesson, explain the "Sharing Circle" process and ask the following questions:

What does our meeting room look like?

Describe Meeting for Worship. What happens?

What do you do in Meeting for Worship?

After each question, summarize briefly what has been said. Ask the children if they have any questions they would like to ask about Meeting for Worship.

Activity:

"Meeting Machines" - Divide your class into small groups of 4 or 5. Each group spends 5-10 minutes making a "Meeting Machine" which illustrates how Meeting would look if it were a machine. For example, a group might come in wheeling and spinning in all directions; as the individuals touch they settle into silence. The teacher should move from group to group and give help as needed. Each group presents its machine to the others. Talk about the reasons the children have for choosing to depict Meeting for Worship in the ways they did.

Art Activity:Constructing a Meeting Room:

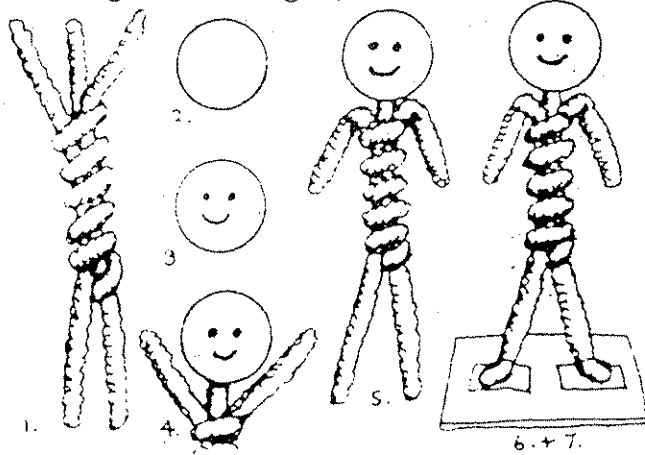
If you can, take the children into the meeting room. Ask them to make charts of the room. They should note where benches, windows and doors are. If you cannot go into the meeting room, make a chart in your classroom on a chalkboard or newsprint. Ask the children to help you remember where windows, doors and benches are.

Divide the group among the following three activities (if your class is very small, skip #3 and just tape the benches onto a piece of cardboard). You will be constructing a model of your meeting room.

1. Benches - See the pattern at the end of this lesson. Decide how many benches you will need. You may not be able to fit in as many as there really are, but the configuration can be similar.
2. People - Choose one method. The advantage of wire is that it bends.
 - a. Wire Figures

Materials - chenille-covered wire or telephone wire about 4" long, cardboard, tape.

Procedure - 1. Fasten two pieces of wire together by winding a third piece of wire around the middle of the two. Leave some of the two wires unwrapped at the top and bottom for the arms and legs. Leave one end of the third wire sticking up between the two arms to make the neck.

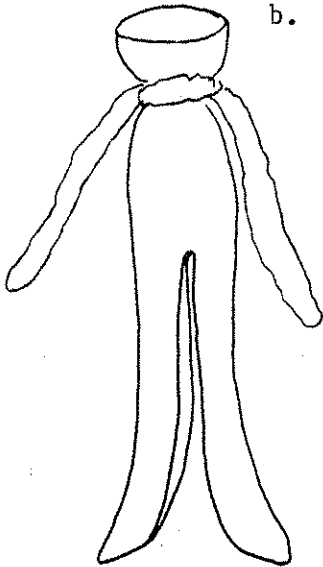


2. Cut a circle for the head out of paper.
3. Make a face on it.
4. Glue the head to the neck.
5. Shape the arms and legs as you wish.
6. Turn up about 1/4 inch of the leg wire for feet.
7. To make your figure stand up, tape the feet to a piece of cardboard.
8. Dress in scraps of material or crepe paper; use tape or glue or pins to fasten clothes on.

b. Clothespin People

Materials: Wooden clothespins, pipe cleaners, pins, thread and needles. Paper tissues. Elmer's glue. Crepe paper or fabric scraps.

Procedure - 1. Twist pipe cleaner around neck of clothespin to make arms. 2. Cover head with a tissue. Tie on with thread at neck. Special heads for clothespins are available at craft stores. 3. If stout figure is desired, wrap cotton batting around waist and tie on with thread. 4. Clothes can be made out of fabric or crepe paper. Glue, sew or pin clothes on. A gathered skirt is easy to make with a needle and thread. Shawls and scarves are also simple. For pants color the clothespin legs with magic markers. For a simple shirt, cut a neck hole in a small rectangle of fabric. Slip over the doll's head and tie around the waist with thread, string or ribbon. 5. Features can be added or not as desired. The area is so small it is often better not to attempt it. A base of plastilene allows the figure to stand up.



3. The Meeting Room - Cut the top and one side off a large box. Precut windows and doors in the sides; follow your diagram of the meeting room. The children can make carpet out of fabric or construction paper, color the walls, cut out bushes and trees for the outside, make mullions for the windows out of construction paper and add any details peculiar to your meeting house. After everyone is done, assemble the room. Tape in the benches, and add the people. If the project is not finished, continue next week.

Alternative: Let children design an ideal meetinghouse. First brainstorm what the building would be like. Then do drawings in small groups or all together. Finally, construct a model of the meetinghouse. This project takes more than one week.

Closing:

Gather in a circle. Teach the song "Kum Bah Yah!", Songs of the Spirit, #52. Tell the children this song is a simple prayer, asking God to be with us. Use the same process you did for the opening - a "Sharing Circle." Go around the group with this question: What is one thing you might think about in Meeting for Worship? or If a Martian came into our class, what is one thing you could tell him about Meeting for Worship? Then ask the children to sit quietly for a few minutes. Tell the children you will close with a short quiet time every week. Close by singing the chorus of "Kum Bah Yah!" and shaking hands.

BENCHES

1. Trace or photocopy pattern onto heavy paper.
2. Cut along solid lines
3. Fold on dotted lines. Use a ruler to transfer dotted lines onto your cut-outs.
4. Tape the folded flap on the bottom of the legs to the floor of your meeting room model.
5. You can tape on arm rests, if you want.
6. Add cushions made out of construction paper.

