

OPENING

Meetings for the transaction of business are conducted in the same expectant waiting for the guidance of the spirit as is the meeting for worship.

Faith and Practice, p. 17

Songs: Select from those in Lesson I and add:

"Dear Lord and Father of Mankind"      A Hymnal for Friends #83  
(Revised words in Songs of the Spirit #125)

Questions:

1. When you are with a group of friends, how do you decide what you're going to do? Does everyone have a say?
2. Do you ever ask someone else to help you with a difficult decision? Do you ever ask God to help?
3. Do you know how Friends try to make decisions? Describe that process briefly.
4. Why don't Friends vote in Business Meeting?

LESSON III

For the Teacher: This lesson begins with a discussion of two interconnected Quaker beliefs, central to Business Meeting and to Meeting for Worship. First, there is that of God, often called the Inner Light, in each person (not just in Quakers); each person is, therefore, valuable and has the potential to be and do good. Second, general access to the Divine means a general responsibility to serve God. Business Meeting is a place where Quakers take responsibility as a group; each person's contribution is important. This lesson provides a chance for children to experience this decision-making process.

Children can continue work on mats or pillows (Lesson II) as time allows.

Needed:

Slide-making supplies as listed below.

Opening Song and Story:

Gather in a circle. Sing the first and last verse of "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind," A Hymnal for Friends #83 (alternative words in Songs of the Spirit, #125)

Tell the story of Elijah on Mount Sinai, I Kings 19:3-15. Do not go into historical details. Describe Elijah as a prophet or man of God with a special message to share. He ran away into the wilderness because he was afraid. In the wilderness God spoke to him in a "still, small voice." God tells Elijah to return to Israel and continue his prophecies. Emphasize to the children that God speaks to Elijah in a whisper. Elijah is running away, but God sends him back. When God speaks to Elijah, Elijah does not like what he hears but he does obey God. Tell the children that God speaks to us in many ways; one way is to

tell us inside ourselves what is right and what is wrong. Ask the children to describe times they felt they had to do something because it was right.

Continue by telling the children that Elijah did two things: he listened and he acted. The "still, small voice" which Elijah heard for Friends is the Inner Light, that of God in each of us. We, like Elijah, can call on God for help.

Alternative Story: Jonah

Art and Activity:

Slide making

Supplies:

1. Blank photographic slides - most photography stores sell blank transparencies.
2. Pens or pencils made for writing on acetate - office and school-supply stores have these.
3. Paper and markers

Process:

1. Depict the Inner Light in visual terms on a piece of paper. Keep it simple.
2. Transfer that picture to a slide. Use the special pens or pencils provided.
3. When the slides are finished, show them to the class. Children may want to comment on their work. Then collect and save to show at the final session, Lesson IX.

Alternatives:

1. Tell the Elijah story via a "movie screen". See Lesson VI, p. 24 for directions.
2. Make sequential pictures of the Elijah story. Assign each child a scene. Do as a comic strip or mural.
3. Act out the Elijah story.
4. Make a felt board of the Elijah story.

Game: Play one of these active games before moving to the final discussion:

Switchbacks: Everyone is in pairs, back to back. If there is an odd number of children, the free child sings or talks in monologue (or plays some kind of simple instrument, e.g. drum), while everyone moves around the room, back-to-back with his or her partner (elbows can be locked). When the singing stops, each child finds a new partner and the free child must find a partner. The current odd child is now the music-maker and the game is repeated. The teacher can play, if there is an even number of children.

Dragon: Works best with not more than seven to eight children. Everyone gets into a line holding the waist of the person in front with their hands, not arms. Then the "head" (first person in line) of the dragon tries to touch the "tail" (the last person in line) while the "body" (people in between) help keep the "tail" from being touched without anyone losing grip of the waist of the person in front. If there is more than one line, then each line can operate independently of each other or think up something that would cause the various lines to interact.

From For the Fun of It! by Marta Harrison

Making a Decision:

Remind the children that we talked about decision-making in the intergenerational opening time. Now we are going to talk about how Quakers make decisions as a group.

Ask this question:

Do you know what Business Meeting is?

Tell the children that Business Meeting is a place where Friends make decisions together. They share feelings and they listen as Elijah did. They try to act as God wants them to.

Ahead of time write the following list on newsprint or the chalkboard and tape it up.

In a Meeting for Business:

1. A person called the clerk leads the meeting.
2. A person called the recording secretary or clerk takes notes.
3. The clerk presents an issue.
4. Anyone may speak about the issue.
5. Sometimes there is silence between speakers
6. After all viewpoints are stated, the clerk tries to summarize what has been said. If this is a decision, he calls it the sense of the meeting.
7. There is time to comment on the summary
8. When the clerk feels there is agreement, he asks for approval. The meeting approves or disapproves and the secretary records the decision in what is called a minute. There is no voting or show of hands.
9. If someone feels strongly that the decision is wrong, he/she can block the decision or stand aside after stating his/her opposition. Often Friends will wait a week or two and return to the issue then.

As you go over this list translate "Quakerese" into language the children will understand. Use examples from your own meeting. Stress that participants are seeking God's guidance as they try to reach decisions.

Now work with the children to make a decision. Act as clerk yourself or choose an older child to do this. Present the issue. Choose from those listed below or, better yet, develop one relevant to your meeting.

1. Your classroom needs rules. It is the class' job to come up with a list of rules. Brainstorm possibilities, then consider each suggestion separately. Make sure all the children agree to each rule.
2. Someone has given the class \$500. How should it be spent? ... or the class has raised \$500. What should be done with the money?
3. How can the children help the meeting? Develop a specific plan.
4. The meeting is concerned that members do not know each other very well. Develop a plan for helping Friends get to know each other.

Minute your decision. Is the decision one children can follow up on? If so, provide some time in future weeks for follow-up. Ask the children if this process is one they might use in other settings - with friends or siblings.

Closing:

Gather in a circle. Light a candle and place it in the center of the circle. Ask the children to concentrate on the candle. Sit quietly. End with "Kum Bah Yah!" and a handshake. The children will enjoy making up motions to go with "Kum Bah Yah!"