

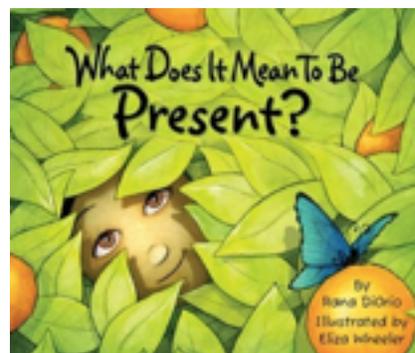
Remembering, Hoping, and Being Present

With thanks to Beth Collea for language in her lesson on Silence as a Tool.

Adapted for home!

Materials

- Medium-sized mixing bowl or other container (transparent and unbreakable, if possible)
- Blank paper cut into pieces which will fit easily into the bowl (blank index cards work well)
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Optional: Small stones and glass beads in their own baskets or containers
- Optional: Children's book "What Does It Mean to Be Present?" by Rana Diorio (can also be viewed on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stnz10c2tt0>)



Opening

Gather in a comfortable space (sitting on the floor, around the kitchen table) with children and other family members.

Begin with a few minutes of centering silence, or sharing 5 deep breaths together.

Hand out two pieces of paper/index cards to each person, and provide time to write or draw:

- (1) something they want to remember — that already happened
- (2) something they are looking forward to — that will happen in the future

Invite anyone who would like to share their memory and/or hope. Let this be voluntary, and encourage listening to one another.

We Gather for Worship — with our Meeting, or at Home

[Italicized words are for the adult facilitator to share. They are meant as a guide, and you may find your own way to express the meaning.]

In our Quaker meeting community, we help each other to hold our memories and hopes, joys and sorrows, big feelings and wonderings by worshipping together.

*[Bring out the bowl or container.
Hold it up and touch the inside surface and the outside surface.]*



Our community gathered for meeting for worship is like this bowl. When we come to meeting, Friends are waiting, and listening, in the silence together. In the silence, all our experiences, feelings, needs, and hopes are held in the Light.

Meeting for worship can happen and we can be held in the Light at any time, in any place, not just in the meetinghouse.¹

Let's add our memories from the past and hopes for the future to the bowl.

[Invite those present to fold their papers and add them to the bowl in the center of the group, or while passing it around.]

Meeting for worship has room to hold our whole selves. It is a very strong vessel!

(Continue, or use "Alternative" on next page)

We can also bring any strong feelings or problems or big questions to meeting for worship. I'm going to pass around a basket of stones. Stones are sometimes heavy, and problems and questions can feel heavy. If you would like to add a stone to the bowl, you may. It might represent something for you today, or just be a reminder that we can bring this part of our selves to worship, too.

[Pass around basket of stones. Children do not need to add one, only as they are led. Hold the silence while you're doing this.]

In worship, we invite the Light, the divine presence of God, to shine on everything we bring to worship. We each bring more of the Light when we gather. These beads could remind us of the Light each of us bring to our family, and our meeting community.

[Pass around a basket or box of the clear glass beads or some other small object to represent "light;" invite the children to add "Light" to the bowl. Hold the silence, allowing that this might be joyful and fun, too!]

The bowl is like the strong, open, prepared space in meeting for worship, where we bring who we are and who we hope to be. It can hold our joys and concerns, as we listen together for God. We can be like this bowl when we gather with our meeting, with another person, and as a family.

¹ Use the language appropriate for the space where you worship with your community.

Afterward

[Make space for the children to share their ideas from those last two additions to the bowl — if they choose to do so. This is like joys and sorrows at the end of worship. If it feels right to be more specific about feelings children are experiencing during the COVID-19 time, invite that, but don't assume it is the focus of their feelings. You might ask:]

I wonder what is on your heart? What is heavy? Where is the Light?

Close the time by deciding on a place in your home to place the bowl. If you are having worship together at home, perhaps the bowl will be part of that time together. You could also make paper available close by, to add new memories, hopes, present feelings; rocks and "Light" can be available for children to add when a strong feeling rises and they need a place for it.

Alternative to using the rocks and beads: "What does it mean to be present?"

[After *"Meeting for worship has room to hold our whole selves. It is a very strong vessel!"*]

Meeting for worship can hold our past experiences, and our future hopes, and also how we are feeling now. I wonder what does it mean to be present in the "now?"

[Read the story, showing the illustrations, or watch the story be read on YouTube.]

Let's settle into silence, and pay attention to how the silence feels. Listen inside, pay attention to your feelings, and also how your body is feeling. Write or draw what you noticed.

[Give the children each a third paper/card, and invite them to write or draw on it how they are feeling right now, in this moment. Invite them to pay attention as described above.]

[Add the third pieces of paper to the bowl. Settle back into silence for a few minutes.]

Afterward

Make space for the children to share anything they wanted to from those last additions to the bowl, if they would like to share. This is like joys and sorrows at the end of worship. See suggestions above for closing: decide where to keep the bowl for family worship at home, and ways to keep adding to it as needed.

