



*Celebrating
The
Seasons*

Ideas for First-Day Schools

Published by

Curriculum Subcommittee
Religious Education Committee
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
September, 1994



**Philadelphia
Yearly Meeting**

of the Religious Society of Friends

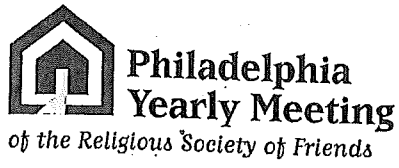
INTRODUCTION

"Celebrating the Seasons" is the brainchild of the Curriculum Subcommittee of the Religious Education Committee of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. This talented and dedicated group found that their enjoyment of their time together in committee meetings was enhanced by discussions of what each First-Day School was doing to celebrate the "special" times of year in their Meetings. One idea would spark another and the group soon found that they all benefited from the sharing that ensued - so much so that after their last project was completed, when they were called to decide on their next effort, they felt a leading to share their enthusiasm with Friends at large in this packet.

In it, you will find ideas suitable for small, wide-age-range classes, and for large classes too. Some of these ideas will be familiar to Friends in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting area from other publications, or from our recently introduced "Nifty Ideas". The Religious Education Committee welcomes ideas from all sources. Where an idea seems especially creative and useful, we have identified the source.

Members of the Subcommittee who worked on this packet include Lynne Brick (Medford Meeting), Elinor (Penny) Briggs (Middletown Meeting, Concord Quarter), Kathy Corley (Middletown Meeting, Bucks Quarter), Linda Edwards (Medford Meeting), Sally Farneth (Middletown Meeting, Bucks Quarter), Edith (Chula) Nicholson, (Haaverford Meeting), and Lynne Piersol (Swarthmore Meeting). The editor was Martha G. Smith, Executive Secretary, Religious Education Committee (Moorestown Meeting); Martha Haines, Religious Education Committee, helped with typing, formatting, and graphics.

We welcome your questions and comments on our packet: write or phone Marty Smith, Religious Education Committee, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, (215) 241-7221. And please do send us your seasonal ideas for inclusion in our next edition!



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SEPTEMBER IDEAS

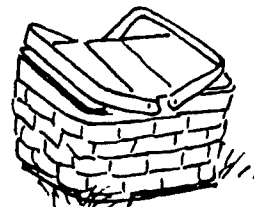
Pre-Opening Day Activities (assuming First-Day School classes are not held in the summer):

Plan a *First-day School Picnic*, a week or two before the opening First-day class wherein:

Parents and children can meet their teacher(s).

Teachers can talk about what they will be teaching.

First-day Committee can talk about events coming up
(such as a Christmas Pageant).



Hold *Teacher Training Session(s)*, a week or two before FDS starts. Ask First-day teachers to come to one two-hour session or two one-hour sessions (perhaps during Meeting for Worship), with child care provided. Offer coffee, juice and donuts or rolls. During that time:

Teachers become acquainted with one another, especially those with whom they are "team" teaching.

Curriculum material is given out.

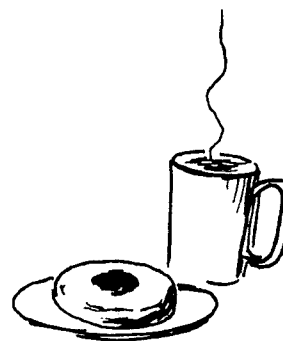
Meeting calendar of important events is circulated--so teachers know which First-days they have to teach.

Post cards and addresses of children and youth are distributed, to invite them to the opening class.

Teachers get to look at their rooms and see what supplies they need.

Emergency exits and first-aid procedures are outlined.

Basic teaching techniques are offered, especially for inexperienced teachers.



On the first day of classes

Have a coffee or snack time for parents, children and teachers, or

Have a covered-dish lunch after Meeting to talk about the First-day program and get acquainted.

Have a Quaker Visitor come to emphasize the theme of the year.





OCTOBER IDEAS

William Penn's Birthday*, October 24

Have a big birthday cake or cupcakes. Send invitations to the Meeting or local community.

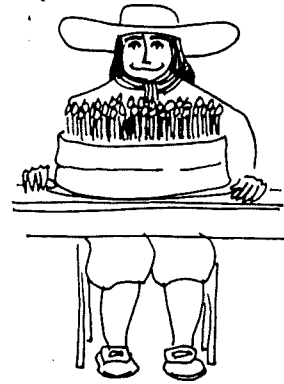
Invite someone dressed up as William Penn to visit your Meeting.

Use the William Penn Curriculum Packet published by the R.E. Committee and available from F.G.C. Bookstore.

Have a game show using the "Jeopardy" format for all ages using answers about William Penn's life.

View the film on William Penn available from the PYM Library.

Take a trip to Pennsbury Manor between Bristol and Morrisville, Pa. on the Delaware River, the home of William Penn. Phone: (215) 946-0400, or write: 400 Pennsbury Memorial Road, Morrisville, PA, 19067.



Note: person in charge should visit the Manor before the trip to be familiar with the site and share information. There may not be guided tours available. Tailor your visit to the age of your First-Day School class.

**Other Quaker Birthdays* - Choose a different Quaker but use a similar format each month of the year. Instead of a birthday cake, the treat could be a dessert from that period in time. Facts about the person could be presented in an interesting format: stories, pictures, games, role-plays, etc.

UNICEF

Collect UNICEF money individually: send to 333 East 38th St., New York, NY, 10016.

Small children go in costume to a nearby retirement community; check to see if prior permission is needed.

Younger kids dress in costumes and collect for UNICEF as people go into Meeting; Meeting members are reminded for several weeks in advance to bring coins for that day.

Bake Sale - Instead of trick-or-treating to support UNICEF, hold a bake sale at the rise of Meeting. Publicize your event a couple of First-Days ahead. Have the children bring in baked goods. Many people enjoy buying a quick snack, so package some items individually, like brownies or cookies. One technique to boost sales is to have one class bake something aromatic like gingerbread during or before Meeting so the scent is in the air! Children enjoy selling and making change (keep prices reasonable to facilitate this.)

United States Committee for

unicef 

United Nations Children's Fund

Have current UNICEF catalogs available: order Christmas cards from UNICEF; profits go to the Fund. (1 Children's Boulevard, PO Box 182233, Chattanooga, Tenn, 37422; 1-800-553-1200.)

Show a film about UNICEF: borrow from the local distributor of UNICEF boxes.

International/intergenerational Activities to highlight the UNICEF effort

Set up "stations" around the meeting house where each of these topics is addressed for a particular country: 1) Write a letter to a pen pal. 2) Show the local dress 3) have a local craft or art lesson from that country. 4) Give a brief geography/cultural lesson. 5) Make and/or sample a food of the country. 6) Show a video. 7) Have a member of the Meeting or community share their knowledge. 8) Show artifacts from the country. Even very young children will retain a bit of the day.

Example: Middle East - One center may have small squares of paper to be used to make a "mosaic." Show several samples of mosaics; children copy the style and technique, and make individual pictures. At another station, a Fairy tale or poetry from the area can be heard.

Halloween Story

This is a touching story of how a _____ boy turned a pumpkin's insecurities about his "bulge" and "lopsidedness" into a prize-winning pumpkin. This is best told in the teacher's own words.

Kg - 2nd grade.

The Crooked Pumpkin

by Jill Taylor

Like all other pumpkins, the pumpkin in this story grew on a long trailing vine with broad prickly leaves, and was the center of a large funnel-shaped blossom. At one time, this pumpkin - like other pumpkins of its kind - was no bigger than a green pea. As it continued to grow, it became as large as a baseball, and still it grew. But, when it was almost as big as a basketball, something unusual happened to it. It began to grow crooked. One of its sides got bigger than the other, and its stem was not in the center of its top. The result was that this pumpkin was no longer as round as a ball. It was, to be frank, lopsided. Then, to make matters worse, a small bulge appeared on one side.

One day, one of the round pumpkins growing nearby called attention to the crooked pumpkin. "Look at the lopsided pumpkin!" it called out.

"Yes, I've noticed it," replied another round pumpkin. "I've asked myself who would want *him* for a jack-o'-lantern."



"I doubt that anybody would want a lopsided pumpkin even for a pie!" said another pumpkin.

The crooked pumpkin heard these remarks and became very unhappy. They are not being fair, he told himself. I did not ask to grow up this way, and I cannot help it if I am lopsided. The more he thought about it, the sorrier he felt for himself.

Later, when all the pumpkins had turned bright orange, the farmer who had planted them and his son, Jimmy, came to pick them. The farmer laughed when he saw the crooked pumpkin.

"Nobody would want that funny looking pumpkin!" he said. "We'll just leave it here in the field."

He and Jimmy picked all the other pumpkins and loaded them into their truck. When they had finished, Jimmy's father said, "Now, Jimmy, you may choose any pumpkin you want for a jack-o'-lantern."

"I'll take this one!" Jimmy replied promptly.

The crooked pumpkin peeked out from among the vines to see which one Jimmy had chosen. Jimmy was pointing right at him! At first, the pumpkin could not believe it, but, sure enough, Jimmy picked up the crooked pumpkin and started to carry it to the truck. Jimmy had taken only two or three steps when the pumpkin noticed that he walked with a limp. One of Jimmy's legs was crooked, and he wore a heavy metal brace.

"Why did you choose that pumpkin for a jack-o'-lantern?" his father asked, surprised.

"Because it's lopsided, like me," Jimmy laughed. "I'm going to enter it in the contest at school tomorrow, and maybe I'll win a prize!"

When Jimmy got home, he looked at the pumpkin for several minutes before he began to make his jack-o'-lantern. "This funny little bump can be your nose," Jimmy told the pumpkin.

Then he carefully cut out the stem and removed the fibers and seeds, leaving only the thick shell. "Now I'll give you a big happy smile," Jimmy said. "Nobody likes to look at a sad face."

The crooked pumpkin still felt so sorry for himself that he thought he could not possibly smile. But, before he knew it, he had a wide laughing mouth with two teeth above and three below.

Jimmy held the pumpkin out at arm's length and studied his handiwork. "I'll tilt your eyes up at the corners," he decided, "so they're laughing, too."

When he had finished making the eyes, he put a crown of aluminum foil on the crooked pumpkin. "I'll call you Prince Pumpkin," he said.

The crown, Jimmy thought, gave the pumpkin a very jaunty air, indeed. "Now I'll get a candle, and you'll soon be ready for the contest," he said, and he gave the pumpkin a friendly pat as he put it on a table in the hall. The pumpkin looked at himself in the mirror on the opposite wall. Why, he thought, I must be dreaming! He had turned into a perfectly beautiful jack-o'-lantern.

When Jimmy came back, he placed a candle firmly inside the pumpkin and lighted it. Then the crooked pumpkin glowed with pride, as well as candlelight.

At school the next day, Prince Pumpkin saw the round pumpkins lined up for the contest and began to feel sorry for himself all over again. As if he knew how the pumpkin felt, Jimmy whispered, "Smile, Prince Pumpkin! Nobody cares how crooked you are as long as *you* don't care. I know!"

So the crooked pumpkin smiled just as widely as he could. When the teacher who was judging the contest saw Prince Pumpkin, she laughed. Oh, dear, he thought, now that she knows I am lopsided, I will never win a prize. But he kept right on smiling.

After the teacher had looked over all the pumpkins, she turned to the class and said, "Girls and boys, your jack-o'-lanterns are just wonderful. The one I think is best is the jolliest jack-o'-lantern of all. First prize goes to Prince Pumpkin!"

Then the teacher gave Jimmy his prize - a gingerbread cake shaped and decorated like a pumpkin, and all the members of Jimmy's class clapped and cheered to show their approval.

And what about Prince Pumpkin? He just smiled and smiled with his wide, laughing mouth and his tilted eyes. He even tried to wrinkle up his funny bump of a nose, he was so happy.

Other Fall Ideas

In certain locations *CROP Walk* is in the fall.

Meeting members can support it by walking or sponsoring a walker. Church World Service is the sponsor. Films and information are available from Church World Service, PO Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515, (219) 264-3102.

Rummage Sale (takes entire Meeting to help). Can include lunch, baked goods, face painting, fish pond, magician, pony rides. Good intergenerational event and can be a real money maker.

"Feather of Peace" could be used early fall or around Thanksgiving. The story is found in *Lighting Candles in the Dark*, FGC Publications. The story took place in Easton, Maryland, where Friends worshipped with the Indians instead of fleeing. The chief left a white feather above the meetinghouse door symbolizing their safety and friendship. After hearing the story, the children can dress up as early Quakers and as Indians. Then the "cast" can enter Meeting for Worship and act out the story.



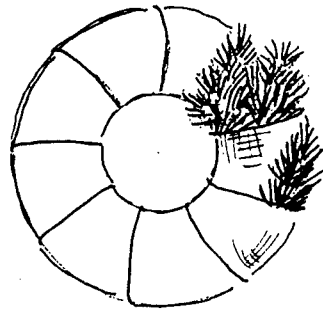
NOVEMBER IDEAS

Christmas Craft Day

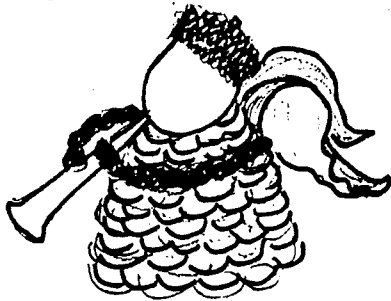
On the First-day following Thanksgiving there are usually very few regular attenders (because of traveling or hosting families). To welcome visitors and to blend all ages into one group, consider having an intergenerational craft day. Set up several craft stations, to be manned by members skilled at showing how to make Christmas tree decorations (to replace worn out ones for the Meeting tree), Christmas wreaths, or pine-cone angels. Set up tables for writing letters to respond to a social concern, or to make a Meeting banner. Meeting people of all ages circulate among the various stations, perhaps with older members helping younger ones make the projects.

Burlap and greens wreaths

Cut rings of heavy cardboard; purchase burlap and cut into 4" strips, wrap around the ring so that it overlaps leaving 2-1/2" showing. Cut greens from bushes approximately 6 to 7". Tuck into folds so greens overlap. Springs of holly can be tucked in. Bows, plain or fancy, may be added.



Pine Cone Angels



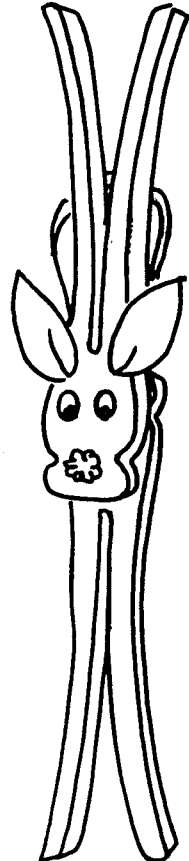
Milkweed pod wings

Glue on acorn and hat

Medium pine cone

Golf tee to form "horn"

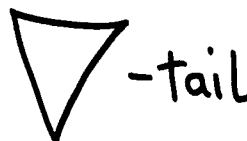
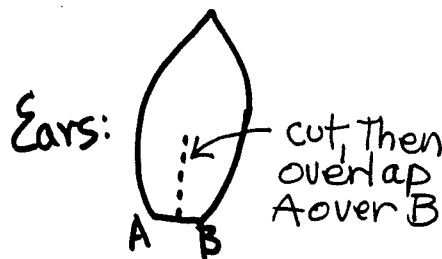
Use a pipe cleaner to form arms. Milkweed pods stuck in and glued to form wings. Golf tee or other small ornament for hands. Spray with shellac or gold paint.



Clothespin Reindeer Ornament

Supplies:

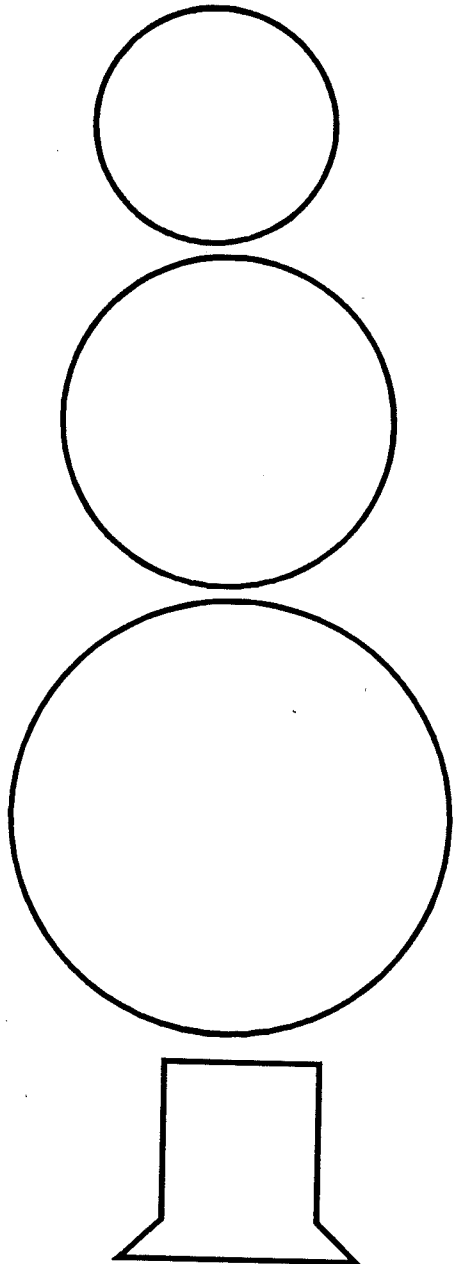
- Two wooden clothespins
- Small piece of brown or tan felt
- two eyes - 1/4" or 3/8 "
- One red pompom, 1/2"
- 8" narrow ribbon or cord



Cut two ears and one tail from the tan felt using the patterns shown. Make a small slit in the base of each ear. Glue the ears on one clothespin as shown, overlapping the ends of the ears. Glue on eyes and pompom for nose. Glue tail on reindeer's back end. Glue ends of ribbon on back of the "face" clothespin to make a loop, then glue other clothespin on top of the ribbon as shown.

Note: Heavy craft glue (tacky glue) or a glue gun is recommended.

Snowman Refrigerator Magnet



Supplies:

White felt
Green felt for hat
Eyes, 1/4 - 3/8 "; sequins, ribbon
Magnetic tape
Tacky glue or glue gun

Cut one each of the three circles at left from white felt. Cut one hat from the green felt. Glue together as shown.

Decorate with sequins, eyes, and ribbon as you wish. Glue magnet strip on the back. We recommend gluing with a glue gun or heavy white craft glue.

Alternate suggestion: Use a piece of ribbon or yarn to make a loop and glue to the hat to make a tree ornament.



Intergenerational Lunch and Book Sale

An intergenerational November activity has been very successful at Middletown Meeting (Bucks Quarter). One member brings pre-made soup stock, another provides apples for applesauce, and each remaining family brings a vegetable to be chopped for soup. During the hour before Meeting for Worship, some chop the vegetables, some make muffins, (or instead of muffins, some members could bring bread dough ready to bake) and some cut apples. The chopped vegetables are dumped into the stock, the apples are set to cook in a big pot with sugar and cinnamon, and apple cider is heated on the stove with mulling spices. Fifteen minutes before Meeting begins, everyone helps set the tables. After worship, the entire Meeting enjoys delicious vegetable soup, bread, and applesauce.

Two big pots soup

One big pot, one small pot for applesauce.

Stock for soup

Many vegetable peelers

Small paring knives

Six cutting boards

Seasonings for soup

Cinnamon and sugar for sauce

Breads - assorted

(The person who oversees muffin making brings own supplies)

Recipe for muffins



After folks have eaten, they can browse and purchase books for Christmas gifts on consignment from FGC. A consignment of books can be picked up from the FGC Bookstore at 1216 Arch Street in Philadelphia, or call 1-800-966-4556 and ask that a box be shipped to your Meeting. Books can also be sold to raise money for a Meeting project. The Meeting gets to keep ten per cent of its total sales. The unsold FGC books are returned to the Bookstore in person or by mail.



**Philadelphia
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DECEMBER IDEAS

(Mainly Christmas)

Preface:

Several weeks can be spent in preparation for Christmas with activities commencing right after Thanksgiving. If a Meeting chooses to do this it seems important to ask:

Is the time justified?

What do we wish to convey about Christmas to the children (and ourselves?)

Our committee affirms that preparation for Christmas is valuable to Quaker children and youth for a variety of reasons:

It can be a time of joy (too often missing from Meeting activities) and celebration together.

It may be the one time of year where truly intergenerational activities take place.

There is value in children working together on projects and activities that they deem important and that have become a part of their FDS tradition and experience.

Emphasis on Christmas as a religious holiday is frequently missing from other areas of children's experience (although early Quakers did not celebrate Christmas specifically).

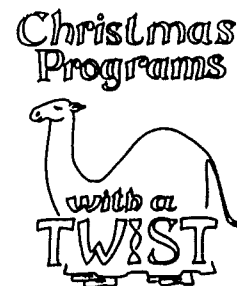
Giving and helping are important goals realized through the use of hands-on, participatory service projects, like toys for homeless children.

The story of Jesus' beginnings can be seen as the birth of a person who became the center of our Christian beliefs.

Christmas Plays

Ideas

Perhaps a Meeting can do a "pageant" within a play. The oldest children pick a play (those in *Christmas Programs With a Twist* by Elinor Briggs (PYM RE Committee) are excellent), and do most of the speaking roles, with the younger children playing roles of Mary, Joseph, angels, etc. Babysitting-age kids come in ringing bells while the Meeting sings "O Come, Little Children."



Do a tableau Christmas story by hanging a sheet with a strong light behind it. Arrange and add characters as story is read. Turn light off as characters get into place. Then turn light on.

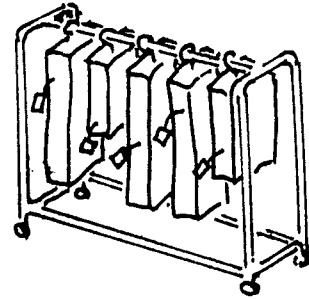
Costumes

Organizing Costumes

If possible, keep an inventory of simple costumes.

If you have dry hanging space, put each costume with its accessories all on one hanger. Before the play a name tag can be added when fitting to identify who is wearing it. During the pre-play confusion it helps parents or helpers get children ready.

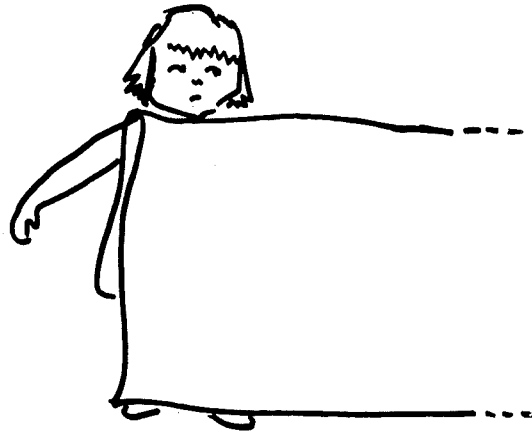
If you have no hangers, use a bag for each costume and its accessories. Write the wearer's name on the bag.



Angel Costumes

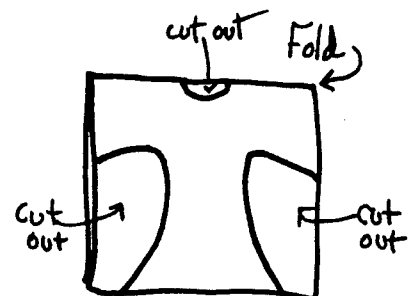
T-shirts: for small children use men's large and extra large T-shirts. Use gold rope-style garland to tie the waist and crisscross over shoulders. Tie a length of garland into a circle to place on head as a halo.

Folded sheets: for larger children or adults use full-size, non-fitted white sheets. Ask parents to bring labeled sheets to the Meeting before the pageant. For smaller children, a twin-sized white sheet will do. Directions: Fold sheet lengthwise and adjust to height of child. Fold sheet again width-wise around the child, adjusting the lengthwise fold for proper length. Adjust fold according to length, e.g. 1/2, 3/4, etc. Child's arm is slipped through a loop made from the folded corners, loop joined at



shoulder with a pin. Other arm goes through open ends of sheet, which are also joined at the shoulder. See illustrations.

Sewn sheets: fold a sheet (any size) in half to make a doubled length from a child's shoulder to ankle. Width should be from one wrist to the other when arms are extended. Cut a T-shaped "dress" from the folded fabric as in picture. Cut a small oval for neck opening. Sew up side seams, hem sleeves and bottom. Turn under raw edge at neck. Add lace or trims or just tie with garland as in T-shirt directions.



Angel Wings

Gauze/nylon net wings

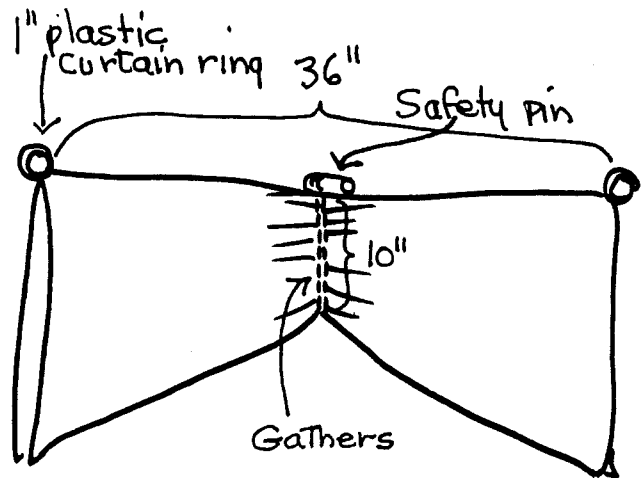
Materials:

36 x 50 inches of nylon net or something "gauzy." It should not be stiff and should not unravel.

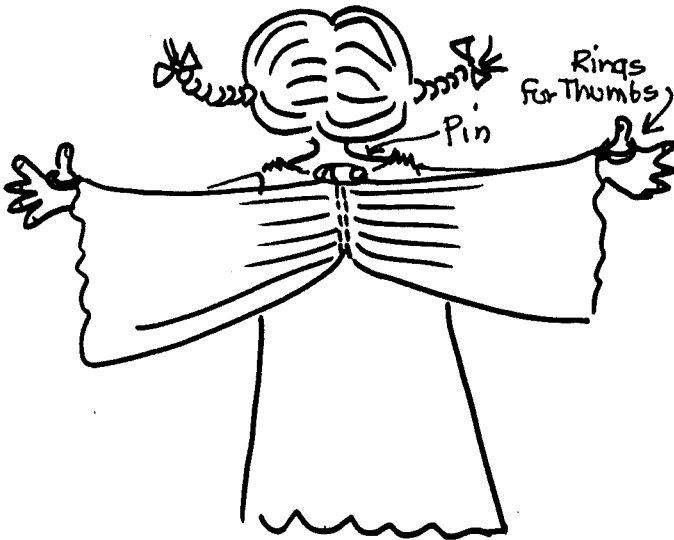
Two one-inch curtain rings

Needle and thread

Safety pin



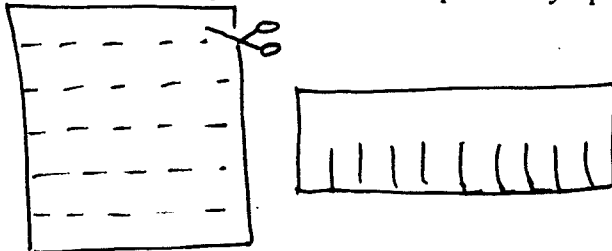
The fabric is folded in half so that it is 36 x 25 inches. A loose line of stitching is placed from the middle of the fold to the bottom and pulled up to gather so that it is about ten inches long. A curtain ring is sewn at each end of the fold for the child to put a finger in. A safety pin at the top of the line of stitching will keep the wings in place. The advantage of these wings is that they can be folded up in a bag.



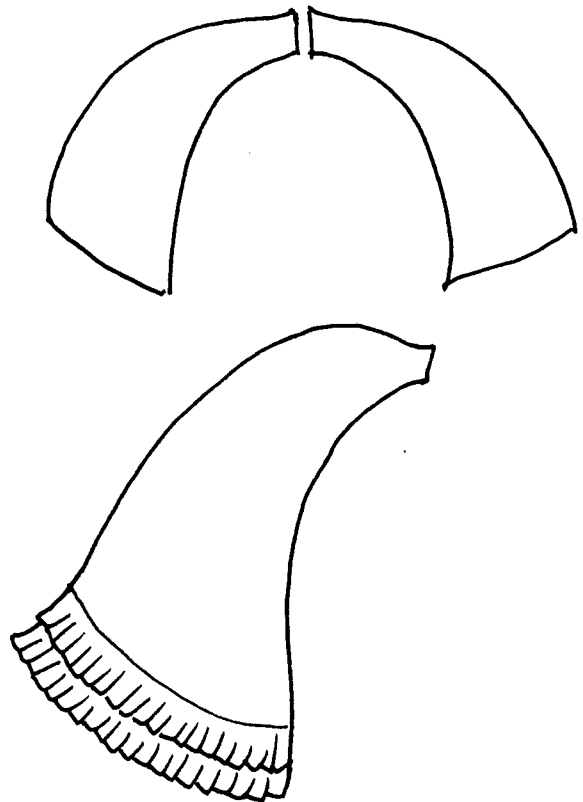
Feathery tissue paper wings:

Cut two wing shapes from brown wrapping paper. Paint white

Cut white tissue paper into strips to fit the wing shapes. Cut each strip halfway up.



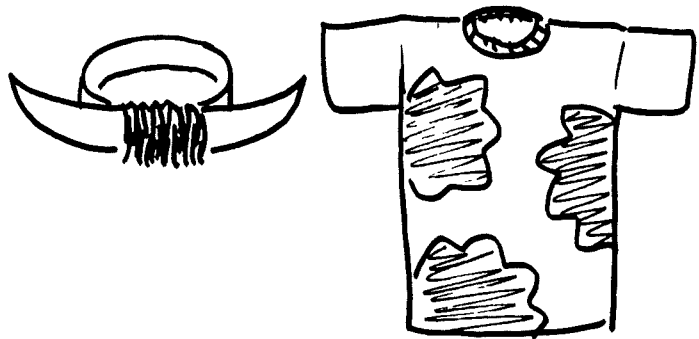
Paste top of each strip on the paper wing starting at the bottom and continuing to the top. Pin on the shoulders and tape a wristband onto the back for hand to hold or go through.



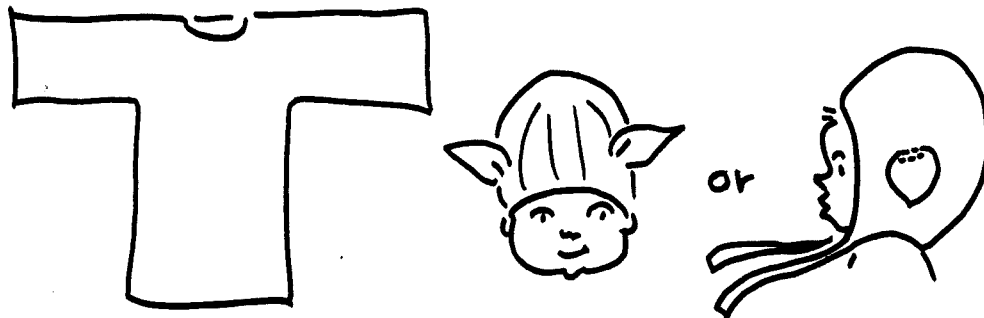
Animal Costumes

Use fake fur, felt, fake suede or fleece to make costumes for animals at manger.

Cow: Use large T-shirt with brown felt or suede cut-out patches sewn on randomly. Horns can be cut from cardboard and stapled to a circle of stiff paper (oaktag) and fit to child's head. Glue or staple brown yarn in center.



Sheep: Cut a straight T-shaped "dress" of white flannel, fleece, fake fur or other suitable fabric. Length should be from shoulder to knee. Sleeves can go to wrist. White knit stocking hats with white felt ears sewn on can be headpieces. Or cut a hood shape from same fabric as body. Sew around seam for center back. Attach ties made from ribbon long enough to tie under shin. Ears (floppy) get sewn to sides of hat. Sheep can be white, gray, or black.



Donkey: Grey or brown suede, flannel, corduroy or other suitable fabric. Construction is same as sheep. Headpiece is like cow's, but has stand-up brown construction paper ears and brown yarn.

Shepherds

Ask Meeting members for cast-off bathrobes (they seem to be a rare commodity these days.) Also check the clothing that comes to your Meeting for the American Friends Service Committee.

Headdresses can be made from upholstery fabric, old towels, 2' x 3' pieces of cloth, or cloth squares 2' x 2'. Use cord, old bathrobe ties, rope, curtain tie-back cord, cloth braid, or even strips of cloth to tie headdress to shepherd's head.

Emergency Kit for the Day of the Play or Pageant

Extra men's white T-shirts and gold garland to make instant angels.
Extra bathrobes, cloths and cord for headpieces for shepherds.
Safety pins.
Sheets.
Masking or Scotch tape for instant hems.

Other Christmas Activities

Christmas Eve First-Day School

When Christmas Day is on Sunday try having First-Day School on Christmas Eve. It makes a special quiet closing to what might otherwise be a very stimulating night for children. Activities include:

Stories - several short ones read or told by Meeting members in a rocking chair with a low reading lamp. Other light is dim to set a quiet bedtime story mood. If your Meeting has a fireplace - light a fire!

Bible story from Luke. While reading have little children bring up and arrange pieces for a small nativity scene.

Christmas Carols - with guitar or piano



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Make Meeting 1/2 to 3/4 hr. in length, so it is easier for young, excited children to focus on the meaning of Meeting, or of Christmas.

Have a candle at the head of Meeting or in the center of a circle of chairs.

Begin Meeting with a Bible reading of Christ's birth. Settle into quiet waiting. Encourage celebrants to speak if they feel moved, perhaps about what Christmas means to them. Close with all candles being lit from the central flame and all holding hands.



Potluck and Carol Sing

In mid-December invite all Meeting members to a potluck supper followed (or preceded) by a carol sing. People to set up the potluck and clean up, and someone to lead the singing and play the piano are needed. Invite others to play their instruments.

It seems to work better if the "song master or mistress" picks a few favorites to start with and then takes suggestions from participants. This intergenerational event is lots of fun. Sing for an hour or so.

Christmas Tea Fund Raiser

Sometime before the holidays ask members to make craft items and preserves to sell. Invite nearby Meetings and churches to attend and announce what organization will benefit from their purchases. Serve tea and goodies while shoppers browse.

Choral Reading

Prepare handouts of the Christmas story from a favorite Bible translation. Mark various reading parts for "men", "women", "high schoolers", "girls", "boys" as you wish. Single readers can be designated and selected ahead of time. Everyone gets a script and reads in unison from wherever he/she is seated. Some Friends may not be familiar with responsive readings; having a strong leader primed to get each group going may be a good idea.

Christmas Service Projects

Projects are more meaningful to the children if there are hands-on activities and opportunities for as much input and participation as is appropriate for each age group.

Christmas Helping Project (done in conjunction with Peace and Social Concerns Committee)

Fill stockings for children in a homeless shelter, or check with the county "youth services" division.

The important aspect of this project is to make it hands on. According to your own Meeting's schedule, do the following activities each week:

Discuss plans and gifts to purchase. Find out ages of children to receive gifts and get suggestions of gifts from FDS children.

Take small groups of children to store and shop for the gifts.

Recruit parent helpers.

Make cookies or other treats to go into gift packages or stockings.

Wrap presents and fill stockings.*

Money for larger gifts for each child might come from the Peace and Social Concerns Committee. Suggestions: personalized sweatshirts.

With the help of the Social Committee put on a party for a Saturday children's enrichment program connected to a homeless shelter or soup kitchen.

*This can be done when groups are rehearsing for a Christmas play or getting fitted for costumes, etc.

Bear in mind that families' privacy should be respected when planning deliveries.

Toilet Articles for Homeless Shelters.

Ask First-Day Schoolers to bring in small size toiletries (make up a list). Ask the whole Meeting to participate by bringing items or donating money to fill in the gaps. The children can sort the toilet articles and bag them in Ziplock bags. Make sure you have an organization lined up which can use them. The Shepherds Place in Upper Darby, PA, is one.



Carol Singing at local nursing home or senior citizen center.

School Supply Collection: collect and package for local homeless shelters, children's agencies, or for countries such as El Salvador that have programs to receive these supplies. It's nice to balance projects that benefit far-off places with those close to home. Check with the American Friends Service Committee to see what is needed: (215) 241-7041.

Portable Christmas Spirit

For Meeting families, here is a project to decorate small artificial trees for your Meeting's shut-ins, members in nursing homes, or in hospitals. This can happen after a covered dish supper with each table decorating a tree or as an intergenerational First-Day activity a week or two before Christmas. Making the decorations is part of the fun. Supplies should be varied and colorful to inspire the decorators to create their own ornaments. Suggestions:

- Old Christmas cards and other greeting cards
- scraps of wood, to wrap like presents
- pine cones and other natural materials
- scraps of bright fabric
- scraps of lace and trim
- construction paper
- foil Christmas wrappings
- paper doilies
- old costume jewelry
- cotton balls
- cookie cutters
- cranberries
- popcorn
- glitter



Also needed: plenty of string, light wire (with cutters), glue, yarn, scissors, crayons, tape, needles and thread, etc.

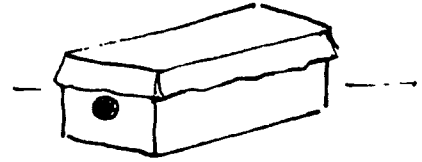
Place the decorated trees in large plastic bags. An individual family may call on a shut-in, or a class may take the Christmas trees to an agency for delivery to the hospital or a needy person.

Mitten Tree or Sock Tree: Have a small Christmas tree for First-Day School children. Ask them to bring a pair of new mittens or gloves or socks to hang on the tree. Ask adults to make cash donations and put them in the mittens. After the Christmas play or other festivities the mittens and donations are sent to a children's center or agency.



Christmas Peep Box

The creation of a peep box offers children the opportunity to graphically reconstruct the setting of a moment in history, an important event or a story and, in doing so, to be more able to explore the meaning of the event or to better understand the questions, issues and the values that are within the scene being depicted. Peep boxes may be used to capture a single story, the imagery of a Psalm or poem, or, in a group, to show a series of events in history, or to illustrate elements or practices central to the life of Friends.



Basic material needed:

one shoe box for each class member	rubber cement, paste or glue
white tissue paper (pale blue or yellow may be used to create different effects)	brads or thin wire
materials to make people and objects for the scene (old Christmas cards, clay, fabric, construction paper, small clothes pins, or pipe cleaners)	drawing paper
	crayons, paints or colored pencils
	string
	scissors

Begin by cutting a round hole (about the size of a nickel) in the center of one end of the box (the peep hole). Create a background for the scene with a piece of drawing paper as wide as the height of the box and the length of the two sides plus one end. Mark the paper so that the children will know which part of the paper will be directly opposite the peep hole and which parts will be the sides of the scene. Outdoor scenes can have hills, trees, desert, or a village scene. Indoor scenes may show a room in a house, with windows and doors, the inside of a meeting house, or whatever is appropriate to the scene. When the scene drawn on paper is complete, glue the paper inside the box, covering the two sides and the end opposite the peep hole.

To make the figures and objects for the scene, it is important to keep the size in proportion to the box. Only a few are needed. Figures can be as simple as cutouts from greeting and Christmas cards to figures made with clothes pins or modeling clay with fabric garments. Paper figures may need to be reinforced with poster board, or they may be glued to popsicle sticks. All figures need to be able to stand up. Paper figures can be notched at the feet; a small piece of cardboard can be notched similarly so that together they form a cross piece which will hold the figure upright. Lumps of clay may be used to hold up stick-backed figures. Another way is to roll a cylinder of paper the height of the figure and about an inch in diameter, gluing or taping it tight and to the figure, making sure the feet of the figure and the cylinder are even.

Outdoor scenes can be enhanced with evergreens or twigs stuck in clay, ground can be represented by sandpaper, and grass can be shown by dark green cloth. Little stones and a pocket mirror for water (an oasis) can add detail to the scene. A small house can be made by adding a roof to a small jewelry or match box. Indoor scenes can have furniture made with toothpicks, folded cardboard, or small rectangular toothpaste or medicine containers.

When the figures and objects are completed, place them in the box, positioning them from front to back. Fasten them to the bottom and sides with glue, brads or loops of string or wire (younger Friends will need help with this delicate maneuvering). Last, place a single thickness of tissue paper over the top of the shoebox and tie string around (or tape) to hold tissue paper down. Save the lid of the box to protect the tissue when the box is being carried.

Now, take a peep!

Crafts and Decorations

Christmas Decorations: (See November Ideas): Be sure to use your Meeting's tax-exempt number when you go for supplies.

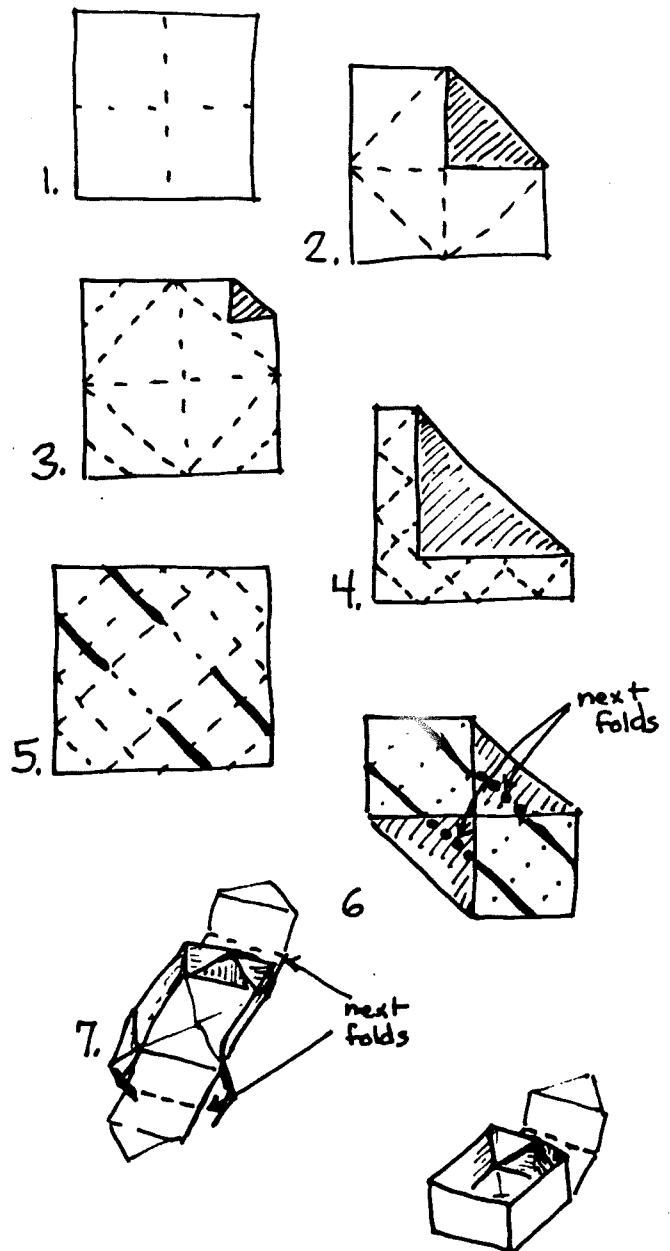
Folded Christmas Card Boxes from old Christmas cards

Use the picture part of the card for the box lid (make it 1/8" bigger than the bottom, all around) and the plain side of the card as the box.

How to fold a paper box

Use a square piece of paper.

1. Fold the square horizontally and vertically to find the center. Crease lightly. Unfold.
2. Fold each corner to the center. Crease firmly. Unfold.
3. Fold each corner to the crease line just made. Crease firmly. Unfold.
4. Fold each corner to the fold lines made in Step 2, on the opposite side of the square. Crease firmly. Unfold.
5. Cut on the heavy lines.
6. Fold the un-cut corners to the center.
7. Fold up the two sides, then fold in the triangles at the edges.
8. Lock the box in place by folding over the other two corners.





JANUARY IDEAS

Night Watch (New Year's Eve)

This can be offered as an event for all ages. People are invited to come to the meetinghouse on New Year's Eve at 8 p.m. or thereabouts. The idea is to have about a half hour of worship sharing on the topic of the passing of the old year and hopes for the new one. This needs to be kept on the short side if families with children are included.

Following this, refreshments are served (simple - cider and cookies, etc.) The event can be ended at 10 p.m. (Quaker midnight.)

If there is a fireplace in the meetinghouse, this is a perfect time for a fire.



Arrangements:

Important: Have someone open the building and turn up the heat unless the building has been used that day. It gets cold!

Someone needs to lay the fire and be in charge of it.

Someone needs to lead the worship sharing.

Someone needs to arrange refreshments.

A Time of Reflection - for Middle & High Schoolers

Around the New Year, gather Young Friends together on a First-Day morning or evening under the guise of eating, playing games and worshipfully bringing in the new year. Provide appealing snacks and ice-breaking games.

Then offer these queries for reflection:

Consider one good thing that has happened to you this year.

What one worthwhile deed or accomplishment did you do this year?

What one person has made a positive difference in your life this year?

As the new year approaches, what are your hopes or dreams?

Explain what worship sharing is.

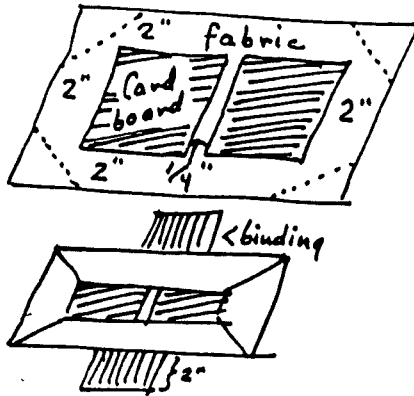
Settle into worship for a half-hour or so.

At close of Meeting ask, "Does anyone wish to speak about a thought that came to you in Meeting?"

Then have the young Friends write their thoughts in a journal:

Journal making:

a. Bound Books:



- Cut two pieces of cardboard for cover. Choose a size slightly larger than the pages you plan to use.
- Cut fabric covering 2" larger than covers.
- Glue covers to backing leaving at least 1/4" between covers.
- Cut out the four corners.
- Fold edges in, miter corners and glue (Sobo glue works best).
- Cut binding strip of fabric or cloth tape 2" longer than cover width. Glue in place.
- Make pages using colored paper for flyleaf. Fold pages in half and sew through center.
- Glue the flyleaf pages to front and back cover.

b. Rice paper covers - instead of fabric use dyed rice paper to cover your journal (covering technique as described above). After cutting out the right size cover, fold the paper accordion style using 1" - 2" folds. Then fold the strip of folded paper in triangles as you would in folding a flag. Dip the three tips of the triangle in thinned inks or food color. Dry before unfolding - the colors will mix a bit as the paper absorbs the colors.



Art stores carry rice paper.

c. Spiral notebooks can also be made into journals. The 70-page, three-hole notebooks can often be purchased 3 for \$1 in the early fall. They can be covered with fabric, rickrack, construction paper, etc.

Journal writing:

The journals can be written in succeeding weeks (for 10-15 minutes) as the youth record how they are progressing toward reaching their New Year resolution. Journals should probably be

kept at the meeting house since they will be forgotten if taken home. At the end of the year the young people can take them home.

Note: Whatever they write in their journals is theirs, to be shared only if they wish.

Martin Luther King's Birthday

Draw, paint, write or in other ways draw out kids' imagination as to *their* dream of the world. Perhaps they would like to record their "dreams" in their journals.



FEBRUARY IDEAS

Secret Friend

This is a good way for older and younger members of Meeting to get to know each other better. Older Friends are invited to participate by stating their willingness to have a secret friend.



The *Secret Friend* program begins on the first Sunday in February. Each child draws a grown-up's name and "secretly" does things for this "friend." The grown-up can reciprocate at any time by leaving notes, etc., marked "To the secret friend of (your name)" on the refreshment table.

In March, the identity of secret friends can be revealed at a special covered dish lunch following Meeting for Worship. You might also refer to your secret friend as your leprechaun, since St. Patrick's Day is in March.

Valentine's Day

The story which follows
February:

would be a good one to use during

The Legend of St. Valentine

According to legend, there once lived a man named Valentine. His home was said to be in a small village in Italy. Because he was a kind and friendly person, people in the village turned to him when they were in trouble. To the sick he gave medicine. To the hungry he gave food. To the poor he gave money. To those shivering in rags, he gave warm clothes. To the sad he spoke cheerful words. Every day, all day long, and often far into the night, men, women, and children made their way to Valentine's little cottage.

Sometimes Valentine was worried. "I wish that there were more hours in the day. The sick and the hungry, the poor and the old and the sad need so much help. I don't have time enough to spend with any of them. If only my vineyards didn't take so much of my time! Perhaps I should sell my vineyards."

After thinking it over, Valentine decided to do just that. When he received the money, he put it into little cloth bags. Then at midnight, when the village was dark, he slipped quietly from door to door, tossing the small bags of money into the houses where the very poorest people lived. Usually no one knew who had left the gift, which was the way Valentine wanted it to be.

When Valentine no longer had to look after his vineyards, he spent all of this time doing thoughtful deeds for friends, for neighbors, and for strangers who came from afar. As you can imagine, everyone in the town dearly loved Valentine. It was said that after he became old and unable to go about, the villagers came to his cottage to cook his meals and take care of him when he was sick. Sometimes they brought gifts to show their friendship.

Then there came a day when Valentine was not able to get out of bed. But he still remembered the people who needed his help. To the sick, the hungry, the poor, the old and the

sad and the lonely he wrote brief notes, decorating them with tiny drawings of birds, flowers, and hearts. Younger friends delivered the notes since he was not able to do so.

One day when Valentine finished writing his messages, he was all alone. He stuck them into the little cracks and crannies in the wall beside his bed. Feeling tired, he fell asleep.

Next morning - so the story goes - there was a knock on Valentine's door. "Good morning, Valentine!" called a neighbor. There was no answer. The neighbor knocked and called again. "Good morning, Valentine!" Again, there was no answer. When the neighbor opened the door and stepped into the room he found that his good friend could not be awakened. Quietly, during the night, Valentine had died.

As the neighbor looked at the wall above Valentine's bed, he spied the little notes sticking out of the cracks and crannies. Reaching up, he took them out, one by one. Then he delivered them to the men, women and children for whom they were intended. Each note was a friendly message of love and cheer and comfort.

Mary Esther McWhirter

Intergenerational Activity: Children take paper and cut a heart in half in an individual way. Each adult receives a half when coming out of Meeting. S/he must find the child with the matching half. They become partners for social hour and a chat.

SPRING IDEAS

Earth Day Procession

Have a procession to music on a tape recorder carried by the leader, of children carrying a variety of banners, large scarves and objects. Wind through First-Day School, meeting house yard, and time entry to the meeting room for the rise of Meeting.

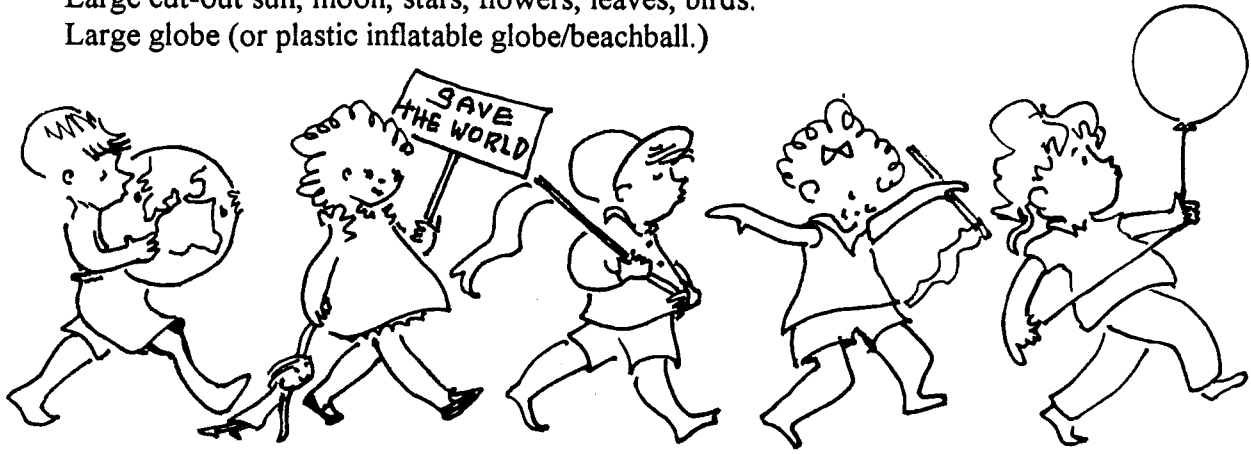
Objects to carry:

Banners on sticks made of bright felt or tie dyed fabric with bells or beads or feathers hanging from it.

Long flowing scarves on short sticks or thin, long strips of bright cloth to make large circles with.

Large cut-out sun, moon, stars, flowers, leaves, birds.

Large globe (or plastic inflatable globe/beachball.)



Bible Lands Garden

From: Marguerite Ickis, *The Book of Religious Holidays and Celebrations*, Dodd Mead & Co., N.Y., 1966.

Within the Bible there are many references to flowers, herbs and spices. Planting a Biblical garden using plants that are from the Bible lands or mentioned in the Bible is a good spring project.

Crocus sativas (saffron) - the saffron crocus is found in the Song of Solomon. Saffron is still used today to make yellow dye or for coloring rice and curries. It is costly because it requires four flower stigmas to make one ounce of the spice.

Allium sativum (garlic) - it occurs wild and in cultivated form in Egypt and Bible lands. It was known in Moses' time.

Brassica nigra (black mustard) - the mustard seed of Jesus' parable was quite small. It is an annual and produces seeds that birds find desirable. Bible farmers would have known it.

Hyssopus officinalis - hyssop - may be what we call marjoram. Hyssop was used with vinegar to give to Christ on the cross. (John 19:29)

Anethum graveolens (dill) - would have been a weed in Israel. It was also called anise and was like caraway in flavor.



Cuminum cyminum (cumin) - annual plant in the carrot family, native to Egypt.
Coriandrum sativum (coriander) - another common weed in Bible lands, with medicinal and flavoring uses.
Spikenard (lavender) was used to make ointments. It appears in the New Testament when Christ is anointed with it by a woman (Mark 4).

Bible Presentations - this does not have to be done in spring, but whenever the RE Committee thinks is appropriate. Some Meetings present Bibles to 4th and 5th graders, some to 2nd and 3rd graders.

1. Order Bibles for each First-Day School student of the grade chosen and any new children older than that grade. Make sure you have correct names for the children if you plan to have names put on the Bibles. Perhaps a calligrapher could inscribe the front inside cover. The Meeting Clerk can sign them.
2. Recruit someone to talk about the Bible to the children during Meeting. That person, the Meeting Clerk, the Religious Education Clerk, or whoever you wish can give out the Bibles.

Towards the end of Meeting for Worship, the entire First-Day School comes into Meeting with the recipients on the facing benches. The presentation is short (5-10 minutes) and then the Bibles are given out.

This can be followed by a special refreshment time sponsored by FDS. Ask people to bake things. A fun punch can be made from lemon-lime soda with sherbet floating on the top (four liters of soda to 1/2 gallon of sherbet). The sherbet needs to soften a bit before scooping it into the soda - it all foams up and everyone likes it.

April Fools Day

Turn the Tables:

This activity needs to be planned ahead so as not to catch people unaware. Have children and adults exchange roles one Sunday in April. Examples: Teachers become students, and a child leads the class. Ask the property committee to provide the coffee and the social committee chair to close meeting. Do something completely different in FDS - have square dancing, charades to act out Bible stories or Quaker stories.

EASTER IDEAS

Note: Friends traditionally did not celebrate Easter as a special day as every day was considered holy. However, this Committee thinks children should know what the day is all about and that the real meaning of Easter should be emphasized. See *Teaching Children about Jesus, Part II*, by PYM RE, sections on Holy Week, Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Good Friday Cross Walk

This is an activity of the Langhorne, PA, Ministerium group. Participants meet at Middletown Meeting at noon. Walkers then proceed to the various churches in the area, taking turns carrying a large wooden cross. At each church, the minister or representative gives some thoughts about Easter and Good Friday. Hymns are often sung. The churches take turns hosting a meeting for worship at the end of the procession. It's a special time to see people from so many different religious backgrounds sharing in something common to them all.

Plastic Egg Hunt

Each child brings six colored eggs

Plastic eggs are provided by Meeting - filled with candy, stickers, etc.

Children are counted to determine how many plastic eggs they are allowed to find.

While eggs are being hidden by older children and adults, younger children read a story (see list which follows).

Children find eggs.

Children return plastic eggs (they keep what was inside!) for a "prize."

All share in refreshments

Then join together and read the Easter Story from the Bible (usually read the Beginner's Bible); we discuss what Easter means to us (why we refer to spring, new beginnings, and rebirth, etc.)

Books to read while eggs are hidden (these get the real meaning of Easter across)

1. *The Golden Easter Egg*, by Katherine Zwiers and John Tobin. Sebastian, a shepherd, and his companion, Hopscotch, a sheep, set out to find the Golden Egg. They face many dangers, but finally reach their destination. In the beautiful egg, they find many treats, but also find a deeper meaning to Easter.
2. *The Adventures of Egbert the Easter Egg*, by Richard Armour. The ideas of being loved for oneself and being special are explored through the eyes of a special Easter egg made by a certain boy.
3. *Bently & Egg*, by William Joyce. Bently, a frog, learns about friendship, responsibility, and seeing that which is special in each of us.
4. *The Country Bunny and the Little Gold Shoes*, by Du Bose Heyward. A bunny becomes an Easter bunny. In the process, children see that it is important to keep trying, work together, and follow their dreams.
5. *What Is Easter?*, by Lillie James. This book talks about some of the spiritual aspects and secular activities of Easter.

Sunrise service: Young Friends or Middle School youth plan music, continental breakfast, and worship. Worship in a room with a view and a fire in fireplace.

Chestnut Hill Easter Lesson: (Age 4-6 or a little older)

We have an active, thinking, willing to be involved and bouncy K - 1st class this year. Most of them don't know Bible events. Some have heard the stories with a very fundamentalist view. So I've been looking for ways to help them "live" the New Testament. This lesson plan was one of the best. It's adapted from a New Life Presbyterian lesson.

Kids should already have a sense of who Jesus was before lesson. If we hadn't been doing the miracle stories, or if we had several visitors I would have told the Good Shepherd story of Jesus during our settling-in period.

Pass around a basket of plastic Easter eggs, each with a number on it.

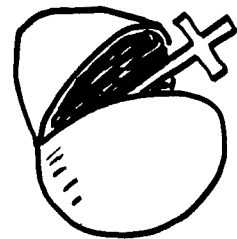
Inside each is an object which represents a part of the Easter story.

Ask children to peek, but not let anyone know what is inside.

Introduce topic. Use the wording: "This is how people remembered Jesus' last days on earth..."

Have the 1 or 1's open their plastic eggs. Tell that part, as represented by the object inside. As you are telling each part, have children pass their "prize" around.

Have the 2 or 2's open theirs. Tell that part, etc.



We did not dwell on the crucifixion very much.

Pause before empty tomb portion and use a "guess what?" attitude, which may be directing children's reactions too much. But it's good story telling.

Have extra objects handy in case a child doesn't want to pass his/her item around.

Objects for Easter Eggs:

If you are expecting more children, have two or more of each egg.

1. Palm Sunday - leaves, cloth or doll cloak
2. Last Supper - Matzoh or crackers - plus extra for eating
3. Arrest - soldiers (cut pictures of Lego ad or small paper shield)
4. Arrest, Peter cutting servant's ear - small plastic sword or make a pipe cleaner or popsicle stick model. I put this in a pink egg. Maybe cheating, but it kept temptation away from a few. (I skipped trial and Peter's denial)
5. Cross - made of toothpicks

When this was explained, I opened children's Bible to picture of cemetery.

Explained disciples had been hiding and scared for two days. Children discussed how they would feel.

6. Three women - pictures from Christmas card - or any other source.
7. Angel and Mary (this was a combination of the Biblical sources) Angel picture from card.
8. Empty tomb - very colorful dyed, empty real egg - could also be nothing.

I discussed how the disciples reacted to the news and told of Mary meeting Jesus. Didn't want to use a picture here. Each child had very clear idea in his/her own mind of the scene.

Additional activities

Play act the scene at the tomb. You can spend some time making a tomb of big pieces of paper (cut paper bags) and chairs.

Stained-Glass Windows: Cut holes in dark pieces of construction paper; glue bright tissue paper in back of the holes. This is a good wide-age-range craft. It can also represent the feelings of the story - dark for Good Friday, bright for Easter.

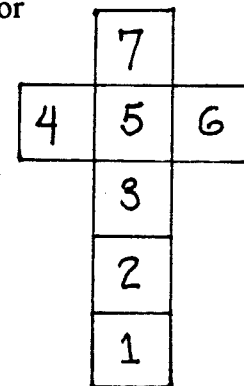
If this is done on Easter, the children have likely had their fill of candy. If not, then perhaps pass out a small amount of chocolate. It's hard to see Easter Eggs and not get candy.

Meg Mitchell

Moorestown's "Stations of the Cross":

This activity, about 1 hour in length, is designed to educate about the meaning of Easter, before the Easter Egg Hunt and while eggs are being hidden by Middle and High School youth:

One person introduces a 15-minute film version of the Easter story. Following the film, the assembled Friends of all ages are divided into seven groups, corresponding to seven stations of the cross (although not the traditional seven stations) to illustrate different aspects of the Easter story using felt-tipped markers on acetate or overhead transparencies. The transparent drawings (13-1/2" x 16-1/2") are then taped to the library windows in the shape of a cross. (See illustration)



1. Entry to Jerusalem
2. Last Supper
3. Praying in the Garden
4. Trial and Mocking
5. Crucifixion
6. Empty Tomb
7. Appearance of the Risen Christ to followers.

Meanwhile, the older FDS students will be hiding the eggs for the hunt. After about 45 minutes, when the eggs are hidden, First-Day-School children are asked to join their teachers in the meeting house before going out to the hunt.

"Seed Hunt" as an alternative to Egg hunt, where children search for seed packets for easy-to-grow annual flowers or vegetables. Encourage finders to plant and care for their seeds. Provide peat pots and soil. - from *The Alternative Celebrations Catalogue* by Milo Shannon-Thornberry, The Pilgrim Press, NY, 1982

West Chester Easter Egg Hunt

We have wrestled for years at West Chester Friends over the advisability of an Easter Egg hunt on Easter Morning. On one hand, the egg hunt is a tradition of long standing - one the kids have come to expect. On the other hand, the hunt has clearly been a competition which allowed older children to take advantage of their superior size and quickness to the detriment of the younger, smaller children. Despite all our efforts to get children to share and cooperate, at the end of the hunt one child would wind up feeling

smug at having found 27 eggs, while another child felt despondent at having found only two or three.

Another major problem with the hunt has been that it tended to wind up after only ten or fifteen minutes, leaving the teachers with an awkward amount of time to fill and children carrying a tempting number of brightly colored projectiles.

Our new approach to the hunt (which we've used over the last two years) seems to solve both problems:

Parents are encouraged to bring *plain, hard-boiled eggs* to Meeting on Easter Sunday rather than colored, hard-boiled eggs. At the beginning of what would normally be First-Day School time, the children are brought together in a classroom, and the hard-boiled eggs are divided equally among all children. Each child then decorates his/her own eggs with crayons and non-toxic, washable markers (which are provided by the Meeting). The decorating takes a considerable amount of time and is an activity enjoyed by kids and grown-ups alike.

After all the eggs are decorated, the children sing songs or engage in other activities while the eggs are hidden by some of the grown-ups and oldest children. When all eggs are hidden, the kids are released to hunt.

The basic rule of the hunt, however, is this: Each child is only allowed to pick up his/her own eggs!!

This approach assures that each child will wind up with (more or less) the same number of eggs. It also encourages cooperation, since after they have found all their own eggs, the older children will happily help the younger children hunt for theirs. The hunt also tends to last much longer, since each child's set of eggs represents an individual hunt - different from all the others.

Randy Lyons

Worship-Sharing Intergenerational Easter

10:00 - 10:15 a.m. Singing

10:15 - 10:20 a.m. Bible Reading - Luke 24 - The Resurrection

10:20 - 10:30 a.m. Worship Sharing on how Friends feel about Easter

10:30 - 10:35 a.m. Ask Friends, big and little, to find someone to sit with as a partner.

A big person with a little person is preferable. Pass out paper and crayons. Explain that you are going to read a story and ask those gathered to think about how each will grow in the Light this year.

10:35 - 10:45 a.m. Read a story about spring (we used *The Carrot Seed*) and take a few minutes to draw or write on your "egg". (The paper that is passed out is construction paper shaped in an egg.) Someone says: "As Jesus grew from a boy to an adult to give his message to us, and as the seeds and animals grow each spring, so we grow in God's Light. Use the egg to show how you will grow in your heart."

10:45 - 11:00 a.m. Take time to share our "egg" with each other, then with Meeting as a whole.

- 11:00 - 11:05 a.m. Announce pansy planting and then Easter Egg Hunt directly after Meeting for Worship.
- 11:05 - 11:15 a.m. Using music, move non-verbally over to Meeting for Worship side of Meetinghouse. Then give a guided meditation (to help the children center down).
- 11:15 - 12:00 N Meeting for Worship (have a place, like the Library, where the children can go with supervision who cannot sit in Meeting for Worship for the entire time.)

Donna Sweeney

Swarthmore Easter Program

The First-Day School practices two or three songs. Classes through fourth grade come into Meeting for the last 20 minutes carrying flowers and stuffed animals and sing. The Meeting can be invited to sing with the children.



Jacob Feldman

Small pots of marigolds are arranged so that every child can take one home. For this you need someone to play the piano or some instrument to accompany the children and someone to lead the singing.

Good Friday or Easter Garden:

This dish garden with a message can be made for your own home or as a gift for someone else who is special in your lives - grandparents, godparents, or a lonely person.

Materials:

- a pie pan or polystyrene meat tray
- dirt
- small plants, moss
- a small cross
- a polystyrene egg carton
- a small clean stone
- scraps of cloth and paper
- scissors
- a small knife
- glue
- thread, pins, toothpicks
- Optional: modeling clay



Alternative if real plants are unavailable: colored construction paper or tissue paper; a brown paper sack.

Cover the bottom of the dish with either dirt or brown paper. Arrange the small plants and/or moss to make a miniature garden. Sprigs from the tips of shrubs, if available, can serve as trees. If using paper, twist it into plant and flower shapes. To help them stand, push them into the dirt or into a crumpled ball of paper glued to the dish.

Cut one cup from the egg carton. Turned upside down, it will represent the tomb. Cut an opening in it, slightly smaller than your small stone. Place the tomb in the center of the garden with the stone next to the opening. Place the cross at one end.

To make a figure of a person, cut a half-circle of cloth or paper with a diameter approximately equal to the height of the tomb. Bend the half circle into a cone shape that will stand up, and pin. This is the dress. Mold a head of modeling clay or cut one from the unused portion of the egg carton. Push a toothpick up into the head. Push the other end of the toothpick down through the opening of the dress to make contact with the group of the garden. If you are using a polystyrene dish, push the toothpick right into the bottom for greater stability. Otherwise, break it off at the right length. Make a head covering of a cloth scrap and tie it in place with thread. Your Easter garden can include as many figures as you choose: Mary Magdalene alone or with Jesus, Peter and the other disciple coming, the whole group of women described in Matthew, Mark and Luke, and/or an angel.

From: *Easter is Jesus, Lenten Devotions and Activities for Families*, by Darcy James, Abingdon Press, c. 1992.

MAY OR JUNE IDEAS

Social Hours

We see some form of regular social times as vital to life and spirit of the Meeting. We feel that knowing each other better and having concern for each other fosters a richer level of worship together. It may require special commitment on the part of individuals or committees to develop and maintain a regular social time but we believe it is well worth the effort.

Medford's Social

Every First Day there is a pot of hot water in the front hall with instant coffee, tea, and hot chocolate mix. It is arranged by a couple who has made a commitment to do this job. Provision of small treats happens because of inspired individuals occasionally and informally.

The refreshment is provided at the rise of Meeting. Because this happens the last 15 minutes of First-Day School, children are occupied while parents and other Meeting members socialize. Usually the socializing continues long enough for the children to join in.

Once a month a larger social function is scheduled - a covered dish luncheon, supper, breakfast or coffee hour which allows an extended and more leisurely socializing time.

The arrangements for these events are handled by the Social Committee

Swarthmore "Coffee Hour"

Each week after Meeting for Worship, there is a "coffee hour." The House Committee is in charge of the regular coffee hours. These involve providing hot water (in cool weather) for instant coffee, tea, etc., and lemonade (powdered) or cocoa (in cool weather) for children. Simple cookies, pretzels, or crackers are also provided. Paper cups are used. In the summer the House Committee turns the job over to volunteers who sign up. Then there is often iced tea (instant) and lemonade. The person doing refreshments usually gets the drinks made before Meeting and then puts everything out just after Meeting is over.

Several times a year on special occasions, there are special coffee hours (early fall to welcome college students, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, the last day of First Day School, and occasional momentous birthdays, etc.) Some of the holiday ones are arranged by other committees in the Meeting, e.g., the Overseers do Easter (to welcome new additions to the Meeting) and First Day School Committee does the end of the year one. These usually involve using the real coffee pots, real china, and a better class of goodies (homemade). Often there is punch.

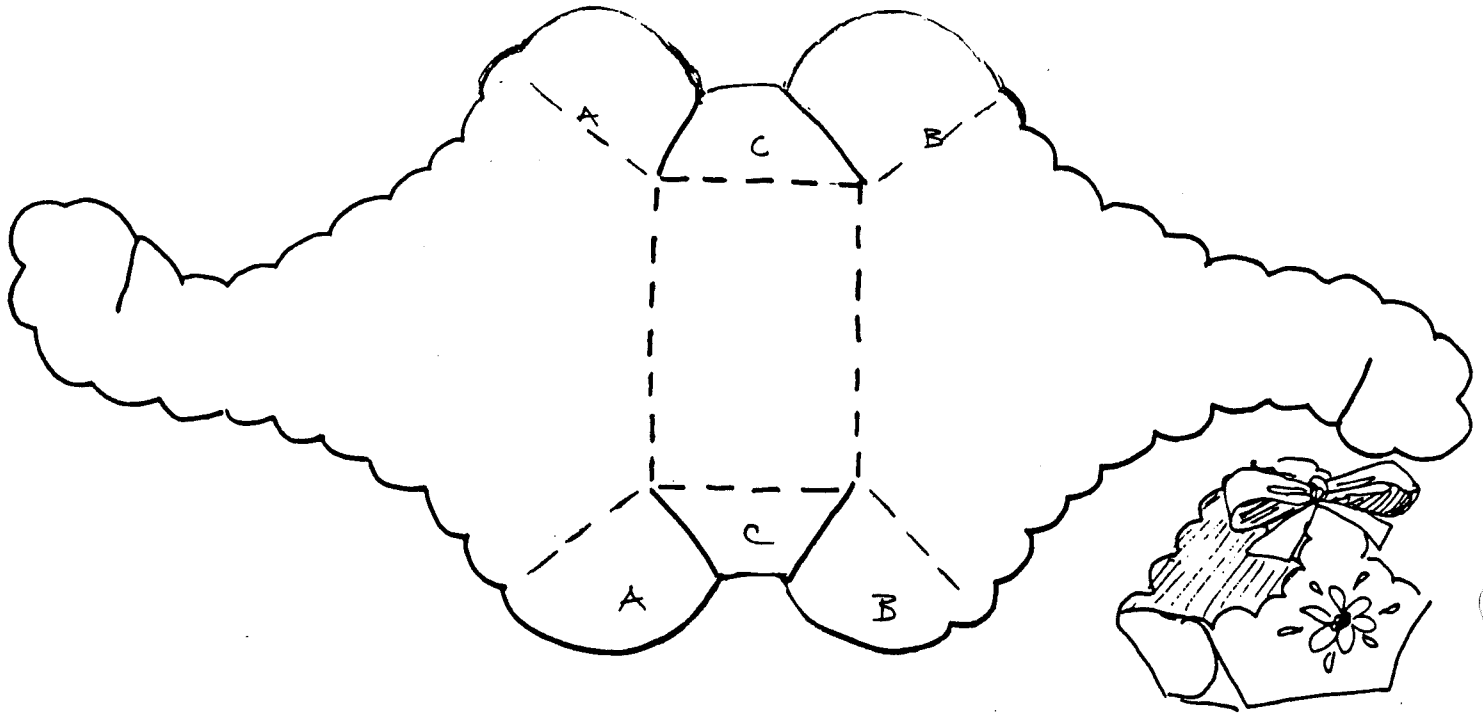
Coffee "hours" usually last about 30 minutes, depending on what forum or business meeting comes afterwards. Some people linger, of course.

Social time is generally held in a room without a rug, except for the special occasions. This is to make spills less traumatic.

May Baskets

Make May baskets before the rise of Meeting. Have ready to fill with fresh flowers immediately before delivery to worshipers as they leave Meeting. Flower stems can be wrapped in plastic wrap to prevent wilting.

Directions for a simple, construction paper basket: Trace the outline below for a pattern. Cut on heavy lines, fold on dotted lines, paste flaps A and B to C, lock the two halves of the handle together. Decorate the sides with markers. Glue a bow onto the handle.



Medford's Bird Walk

On a Sunday in May have a birdwalk. Set a time as early in the morning as is practical for your Meeting. Have members of Meeting who are "birders" be involved in planning time, location, and in leading the walk. Encourage children to come dressed appropriately for cool weather and possibly wet ground. Choose a park, campground or area suitable for the walk. Allow an hour or more depending on age and agility of your group. Join in an outdoor worship time at the conclusion. Regather at meetinghouse or other location for breakfast - but keep it simple - a hot drink, juice, buns, bagels, etc. (A tradition at Medford Meeting is scrambled eggs in hot dog buns!)

Swarthmore's Birdwalk/Breakfast

This is a great intergenerational event. It is good if your meetinghouse is located near woods or open country where you could take a walk or hike. Otherwise you could meet at a park and then come back for breakfast.

Ahead of time:

Recruit a few people who actually know about birds.

Recruit a few people to cook breakfast.

Arrange for scavenger hunt sheets (sample on next page) and crayons for children.

At 7:00 (traditionally the first Sunday in May) - meet and walk for an hour.

At 8:00 or so, meet back at the meetinghouse for breakfast. Traditional fare has been scrambled eggs and bacon in a hotdog roll, drinks (cocoa, juice, coffee, etc.,) and sticky buns. No silverware or other utensils are required (except for coffee spoons). Keep setup very simple.

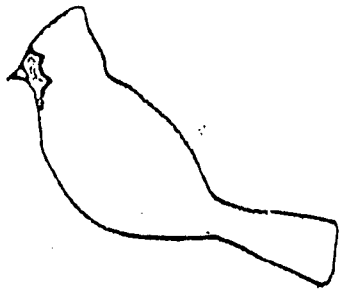
Mothers Day

Obtain substitute teachers for the FDS classes in which mothers are teaching (for many Meetings this is the bulk of their teachers). Invite these mothers to come to a full Meeting for Worship!

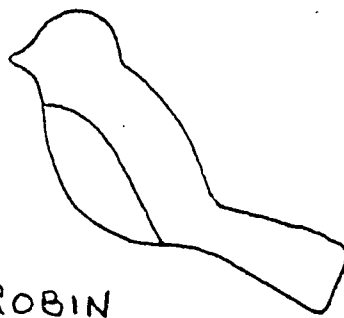
Closing Exercises

Prepare a simple certificate or decorated bookmark to give to each child. Introduce teachers to the Meeting and have each one call up class members to receive certificates. Classes can prepare (or have saved from class projects during the year) examples of activities and learning experiences. Or prepare displays in the FDS room of class projects, photos, or other visual aids.

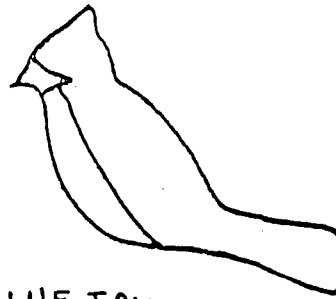
Include a social function following Meeting. Medford Meeting has a covered dish picnic with a cookout and softball, frisbee, croquet and other games. Often a huge cake is offered for dessert to say goodbye to retiring RE clerks, families who are moving, FDS students graduating from high school, or to recognize other milestones.



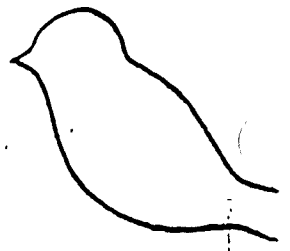
CARDINAL



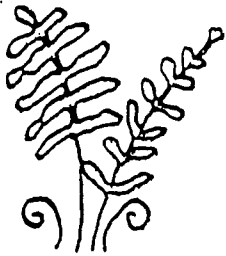
ROBIN



BLUE JAY



SPARROW



FERN



SQUIRREL



MOCKINGBIRD



DUCK



ANIMAL TRACKS



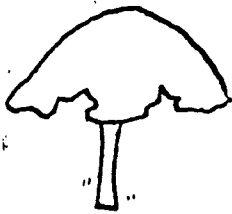
MOSS



MUSHROOM



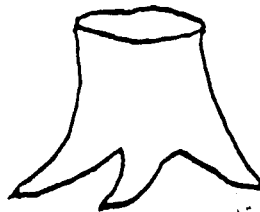
SKUNK CABBAGE



MAY APPLE



JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT



TREE STUMP



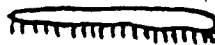
PINE CONE



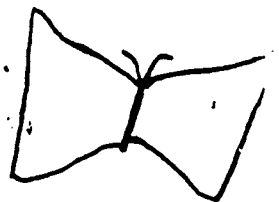
SPIDER



ANT



CENTIPEDE



BUTTERFLY

NAME _____