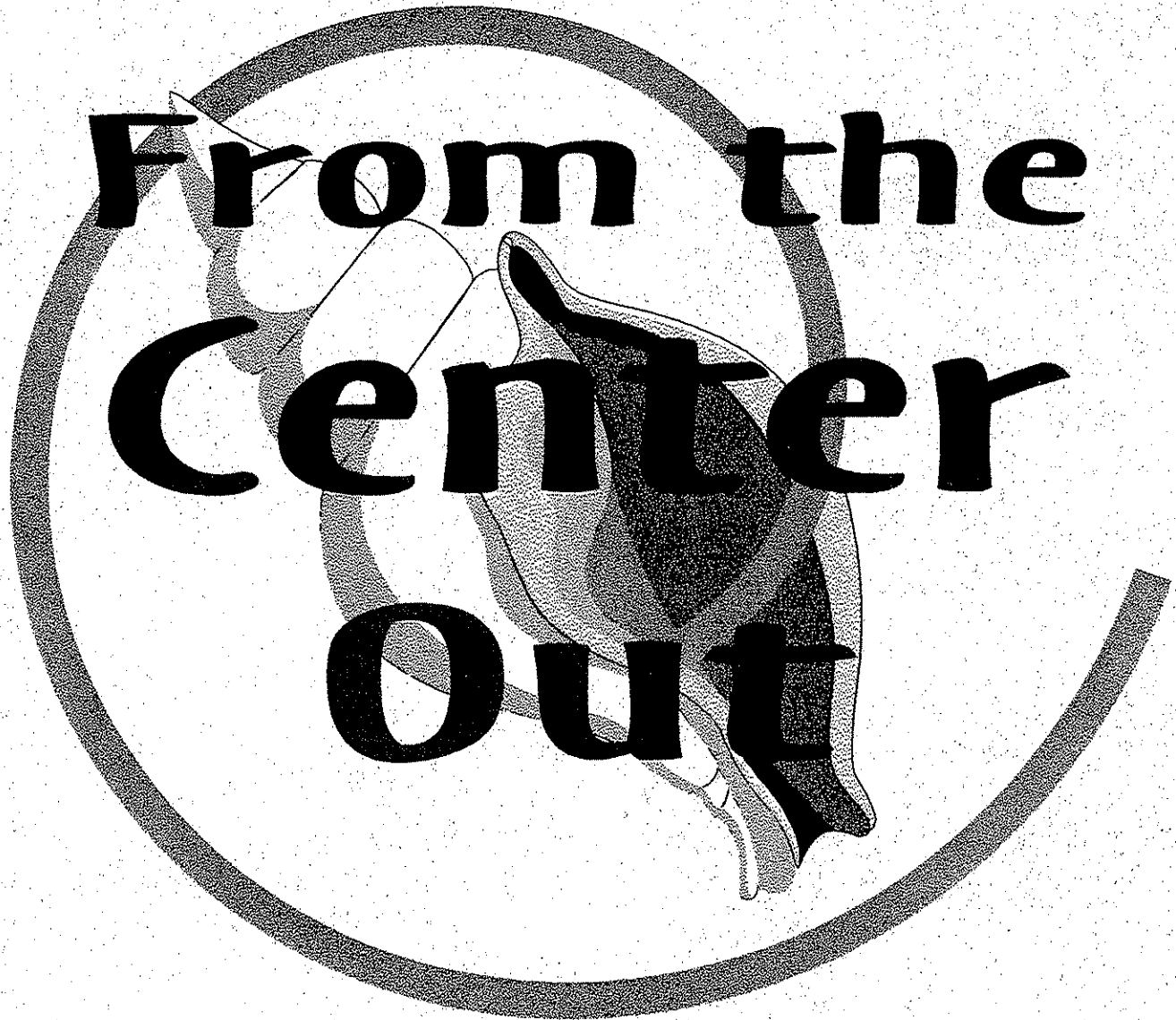


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## **A Curriculum on:**

- Centering and Listening for the Call
- Hearing the Call and Deciding What to Do
- Responding to the Call and Leading

**For Kindergarten - Eighth Grade**

**Created by**

**Children and Youth at Annual Sessions Group**

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**Philadelphia Yearly Meeting**

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**Philadelphia, PA 19102**

# ***FROM THE CENTER OUT***

## **Lessons on Discernment for Kg - 8th Grade**

### ***Listening for and responding to God's call; reaching out and leading others***

The lessons in this packet were created by a very dedicated group of Friends, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Children and Youth at Annual Sessions Group (CYASG). Their intent for this YM Packet is to prepare children and young people and spur them to attend the **July 20-25, 1999** residential sessions at Allentown College. We ask that First-day teachers set aside two or three First-days to teach the packet, and another week or two to create the *Continuing Book of Revelation* (see Page 1). We hope that the lessons on *discernment* can supplement or enrich what you had already planned to teach in 1999 and not be an extra burden. Each lesson begins with a section of background information for the teacher. Several age-specific stories, discussion questions, and activities follow from which teachers can choose depending on the amount of time available and the age of their students. There are activities or stories appropriate for high school age and older, as well as intergenerational suggestions. However, Chapter One has more activities for older Friends, than the other two.

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We are grateful to Mary Anne Crowley for helping us put our ideas together into an attractive and understandable whole and to Molly Haines for several of the illustrations. If you have questions or need more information call Marty Smith, Executive Secretary for the Religious Education Concerns Group of PYM, at 1-800-220-0786, Ext. 7008. Additional copies of this curriculum can be purchased at Friends General Conference Bookstore, 1216 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 or by phone at 1-800-966 4556.

**Yearly Meeting 1999 Project**  
***Continuing Book of Revelation***

Here's a wonderful project that can be done several ways and yield a continuing source of inspiration and support for your Meeting members and others with whom it's shared. And the product of your efforts can be shared with others at Yearly Meeting July 20-25, 1999 at Allentown College.

*What this project is about:*

The idea is to gather and bind individual accounts of "a time I experienced God..." into a book. You may include written as well as pictorial accounts.



You may decide to host an intergenerational event with time for everyone to record their account. (If so, give people advance notice so they can begin thinking of what they want to share.) Or you could make announcements inviting Friends to turn in accounts, but that may not illicit as full participation as you wish. This could be a project done in First-Day School with children and could involve children interviewing adult Meeting members who are willing to share their experiences. Perhaps your Meeting's Worship and Ministry Committee would like to work with First-Day School teachers on this project.

*Getting Started:*

To set the stage for this Yearly Meeting Project, you may use the Bible story in which Elijah listens for the voice of God in various places, and eventually hears God in a still, small voice. (I Kings 19:3-18). Or, you may use *Hide and Seek with God* by Mary Anne Moore, Skinner Books, 1994. If you can't get a copy of the book, you can tell your own version of the story. Basically, God and a group of people decide to play hide and seek with God, seeking because God finds really neat places to hide. Each person goes off looking in a different place and returns home to tell where she/he found God (examples: in a budding flower, in the night sky, in people sharing, in seeing one's self in a mirror).

Next, provide folks with a starter phrase: "I felt God when..." or "I experienced God in my life when..." Encourage people to describe their experience as fully as they can (like a story): where; when; how they felt before, during, after; how it still affects them. Participants may want to include a Bible verse or other quote that is meaningful. Encourage people to record their name and age at the end of their "revelation".

*Completing the Project:*

Bind the stories or pictures in this Continuing Book of Revelation and put the NAME OF YOUR MEETING on the front. The book can become part of your Meeting library, a book to lend to distant or shut-in members, or tangible evidence of the life in your Meeting for prospective meeting donors.

*Delivering the Project:*

If you create a book, we ask that you bring your Meeting's Continuing Book of Revelation to Residential Yearly Meeting at Allentown, PA to be displayed during the sessions. If the book is brought or sent to Marty Smith, RE Concerns Group, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 by July 16, we will take it to Allentown College when we go. Call Marty Smith for details about this project at 1-800-220-0796, #7008.

(This idea is adapted from a similar project done by members of Calvary Baptist Church of Denver, CO as a Lenten Exercise; courtesy of Doren Tenerowicz)

## Chapter 1 Centering and Listening

*In calm and cool silence, once again  
I find my old accustomed place among  
My brethren, where, perchance, no human tongue  
Shall utter words; where never hymn is sung,  
Nor dim light falling through the pictured pane!  
There, syllabled by silence, let me hear  
The still, small voice which reached the prophet's ear.*

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)

*Centering can be a transition from the material world into that deep, inward place where God can be encountered.*

Opening Doors to Quaker Worship, p. 52

*If pressed to say what they are actually doing in a Meeting for Worship, many Quakers would probably say they are waiting - waiting in their utmost heart for the touch of something beyond their everyday selves. Some would call it "listening to the quiet voice of God" - (without trying to define that word). Others would use more abstract terms: just "listening" (though no voice is heard), or "looking inward" (though no vision are seen), or "pure attention" (though nothing specific is attended to).*

Silence and Speech, p. 6

### Themes: Centering and Listening

In this first chapter we will look at how to prepare to enter into the living silence that is Meeting for Worship. If our Meeting for Worship is a time of expectant waiting, how do we quiet the anxious, thinking part of our minds and our restless, active bodies so that we may be open to divine revelation? Outside of Meeting for Worship adults and children alike need quiet times, to be comfortable with silence, to open our senses to all of life around us, and to *center* on "that of God" which is within each of us. In the quiet space we can *listen* for the Truth to direct our lives. If we frequently pause in our busy lives to look for direction *from the center out*, we may find God has a message for us. It may be comfort, peace, and contentment or a call to action to minister to the needs of others or be a leader in doing God's work. As we face new challenges and confront old ones, we can find guidance and comfort by returning to the *center* of our being where the Spirit dwells.

### Background for the Teacher:

*"I love these little people; and it is not a slight thing when they, who are so fresh from God, love us."*  
Charles Dickens

It is marvelous to observe the natural awe and wonder in young children as they make discoveries about the world around them. They are often quite comfortable with a sense of God in their lives without giving it much thought. Children seem to know about God, and might even feel they have a personal relationship with God without questioning why or how.

As Quaker parents, teachers, and Meeting members, we hope to show our children that their "knowing" or "feeling" about God is something special and can be developed throughout their lives in a personal relationship with God through prayer and quiet contemplation. We invite the children to be a part of the living silence in Meeting for Worship. But have we adequately prepared them? Often children are not "tuned in" when Meeting starts on Sunday morning. Instead they are waiting for the time to pass when they can go out to their activities. We can prepare our children by talking with them about what "happens"

in Meeting for Worship and how to center into the silence. We can give them opportunities to practice these things by having worship-sharing or children's Meeting during First-Day School and welcoming the children on occasion to Meeting for Worship for the entire hour. In the longer time, they might experience the deepening of the silence and the ministry.

### *Quaker Worship*

Quakers are different in **how** we worship but not in our purpose of worship. Like other religions, we want our faith to be part of our everyday life, to give inspiration, meaning, and purpose to what we do, and to provide the impetus for our social responsibility. Like others, we want to live Christian lives. Unlike others, we do not rely on an intermediary, an ordained or acknowledged minister, to interpret the words of God or the teachings of Jesus. Nor do we observe the outward forms or creeds or rituals of other faiths. We do not come to Meeting hoping that something inspirational will be said by someone else. We want to know God's will for us personally and "experimentally". At Meeting we enter into the silence, knowing that God is within each of us and hoping to connect with the indwelling Spirit. We try to center down. It is not our conscience nor our intellect we are seeking. We hope to get beyond our intellect and the distracting thoughts that crowd our busy minds and to a place where we acknowledge the living Spirit within us with gratitude, trust, concern, and prayer. Time stops, and the here and now is gone. There is a connectedness to all creation that is felt and which can affect everyone with feelings of love and support.

### *Centering*

We can have the spiritual experience, the oneness with God, not only at Meeting for Worship but in our work and play, alone or in a group. When we approach our activities with an openness to spiritual guidance, there is a wonderful feeling of support when one works or plays in a group where unity of purpose exists. To be in touch with our spiritual center, we must take time to quiet our bodies and minds from distractions, and this process is called "centering". **Centering** involves relaxing our bodies and awakening our senses so we can be **listening** to our spiritual center.

### **Introduction:**

In this chapter on **centering and listening**, we will provide a groundwork that can enable children to reach and explore the deep, quiet space at the center of their beings through activities that follow. If we can help our children find ways to still their bodies and their minds and look inside themselves at the source of their feelings, we can help them know that God's love and the spirit of Christ are available to them always. We offer activities like story telling, arts and crafts, walks, games, meditation, and worship-sharing to encourage children to take time for quiet reflection, to give thanks, to be at peace with their surroundings, and to connect with something greater than themselves. See a sample lesson plan at the end of this chapter.

### **Activities:**

#### *Stories*

Read one of these stories to your group of children or young people. Talk about what we hear when there is no talking or music playing. What do we hear coming from inside of us — from the inside of others?

Bonnie Becker (K-1st), *The Quiet Way Home*

Byrd Baylor (PreK-6th), *Everybody Needs a Rock*

Mary C. Test (K-3rd), *On Sitting Still*

Byrd Baylor (all ages), *The Other Way to Listen*

All available on loan from PYM Library, 1515 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA or by calling 215-241-7219 or 7220. "On Sitting Still" and "The Other Way to Listen" can be purchased from FGC Bookstore, 1216 Arch St., Philadelphia, PA by calling 1-800-966-4556

### Art Projects

The activities that follow are to reinforce the themes of previous stories. Each child can practice listening while working to create something. No talking is allowed to encourage children to listen to their inner selves or to what occupied silence has to "say".

*Sounds of Sunprint* (All ages): On a sunny day, have children make a "sunprint" using special sunprint paper available in art stores. First, each person collects one or two objects. Find a place outside where Nature can be observed ("heard" in silence). Have each person place their object(s) on the paper in open sunlight and sit and "listen" to something in Nature (a rock or a tree, etc.) for about ten minutes, the time it takes for the sunprint paper to develop a negative image of the object(s) placed on it.

*Ask:* What were you thinking about when you were waiting? Did you hear the sun doing its work? What sounds could you hear from the inside of your body? From the outside?

*God's Eyes* (K-5th): Needed: two twigs, yarn. Mark the center of each twig. Securely tie these together with a piece of yarn, making the form of a cross. Pull knots to the back. Wind colored yarn around the twigs as illustrated, changing colors of yarn every so often (Fig. 1). Or, you can use multi-colored yarn, thus eliminating the need to change colors in the middle of the project. The finished God's Eye can help us focus on a place within us or in other people where we think God is (Fig. 2).

*Ask:* Where do you think God is?

Fig. 1

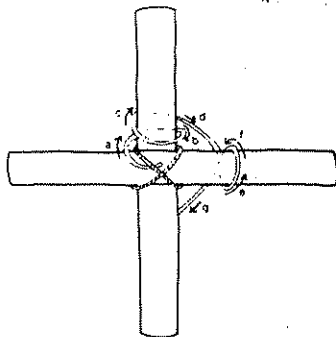
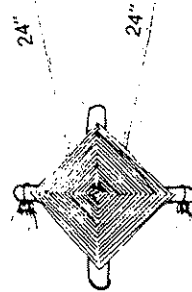
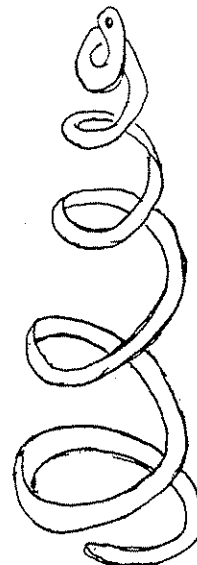


Fig. 2

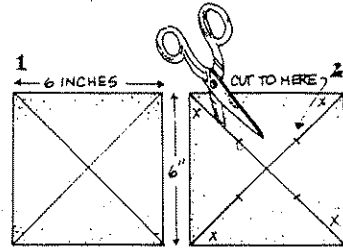


*3-D Spirals* (PreK-5th): Using colored construction paper, hang spirals in classroom or hallway with string tied to center of circle. See directions at the end of this chapter.

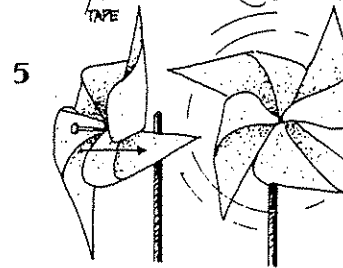
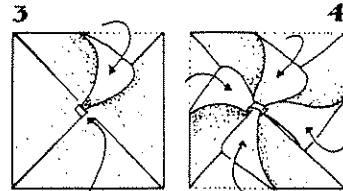


*Pinwheels (K-6th):* Using heavy paper, scissors, straight pins, dowels, straws, or new pencils with rubber erasers, follow the directions described here.

Cut out a square of reasonably heavy paper.  
Fold the square corner-to-corner as shown. Cut until 1/2" of the center of the square.



Fold points A, C, E, and G into the center of the pinwheel with points overlapping each other.



Stick a straight pin through the overlapping points and on through to the eraser of a pencil.

Gently blow into the open face of the pinwheel. The point to emphasize: *The wind moves the pinwheel like the Spirit moves us.*

(From: "Every Kid's Book of Things to Do")

*Fingerpainting (PreK-2nd):* Fingerpaint to music. Remember, no talking.

*Sandpainting (K-5th):* Give each child a piece of poster board and some colored sand (one color per child). Instruct children to keep sand on the poster board and off the floor; it will be collected at the end of the activity. Have children "paint" to the mood created by the music they are listening to, such as Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. If you'd like a permanent picture, Elmer's™ glue can be spread over the paper before the sand is sprinkled.

*Music/Storytelling (K-5th):* Play music or read a story(perhaps one listed on page 4). Ask for artistic response to the music or story through clay or homemade play dough (see recipe that follows). After the objects are made, *ask*: What did you hear during the art activity? What did you feel? What helped to shut out noises that you didn't want to hear? What were you thinking about?

Play Dough Recipe

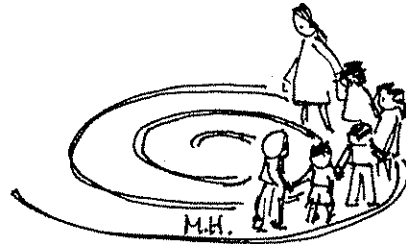
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup salt
- 2 tsp. Cream of Tarter
- 1 cup water
- 2 Tbsp. Baby Oil
- 1 tsp. food coloring

Combine all ingredients in a sauce pan. Cook over medium heat. Stir constantly until mixture forms a ball. Remove from heat and knead for a few minutes. When cool, store in a sealed plastic container or a Zip-Lock bag.

*Take a walk without talking* (K-3rd): Let everyone know ahead of time that each person is to walk with all his/her senses open to nature. After a while stop the children and sit down in a comfortable place. Continue refreshing your senses with the natural world, and then ask the children to listen/feel/know what is deep within each of them.

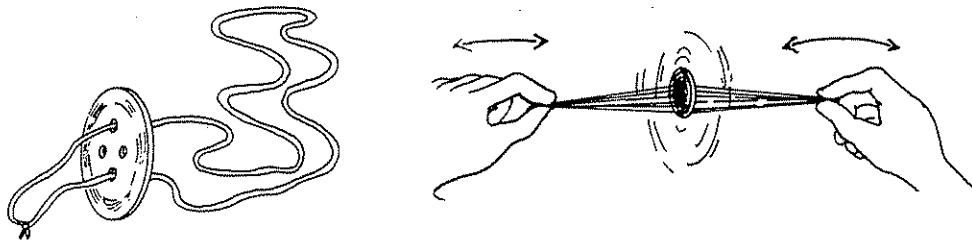
*Make/Bake bread with a message* (All ages). Teacher or students reads each step in making bread out loud and clarifies if necessary; then each person does a step in turn without speaking. Children can place written messages wrapped in foil, such as Bible passages or quotes at the beginning of this chapter, in the loaf or in each roll prior to baking. Before the bread is eaten by others, alert them to look for the foil envelope so they don't swallow the message which was meant for them. Baked loaves or rolls can be shared with other classes or in Meeting. The point here is to mindfully be aware of each part of the whole process of making bread to which each contributes in silence. Encourage bakers to look for non-verbal signs to know when to do what step. (Adult supervision is needed)

*Spiral Dance* (All ages): Group forms in a line, holding hands, and moves to music, following the leader who leads the line into a spiral and then out. Music suggestions: "The George Fox Song", p. 72 or "Lord of the Dance", p. 115 in *Worship and Song: A Friends Hymnal*, FGC.



*Rainstorm Game* (All ages): This is a fun listening activity that works well with a mixed age group. Divide the group into three sections. The leader starts the first section rubbing hands together. The second group starts a few seconds after and then the third group. Now everyone is rubbing hands together. The leader then directs the first section to change to finger snapping, then the second group; then the third group. Now everyone is snapping. The leader then directs the first section to start slapping its thighs; then the second group; then the third group. Now everyone is slapping. The leader then reverses the progression. The sections return to finger snapping, hand rubbing, and then silence. This sounds like a rainstorm, if each group continues its sound until directed to change.

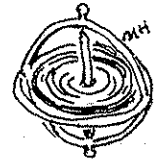
*Centering Whirler* (K-8th): Thread a long piece of string or yarn through two holes opposite the center of a large button. Tie the loose ends of the string together. Move button to the center of the string loop.



Grasp the separate ends of the loop with your fingers and proceed to wind the string by twirling one hand in a circular motion while holding the other hand still. When the string seems twisted tight and begins to kink, slip the ends of the twisted string loop over the fingers of each hand. Pull hands slowly apart. The string will unwind and the button will spin. If you move your hands in and out, the button will keep rewinding  
(From: "Every Kid's Book of Things to Do" by Linda Allison and Martha Weston)



*Gyroscope (4th-8th):* Have older children help younger ones wind the string and pull it out quickly to launch the spinning gyroscope. Notice how it stays on course even when moved. A gyroscope is truly centered. If we can make our lives centered to the will of God and the teachings of Jesus, we will stay on course too!



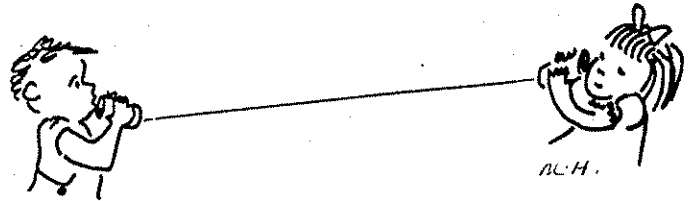
*Walkie-Talkies (K-3rd):* Discuss how holding the string between the two “phones” determines how well the message is received. A tight string carries the message best. Be still and open and the message will reach you. This is similar to being still in Meeting and waiting to hear God’s message for us.

What to Use:

- Two tin cans with one end open
- A long piece of strong twine
- A large nail
- A hammer
- Paint to decorate cans

What to Do:

1. Make a hole in the center of each can by hammering the nail
2. String one end of the twine into each hole. Tie a large knot
3. Decorate the cans with painted designs
4. Pull the line with one person at each end



(From: “As the Way Opens” RE Committee, PYM, 1990)

After everyone has finished making walkie-talkies, play loud music on a tape recorder or record player. It will now be impossible to “listen” to any message on the Walkie-Talkies. Then pairs can take turns using the walkie-talkies while all is quiet. This helps us to recognize the value of silence if we want to listen to others and to what is coming from inside of us.

*Centering Exercises  
With Children and Young People*

*Body Awareness*

1. Sit with proper posture (like a puppet pulled up by a string that's attached from the crown of your head). Put your feet flat on the floor. Let your hands rest lightly, palms up resting on your thighs. Close your eyes. Softly, slowly, breathe in fresh, new air. Now breathe out. Let anything "bad" flow out of you through your hands and feet and your breath. Repeat five times or more. Turn your hands so that your palms are up. Now, as you breathe in, imagine that you are receiving something fresh and new. Pretend your hands are turned up to receive God's blessings. (6th-12th)
2. Use this relaxation technique prior to Meeting for Worship and when you get fidgety in Meeting. (No one will know you are doing this!). First tighten then relax parts of the body beginning with the toes and working up, part by part, to the head (All ages)

*Guided Imagery*

1. Make two lists. One list will have activities which get us excited, stimulated, and responsive. The other list will have activities that calm us down, help us to focus, or help us to center. First *ask students*: What do you do to get ready for a test? What do you do if someone makes you angry? Then *ask*: what if you are getting ready to go to Meeting? Which list would you use?(6th-8th)
2. See "*Eternity in an Hour: Unwrapping a Parcel*," at the end of this chapter, a guided meditation by John Lampen, Irish Friend, in Opening Doors to Quaker Worship, pp. 25-26. This activity was used at the beginning of a family Meeting for Worship where children were expected to stay the entire time. (All ages)

*Resources for Centering*

- Maureen Murdock, *Spinning Inward*, Shambhala, 1987.  
Deborah Rozman, *Meditation for Children*, Ashlan Publishing and Planetary Pubs., 1989.  
Teresina Havens, *Mind What Stirs in Your Heart*, Pendle Hill, 1992 (for adults).  
Gay Hendricks, *The Centering Book*, Prentice Hall, 1975.  
Gay Hendricks, *The Second Centering Book*, Prentice Hall, 1977.  
(All available from FGC Bookstore or PYM Library)

## Worship Sharing

(Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School, Adults)

The following quotation by William Stringfellow describes the experience of real listening that worship sharing encourages:

*Listening is a rare happening among human beings. You cannot listen to the word another is speaking if you are preoccupied with your appearance or with impressing the other, or are trying to decide what you are going to say when the other stops talking, or are debating about whether what is being said is true or relevant or agreeable. Such matters have their right place, but only after listening to the word as the word is being uttered.*

*Listening is a primitive act of love in which a person gives himself of another's word, making himself accessible and vulnerable to that word.*

Opening Doors to Quaker Worship, p. 117

Worship sharing is worship while expressing our own experiences and listening to others, sometimes in response to a query, a series of questions, or a poem. Usually the group gathers in a circle and sometimes centers on an object such as a candle, a work of art, or an object from nature. We speak only from our own knowledge and experience. Prior to worship sharing the leader should explain some guidelines, reminding the participants that sometimes what is shared is very personal, even painful, but always confidential. Cookie Caldwell, Program Coordinator of Young Friends at PYM, offers the following *Guidelines for Worship Sharing* developed at Young Friends gatherings:

- First, go around the circle and share names. Please don't assume that everyone knows everyone else.
- Start with a period of silent centering.
- Allow silence during and after each contribution.
- Remember that no one is required to speak.
- That each contribution should be welcomed as a "gift."
- Try to be aware of the needs of each person in your group.
- Remember that everyone's contributions are of equal value.
- Respect confidentiality, what ever is said in the group stays within the group.
- Be serious but not somber. Too much laughter can make your group feel frivolous.
- Do not ask follow up questions.
- End with a group hug, or hand squeeze or what ever else seems supportive and appropriate

Some ideas to use to focus children and young people during worship sharing are:

- (K-5th; all ages) • What do you do in Meeting for Worship?
- (Older children) • What or who makes a difference in your life?
- (All ages) • What do we mean when we say, "There is that of God in everyone"?

**Resources for Centering and Listening:**

*Opening Doors to Quaker Worship*, a publication of the Religious Education Committee of Friends General Conference, 1994, available from the FGC Bookstore (1-800-966-4556), or PYM Library (1-800-220-0796, #7219 or 7220).

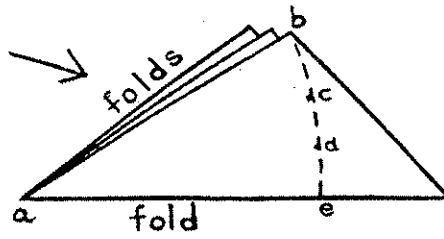
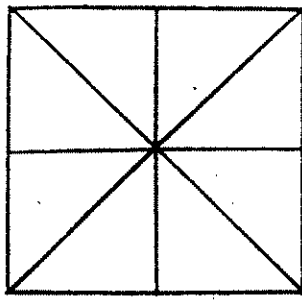
Richard Allen, *Silence and Speech*, Quaker Home Service, London, available from FGC Bookstore.

Dorothy Steere, *On Listening: To God and to Each Other*, Wider Quaker Fellowship, Friends World Committee for Consultation, 1984, in PYM Library.

*Teaching Quaker Faith and Practice to Children*, PYM Curriculum, 1992, in PYM Library or from FGC Bookstore.

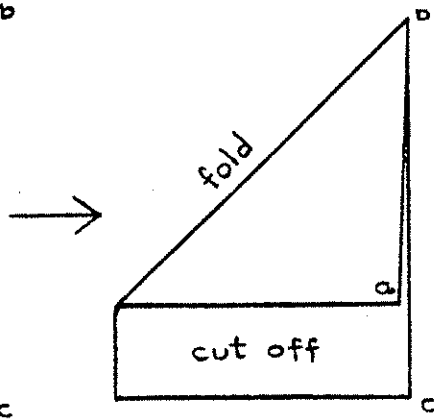
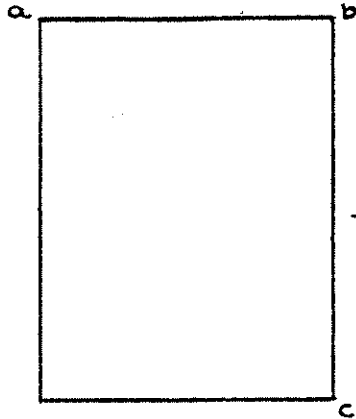
Ann Wiseman, *Making Things: A Handbook of Creative Discovery* (Books I and II), Little, Brown & Co., in PYM Library.

# DIRECTIONS FOR 3-D SPIRAL



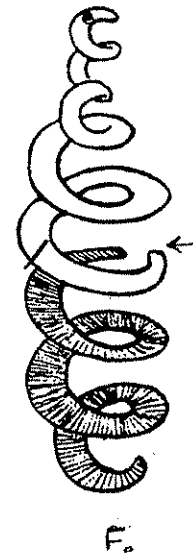
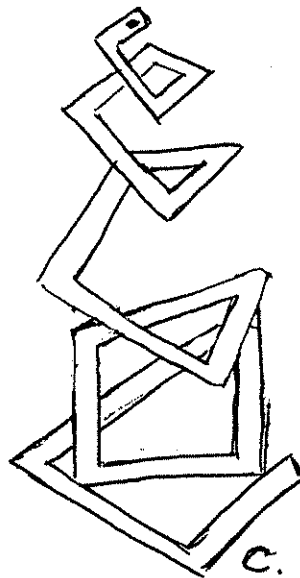
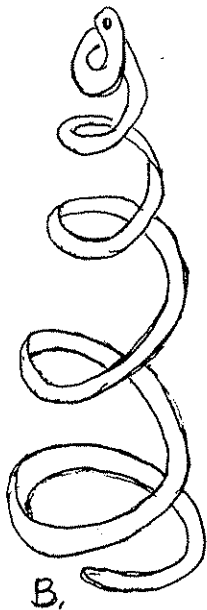
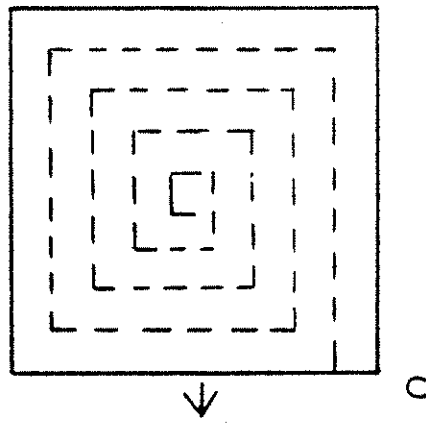
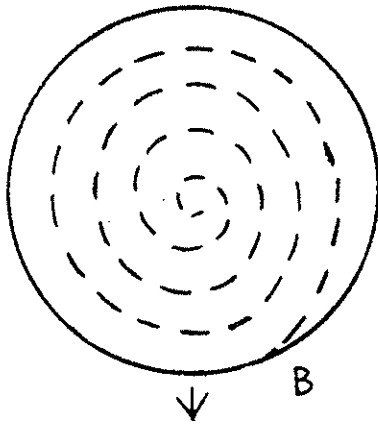
## CUTTING A CIRCLE

Fold a square in half on the diagonal, forming a triangle. Fold in half again, and then in half again. Using  $ab$  as a measure, mark  $ac$ ,  $ad$ , and  $ae$  and cut a connecting arc.



## CUTTING A SQUARE

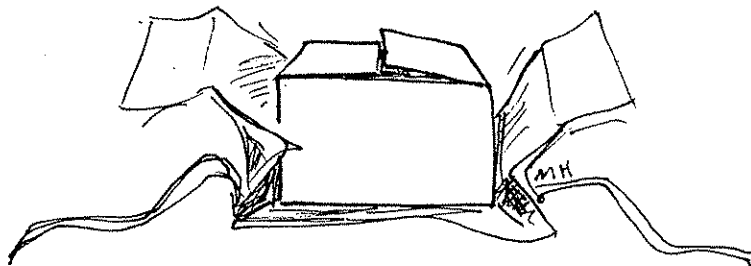
Bring side  $ab$  of a rectangle over to side  $bc$  and cut off extra piece below.



Join two B's together.

## *Eternity in an Hour: Unwrapping a Parcel*

*You must have wondered what the grown-ups were doing so quietly while you sat with us, and how they managed to go on for three-quarters of an hour after you went out. Well, today we hope you will stay with us and see. But if any of you feel after a bit that you've sat here long enough, don't be afraid to get up and go out.*



*This morning, I'm going to suggest we play a thinking game rather like the British game called Pass-the-Parcel. I'm going to mention some of the things which come into people's minds in meeting and ask you to throw each one away in turn, like the layers of paper around the parcel.*

*So, first look around. See who's here. Smile at your friends. See where everyone's sitting. Look at Mum and see if she's smiling.... That's fine. You've have a look. Now take all your thoughts about that, and throw them away. They are the first layer of the parcel; we don't need them any more.*

*Let's go on to the next wrapping. Let's think about the rest of the day. Do you know what's for dinner? What are you going to do this afternoon? Think what you've got to do — what you're going to enjoy... Right, put those thoughts behind you, too. We're getting further in. We don't need them any more.*

*The next layer is anything you're worried about: next week at school, things at home, troubles with friends, anything. Don't be afraid to think of them. Have a really good worry.... Now let's dump all those sad and frightening things. We're getting right into the parcel now.*

*There are just three more layers, and then the secret in the middle. I'm going to ask you to listen hard. A lot of what we do in Meeting is just listening. We shall listen first to everything you can hear outside the room: birds, cars, people. Then we'll try to forget those and listen only to noises in the room: breathing, gentle movements. Then forget those things, too, and listen to what's happening in your own body: those funny clicks and thumps. And that's the last covering. Throw it away and try to listen still deeper inside yourself. Find the treasure in the middle. It will be different for each of you. You may find the person your parents love there. You may find God. Are you ready? Listen outside the room... Inside the room.... Deeper into yourself.... Deeper.... ”*

*(by John Lampen, from Opening Doors to Quaker Worship, FGC, 1994, pp. 25-26)*

## Sample Lesson Plan Centering and Listening

(approximate 45 minutes for elementary age children)

1. Gather children in a circle of chairs.
2. Go around the circle one at a time, and ask each child to say his/her name and:

a) tell one thing he/she learned recently because he/she was a good listener (e.g., the squeaky, groaning noise made by branches as the wind rubs them together, **or** how loudly the clock ticks in the Meeting room during Meeting for Worship, **or** how the teacher taught me to do long division an easier way).

b) If the children came to First-Day School having spent 15 or 20 minutes in Meeting for Worship, ask them to share what they were thinking about during the silence or to reflect on a spoken message.

Reflect briefly on what happens in Meeting for Worship... waiting and listening to our inner selves and for God to speak to us.

3. Play the "Rainstorm Game". Talk about how many different sounds there are in a rainstorm. *Ask* where do you like to be when there is a rainstorm? What part of a storm do you like best and why? The smell the wind carries right before the storm; the sound of the first huge drops of rain on the window, roof or car windshield; the thunder that makes your insides quake, the lightning...?

4. Move the group to a table. Pass out plain paper and markers or crayons. Explain that the children can draw or doodle quietly as you read the story, Another Way to Listen by Bryd Baylor. Ask for comments about the story. Give directions about how the class will now go outside to sit quietly and listen to nature.

5. Go outside, weather permitting. Find a quiet spot where children can comfortably sit near a tree, pretty shrub, patch of flowers, solitary rock, or rock wall. Have children spend 10 minutes listening to their surroundings. Finish by asking the children what they heard. Relate it to the boy in the story and how much he had to practice listening before he heard the rocks sing. Speak briefly about how it takes practice to be a good listener in Meeting for Worship.

## Chapter 2 Discernment — Hearing and Answering the Call

*The Lord came and stood forth calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for thy servant hears."* 1 Samuel 3:10.

*And behold, the Lord passed by and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind, and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake, and after the earthquake was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, and after the fire a still small voice.* I Kings 19:3-18.

*"There is one, even Jesus Christ, who can speak to my condition."* George Fox Journal

**Themes:** Hearing the call, deciding what to do, answering the call.

Webster's dictionary defines *discernment* as:

- 1) to grasp and comprehend what is obscure
- 2) the power to see what is not evident to the average mind
- 3) power to distinguish and select what is true and appropriate

Some Friends define discernment as "Distinguishing what is True so as to use the knowledge in one's own life. Comprehending what is obscure so as not to be distracted from what is important. Distinguishing and selecting between the many options in life or choices we are faced with, knowing that the power to make the decisions is in each of us - 'That of God Within' "

### Discernment is:

making a choice  
knowing your responsibility  
understanding a problem  
feeling the way through a dilemma

by being led  
by seeking Truth  
by waiting on the will of God  
leaning on the power of the Spirit

---

in Worship  
in Clearness  
in the teachings of Christ  
by one's own experiences  
by studying other's experiences  
by listening to That of God within

### **Background for the Teacher:**

The definition above says that discernment is more than decision-making. There is of course, a continuum from deciding which shirt to wear to a search for God's guidance on the major decisions of life. (Though as we know from Quaker history, sometimes the decision of what to wear can be a major decision with far-reaching implications.) This chapter is designed to help children and young people understand the process of discernment. **PART I** looks at people who have been called by God and decided whether to heed the call. This kind of discernment is easier to understand. For example, Jonah was called by God to do something that he did not want to do. In the end he found the strength to do what God had asked. **PART II** explores the more difficult questions of how to know if you are led and how to make decisions that follow the leading of the Spirit.



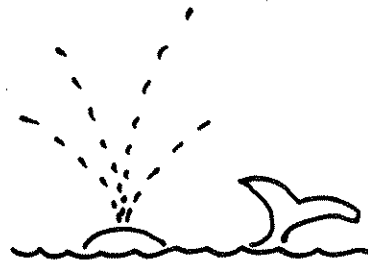
## Introduction:

In each part there are several stories to choose from followed by activities and discussion questions to reinforce the theme of the stories. Depending on the age of your class, choose an appropriate story and activity from Part I and Part II. You may also wish to use activities from the 1997 children's curriculum on how Friends make decisions: (Shaking Out the Truth: Threshing, Clearness, and Meeting for Business), available from the PYM library at 1-800-220-0796, #7219 or 7220 and FGC Bookstore at 215-571-1700.

### *PART I: God, Is That You?*

**Stories:** After you have read one of these stories, ask the children if the main character heard God's call and did what God asked right away.

*Jonah and the Whale* (K-6th). Tell the story of Jonah (found in Jonah 1-3) stopping at the point where Jonah obeys God and goes to Ninevah. (Chapter 4 introduces a lot of ideas that are not relevant in this context.) The point for this lesson is that Jonah finally realizes that he can't resist God's call. If you prefer to read the story, there are several well-illustrated versions of the story, including *Jonah and the Lord* by George MacBeth and *Jonah and the Great Fish* by Warwick Hutton. Both books are available from the Yearly Meeting Library at 1-800-220-0796, #7219 or 7220.



*Noah and the Ark* (K-8th). The story of Noah is found in Genesis 6:9-28. God speaks to Noah several times. Noah's obedience to God has extraordinary consequences. Teens love to hear the story of Noah as told by Bill Crosby on audio tape. (They may not have heard it!)

*Mary Fisher* (3rd-6th). Read the story of Mary Fisher, a Quaker, in *Lighting Candles in the Dark* by Elinor Briggs, Marnie Clark, Carol Passmore, eds., p. 34. Ask the children if Mary's journey was the right thing to do, the reasonable thing to do, and how others reacted to her mission. Ask the children to consider how much courage it took for Mary to undertake this journey. Compare Mary Fisher's journey to Jonah's struggle about whether or not to obey God.

## Activities:

*Blocking God's Call* (3rd-8th). We wear certain masks to block the person we really are; the person God wants us to be. Sometimes we wear a mask of confidence — even though we are unsure of ourselves. Sometimes it is a mask of anger towards others when we are really angry at ourselves. Have your class make masks and suggest that they make masks to represent what they wear to avoid being real and therefore, open and vulnerable. (From: *As the Way Opens*, p. 4, PYM, Yearly Meeting Packet, 1990). See directions at the end of this Chapter.

*Ask:*

- How do you think others feel when they see your mask?
- How do you feel when you wear your mask?

*Walkie-Talkies:* This is a good project to illustrate how we can keep clear and open the channels to God and each other. Directions are found in Chapter 1, p. 7.

## *PART II: Are You Talking to Me, Lord? You Want Me to Do What?*

### **Stories:**

*Everybody Needs a Rock* (K-6th) by Byrd Baylor, describes the search for the rock that is just right. The book goes through a process of eliminating the ones that are not right, looks at characteristics of rocks and what you might want to look for. It asks you to consider very carefully why you chose the rock you did. Using all your senses, you can find just the right rock. The two activities suggested on this page, "The Right Rock" and "Leaf Collection," fit well with this story.

"The Second Mile" (1st-8th) by Janet Sabina from: *Lighting Candles in the Dark* by FGC, RE, 1992. It is the story of a boy who lived at the time of Jesus and heard Jesus' instructions to go the second mile when a Roman soldier asked him to carry his pack. Listening to Jesus' words changed the lives of the boy and his enemy.

"The Punishment that Never Came" (K-6th) by Janet Sabina from: *Lighting Candles in the Dark*. This is a short story of the moment in Rufus Jones' life when he didn't do what his mother asked him to do, and he began to hear God's voice inside himself.

"We Know That Man" (4th-8th) by Amelia Swayne and Hanna Still from: *Lighting Candles in the Dark*. It is the story of a missionary doctor in Africa who found that a series of small encounters with people who needed help changed what he thought he was supposed to do.

### **Activities:**

#### *The Right Rock* (K-3rd)

Take a silent walk about the Meetinghouse grounds and have everyone find a rock.

*Ask:* Why were you able to find just the right rock when there were so many to choose from? What made you decide to pick your rock? Find out if anyone in the group has a collection. Why do you collect stamps, cards, fossils, etc.? Is your collection exactly the same as your friend's collection?

*Leaf Collection* (K-5th). Make a basket for collecting leaves. You can make a basket out of oatmeal boxes and a piece of string. Cut the side out of an oatmeal box, leaving the cover on and an inch at the top and bottom of the box. Tie a heavy string through holes in each end. You can paint it or cover it with a piece of contact paper. Take your basket out to collect leaves.



*Reflection:* Look at the leaves collected. Ask the children: What made you decide to pick one leaf over another?

#### *Clothes Make the Person* (K-6th).

Bring to your First-Day class lots of crazy clothes for the children to dress up in. Have them try on different hats; dress up in different costumes.

*Ask:* What messages do people send by the way they dress. Do we treat people differently depending on what they are wearing? What message did Friends give to others when they wore gray? When early Friends wore plain clothes, do you think people talked or behaved differently around them?

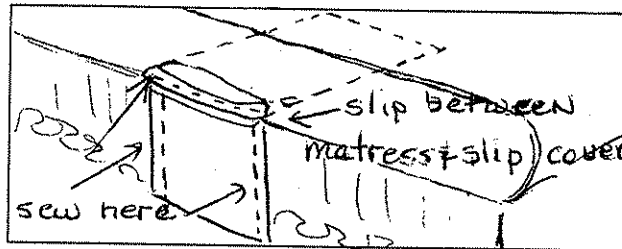
#### *Crayon Resist (K-8th)*

Completely cover heavy paper with different colors of crayon. Paint over the top with black poster paint. You can also buy paper with a black coating from an art supply catalog. Using the tip of sharp scissors, etch the black surface into whatever design you wish. The underlying colors, which are revealed partly by chance, will come through to enhance your surface design.

*Ask:* As you are making your design, do the colors that you uncover make you change your mind about where to scratch next? (The point here is that what we hear from our friends, from our parents, or from God may help us decide what to do.)

#### *Bed Bag (4th-8th)*

We need to prepare for Meeting throughout the week. Many of our best ideas come at night. Nighttime is a good time to read something inspirational, or write in a journal about your thoughts, feelings or dilemmas. You need a piece of cloth a yard or more long and a foot or so wide (felt is good). Fold the end over about an inch and stitch. Then fold it up so that the bag is the size you want, 10 inches, or a foot, leaving at least a foot to put under the mattress to keep it in place. Sew up the sides of the bag and hem the open edge. Keep a book or your journal and a pen in it right where you can find it before you go to sleep every night.



*Brainwriting (6th-8th).* Give each person a 3 x 5 card and a pen or pencil.

- At the top of the card write a problem/conflict for which you would like help.
- Turn in or collect the cards then redistribute. Person A gets the card and writes three possible responses/solutions on the left side of the card.
- Turn in cards and redistribute again. Person B gets the card and writes three solutions on the right side of the card.
- Give cards back to originator of the problem.
- Turn the cards over and each person makes a list of criteria you can use for making a decision.
- Ask the class to figure out what they will about their problem, in silence and write their solution on the back of the card.
- When each one has decided what to do, *ask:* Who would like to tell us what made you decide one way or the other?

*A Children's Creative Response to Conflict Idea.*

*Who Am I? (6th-8th).* Before class look through magazines and cut out pictures of teens in every possible kind of dress. Have each middle schooler choose their own picture. Ask each person to show their picture and tell what kind of person the teen is, maybe what he believes. Then *ask* Do you think your classmates

really know who you are? How can you tell? Do you put on a mask so others can't see? Is it easy for others to see what you are really like? Why?

*My Best Friend* (K-12th)

With the class make a list on a flip-chart of the qualities of a good friend.

*Ask:* Do you treat your friend differently than someone who is not a friend? Do you act one way around your friend and differently around someone you don't like? How would you decide how to act? What are the things you do to keep your friend a friend forever?

**Resources:**

Etan Boritzer, *What is God*, Firefox Books, Ontario, 1990. FGC Bookstore and PYM Library.  
Pam Church, *The Most Important Rule of All*, Prevention and Motivation Programs, 1997.  
Laurence Rittenhouse, *Understanding Ourselves*, United Church Press, 1963. PYM Library.  
Elizabeth Brimlow, *In and Out the Silence*, Quaker Home Service, 1989, London. PYM Library.  
*Lighting Candles in the Dark*, Religious Education Committee of FGC, 1992. FGC Bookstore and PYM Library.

### DIRECTIONS FOR PAPER PLATE MASK

1. Paint a paper plate or start with one that is already patterned or colored.
2. Cut out eyes, nose, and neck, or paint or glue these on.
3. Add yarn trim.
4. Glue, staple or tack a stick or dowel (from craft store) to one side of the plate. This makes a handle for holding the mask over your face.



### CONSTRUCTION PAPER MASK

1. This mask should be large enough to cover your entire head, including your hair.
2. To make the crown, hair, beard, and facial features, cut out pieces of colored construction paper and glue on with white glue.



### FOIL OR STYROFOAM MASK

1. Gather some frozen-food pans, shallow foil tins, or Styrofoam meat trays in a variety of sizes and shapes.
2. Combine several and staple together to form one mask.
3. Cut out features and trimmings and glue them.



### TRANSPARENT ACETATE MASK

1. Cut out a mask shape from a piece of transparent acetate (from craft or hobby store).
2. Dilute a small amount of glue that dries clear with an equal amount of water.
3. Glue shapes cut from colored tissue paper to the mask. Try over-lapping colored tissue for an unusual effect.
4. Wipe off excess glue with a paper towel.



### Chapter 3 Leadership and Ministry

*"The purpose of all of our ministry is to lead us and other people into closer communion with God and to enable us to carry out those tasks which the Spirit lays upon us."*

London Yearly Meeting, 1986  
PYM Faith and Practice, 1997, Extract #131.

*"Friends believe that true leadership consists first and foremost in being led."*

Friends as Leaders: The Vision, Instrument and Methods  
Report from Pendle Hill Workshop, Sallie Jones, July, 1979

**Themes:** truth-telling, action, and witnessing

#### **Background for the Teacher:**

This chapter has ideas for teaching children about *ministry* and *leadership* and how to recognize and practice them in our world. Among Friends, Ministry and Leadership arise out of worship and the discernment process which follows a leading. The concept of *servant as leader* is the idea that a person serves a group of people, doing what needs to be done. Because the simplest and most important tasks are done, others are freed to move toward the goal because the servant's completed tasks clear the path. It can be illustrated through the life of Jesus, the lives of Friends like George Fox and Margaret Fell, and leaders like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Thorough exploring a Quaker view of leadership and ministry we hope to demonstrate creative ways to understand and identify how both opportunities appear in our lives.

#### **Introduction:**

The lessons which follow can be expanded in inventive ways. There are opportunities to compare and contrast Quaker faith and practice with other religions. These discussions can prepare students for field trips, interfaith youth projects, visits to other places of worship and invitations for other faiths to visit your Monthly Meeting.

Choose one or two of the stories or films which suit the age you are teaching. Follow the story with questions for recall and discussion (p. 21) and one or two activities (pp. 21-22).

#### **Stories:**

##### *Ministry and Leadership*

##### K-2nd

##### In PYM Library:

- Robert Coles, *The Story of Ruby Bridges*, Scholastic, 1995.
- Rae Bains, *Harriet Tubman, the Road to Freedom*, Troll Assoc., 1992.
- Leo Lionni, *Swimmy*, Pantheon, 1963.

##### K-4th

- Jan Johnson, *Angel of the Prison: A Story About Elizabeth Fry*, Winston Press, 1977, in PYM Library.



*Quaker Women Leaders:*

3rd-5th

In PYM Library:

Jennifer Fisher Bryant, *Lucretia Mott: A Guiding Light*, Eerdmans, 1996.

Kem Knapp Sawyer, *Lucretia Mott: Friend of Justice*, Discovery Enterprises, 1992.

Constance Burnett, *Lucretia Mott: Girl of Old Nantucket*, Bobbs Merrill, 1963.

*Lucretia Mott*, the film in PYM Library.

Elfrida Vipont, The Story of Margaret Fell in *A Faith to Live By*, Foulds, FGC, 1962.



*Quaker and Other Leaders*

4th-5th

Sophia Lyon Fahs, *George Fox, The Man Who Wouldn't*, FGC, 1994, in PYM Library.

Pat McKessack, *Martin Luther King, Jr., A Man to Remember*.

Lillie Pallmer, *Martin Luther King, Jr., A Man of Peace*.

Carol Greene, *Mother Teresa: Friend of the Friendless*.



6th-8th

Stewart and Polly Anne Graff, *Helen Keller - Toward the Light*

*William Penn: Challenging Vision*, the film in PYM Library

William Kashatus, *Benjamin Lay's Fight Against Slaveholders*, In: "Quaker Profiles and Practices", William Penn Charter School, 1995, in PYM Library.

John J. Vail, *The Mandela's*.

8th-12th

Glenn Alan Cheney, *Mohandas Gandhi*.

All Grades

Theodore Seuss Geisel, *The Lorax*, in PYM Library.

*Bible Stories*

Moses (Exodus 3-40)

Noah (Genesis 5-8)

Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 30-35)

Jesus (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John)

Zacchaeus (Luke 19:3-4)



**Discussion Questions** (related to the themes of previous stories):

*On Leadership* (Ruby Bridges, Harriet Tubman, Swimmy, Lucretia Mott, Margaret Fell, etc):

Ask factual recall questions when you're finished reading a story. Then, depending on the age group, *ask*

- What did the main character do to show leadership?
- What do you think a leader does?
- Who is the leader of your family? How can you tell?
- What qualities make a good leader? A bad leader?
- Was the main character a "servant leader"? (After reminding them of the definition)

*On Ministry* (Elizabeth Fry, Margaret Fell, George Fox, Mother Teresa, etc.):

Ask factual recall questions when you're finished reading a story. Then, depending on the age of the group, have the students answer the following on a piece of paper:

- If I were sick, I'd like someone to...
- If I were trying to make a life-changing decision, I'd like someone to...
- If I felt depressed, I'd like someone to...
- If someone close to me died, I'd like someone to...
- When I feel sad (or angry, disappointed, unfairly treated, lonely, excited, cranky, bored, tired), I'd like someone to...

*On using one's gifts to minister:*

- How do you use your gifts in Meeting?
- How do you share your gifts?
- What do other religions mean by "ministers" and "ministry"?
- Name as many different types of ministry as you can think of
- Do you know any Quaker women ministers?
- Do you know any Quaker men ministers?
- Are there women ministers in other faiths? (Mother Teresa can be used as an example of a female minister of the Roman Catholic Church).

**Activities:**

*On Ministry*

*Paper Plate Balancing* (K-6th) (or Bean Bag Balancing)

Give everyone a cake-size paper plate and ask them to try balancing the plate on different parts of their body. Explain that the goal is to keep everyone in the group moving. Caveat: The child can only move while balancing a plate somewhere on their body. When one plate falls, everyone freezes. Another person may pick up the plate, hopefully without dropping their own, and hand it to you. You can replace it anywhere on your body and keep moving. This activity may be done with different rhythms of music in the background.

*Reflection:* How did it feel when you needed help? How did it feel to help someone else, if you did? Was it hard or easy to pay attention to others' needs as well as your own? Did it feel safe to take risks? Why? Why not? What did this game teach you about ministry to others?

Note: If the group is not dropping their plates, encourage them to try harder/riskier balancing positions or have them move faster.



Activities (continued)

*On Leadership*

*Mirroring Game (K-3rd)*

Divide group into pairs. Decide who will be oranges and who will be apples. In silence, apples lead movements and oranges follow/mirror. Facilitator signals to let them know when to reverse roles. Then, facilitator asks pairs to try to move together without anyone leading or following.

*Reflection:* How did it feel to lead? Follow/mirror? What was it like to try to move together without one person leading? Do you ever get to be a leader in school? That does a good leader have to do?

*Marshmallows (K-3rd)*

The group navigates a “river of chocolate” (marked-off area) by stepping only on “marshmallows”.

You will need: Carpet squares, or wooden blocks (one per person) and two ropes.

Create a riverbank with the rope; place one rope on the ground and the second rope about 15 feet away. Tell the children, “You are little ants. Your goal is to work together to cross this river of chocolate to get to your family picnic. You can use these marshmallows to get across, but be careful because the river of chocolate is flowing quickly. Remember, you can only step on these ‘marshmallows’ (carpet squares or wooden blocks), which have the power to hold anyone safely above this river of hot cocoa. Don’t lose touch of any marshmallow, or it will sink into the chocolate void, never to be seen again! You must get safely from one riverbank to the other, using the marshmallows as stepping stones”.

- Line the group up at one bank of the river. Give the group a stack of marshmallows (equal to the number of people in their group, minus one). Tell them that their goal is to get across the river without falling in.
- There are a few rules. No one may touch the river. The only safe way to cross the river is on the marshmallows. If someone falls off a marshmallow, he or she must start over.
- It is critical that there always be one point of physical contact with each marshmallow. For example, if a marshmallow is left on the floor without anyone touching it, it will quickly float down the river and be lost. Take away any marshmallows that “sink into the chocolate”.

*Reflection:* Did the group cooperate while trying to get across? Did anyone take on a leadership role? How could you tell? Did the group create a plan? Was it followed through?

*Who’s the Leader? (K-6th) (also known as Detective)*

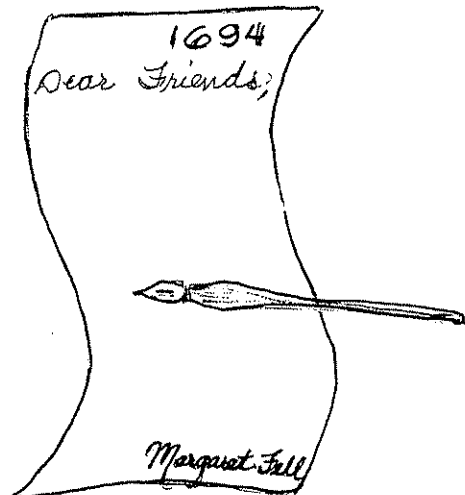
The group sits in a circle. Two volunteers leave the room. The group chooses a leader whose hand movements the entire group will follow (clapping slow, fast, hands on knees, head, etc.). The challenge for the group is to follow the leader’s movements without looking at the leader so as not to reveal who the leader is. The group begins the first movement and notifies the volunteers outside the room when they are ready. The “detectives” return and observe, especially watching when the group changes motions. The pair get three guesses as to who the leaders are. Play several rounds with different volunteers.

*Reflection:* How did it feel to be the leader? How could you tell when someone else was leading? What did they do? Were they bossy? Were they quiet? Who were the best leaders?

## Service Projects:

### *Overseers as Leaders (2nd-6th)*

This is a letter-writing project based upon the life of Margaret Fell. In the early days of the Society of Friends in England, Margaret Fell wrote letters of all kinds: to friends, to important people to ask them to do something, to people in trouble. Read or have one of the children read one of her letters (at the end of this chapter) aloud. Then ask each child to write their letter. Overseers may be invited into your classroom to tell about efforts they are making to keep in touch with members both near and far. The children can write letters to other children who perhaps do not come regularly to Meeting or to any member who is sick, grieving, etc. Using a map of the local area, use push pins of one color to show the destinations of the letters and another color to show origination of the letters.



### *Visit Confined Elderly (K-6th)*

At a time other than Christmas, plan a "Sunshine" visit to a Friends or other nursing home in your area. Have children make a bouquet of paper flowers and lively colorful painted bare branches. Each child will contribute one flower or branch to the gift which may grace the dining room of the home. Cookies can be baked ahead and presented upon your visit. The children can make a few selections of cheerful songs from the hymnal to sing together for the elderly folks.

## Resources:

William Kreidler and Lisa Furlong, *Adventures in Peacemaking: A Conflict-Resolution Guide for School-age Programs*, 1995. Educators for Social Response and Project Adventure.

Barbara Caldwell and Lynne Brick, *Quakers Answer the Call: Lessons Drawn from Quaker Lives*, RE Committee, PYM, 1986.

## Letter from Margaret Fell to the "Children of the Light"

*In the year 1652 it pleased the Lord to draw him (George Fox) toward us... My then husband, Thomas Fell, was not at home at the time, but gone the Welsh circuit, being one of the Judges of Assize, and our house (Swarthmoor Hall) being a place open to entertain ministers and religious people at, one of George Fox his friends brought him hither, where he stayed all night. And the next day, being a lecture or a fast-day, he went to Ulverston steeplehouse, but came not in till people were gathered; I and my children had been a long time there before. And when they were singing, he stood up upon a seat or form and desired that he might have liberty to speak. And he that was in the pulpit said he might. And the first words that he spoke were as followeth: 'He is not a Jew that is one outward, neither is that circumcision which is outward; but he is a Jew that is one inward, and that is circumcision which is of the heart'. And so he went on and said, how that Christ was the Light of the world and lighteth every man that cometh into the world; and that by this Light they might be gathered to God, etc. And I stood up in my pew, and I wondered at his doctrine, for I had never heard such before. And then he went on, and opened the Scriptures, and said, 'The Scriptures were the prophets' words and Christ's and the apostles' words, and what as they spoke they enjoyed and possessed and had it from the Lord'. And said, 'Then what had any to do with the Scriptures, but as they came to the Spirit that gave them forth. You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of Light and hast walked in the Light, and what thou speakest is it inwardly from God?'*

*This opened me so that it cut me to the heart; and then I saw clearly we were all wrong. So I sat me down in my pew again, and cried bitterly. And I cried in my spirit to the Lord, 'We are all thieves, we are all thieves, we have taken the Scriptures in words and know nothing of them in ourselves'. So that served me, that I cannot well tell what he spake afterwards; but he went on in declaring against the false prophets and priests and deceivers of the people.*

Margaret Fell, 1694