

Nifty Ideas *for First Day Schools*

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Children's Religious Education

Worship Sharing with Children

Objective:

To explore a query with the Spirit in a way that is accessible to children.

Introduction for the Children

- ✎ Explain that queries are a way that Quakers examine and guide our lives and actions. Rather than telling Friends what to do, Quakerism asks Friends to explore carefully what we are called to do.
- ✎ Explain that worship sharing is a way that Friends explore queries and share our measure of Light with each other. The general points of worship sharing are detailed on the back.

Activity

- ✎ Share with the children what the group is going to do before starting. Include yourself as a participant, not as a director of the activity.
- ✎ Give each child something beautiful to hold – a polished stone, an acorn or seashell, etc.
- ✎ Center down with the children for a minute or less, or more!
- ✎ Share a query related to a lesson or story or theme the class has been exploring (see examples on the back).
- ✎ Each person may hold the object for a moment while reflecting on what s/he has to say about the query. Then each person may either share their thoughts with everyone or silently tell the object their idea and put the object in a basket you have set in the middle of the circle. You may choose to go in order or not.
- ✎ Another version is to hand a single beautiful object that is reminiscent of the query (for example, paper crane for peace, a leaf for stewardship) to a member of the circle. That person shares his or her thoughts (out loud or privately) and then passes the object to the next person.

Worship Sharing is a tool and a manner of worship adults engage in frequently to help them focus deeply and sharply on a specific topic.

This month's *Nifty Idea* shares how Worship Sharing can be accessible to children.

For more lessons on centering with children, try From the Center Out by the Children and Young People at Yearly Meeting Working Group (go to www.pym.org/education/capsules/13.htm for a description) and Opening Doors to Quaker Worship by the RE Committee of FGC. Both are available at QuakerBooks of FGC and the PYM library.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

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Nifty Idea: Worship Sharing

Worship Sharing Guidelines

- ✎ Friends are asked to each speak one time, although no one is required to share out loud if they don't want to.
- ✎ When one person is speaking, everyone else directs all of the attention of their heart and mind to the words of the speaker. This is not a time to be formulating one's own response to the query!
- ✎ Friends receive each person's sharing as a gift without judgment.
- ✎ Each Friend shares what is True to him/herself. Responses may end up being shaped in part by previous speakers, but the response should be to the query, not to what others have already said.
- ✎ Leave time between each response to allow the words to settle on each person before the next person speaks.

Sample Queries for Children

- ✎ What are the good things about including people who are really different, even people I don't like, in my community?
- ✎ What is really hard about including people who are different and whom I don't like in my community?
- ✎ What is most important in my life? If a stranger followed me around and watched what I do and say everyday, would she be able to figure out correctly what the most important thing is?
- ✎ How can I remain peaceful if people around me are fighting?
- ✎ Can a person or a country create peace by participating in a war?
- ✎ How many toys are enough? Do I have enough or too many or too few??
- ✎ What is most important in my life? Do I have time for those important things or are there too many other things crowding them out?