

The Friendly Seed

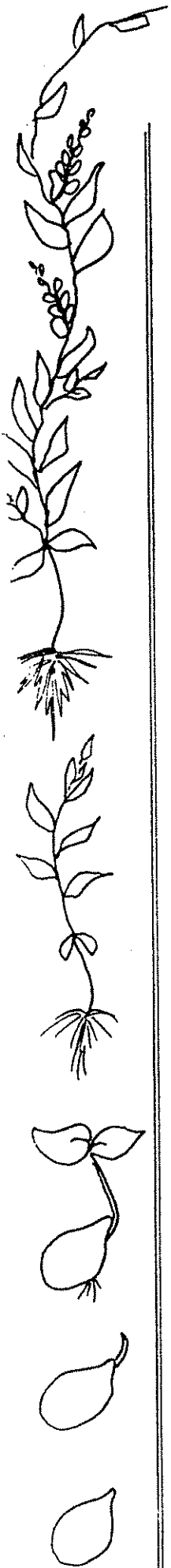
Religious Education Concerns Group
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
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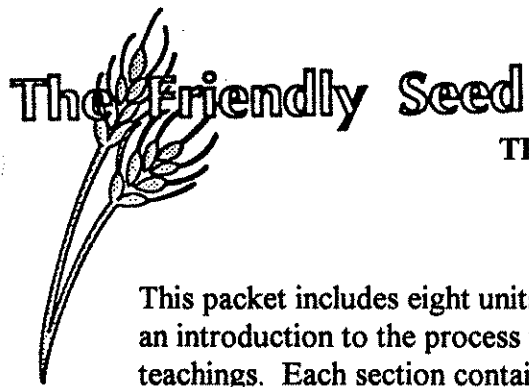
Teaching Children about Jesus Part I



Edited by Barbara Rose Caldwell
for
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's
Religious Education Concerns Group

Revised June, 1992 and March, 1999





TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT JESUS

Introduction

This packet includes eight units, the focus of which is the life and teachings of Jesus. The first unit is an introduction to the process used to create these lessons. The rest look at specific incidents or teachings. Each section contains background material, questions, and activities appropriate for a variety of age levels.

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Important Addresses for Resources Mentioned

Religious Education Concern Group, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19102, (215) 241-7221 or 1-800-220-0796, 7221 or 7008.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19102, (215) 241-7220.

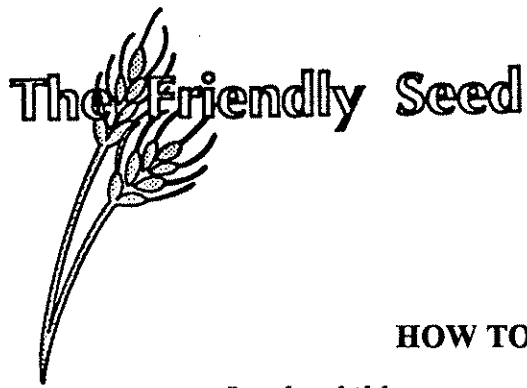
Friends General Conference, 1216 Arch St., Philadelphia, PA, 19107, (215) 561-1700

Quaker Hill Bookstore, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond, IN, 47374, (800) 537-8838

The following wrote one or more of the idea lessons:

Lynne Brick, Barbara Rose Caldwell, Patricia Howe, Barbara Kirschner, Priscilla Taylor Williams





The Friendly Seed

HOW TO TEACH CHILDREN ABOUT JESUS

Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 19:14

Introduction

This *Friendly Seed* is the first in a series centered on teaching children about Jesus. This *Seed* describes a process for preparing and teaching any Bible story as well as two stories, Zacchaeus and the Good Samaritan, which were prepared by this process. This series is an effort to produce a single resource for Friends who want to concentrate on the New Testament with their children. A second volume, *Teaching Children About Jesus, Part II*, is also available.

This *Seed* has six sections:

- I. Teaching children about Jesus - a process
- II. The Story of the Samaritan - an example of a story prepared using the method described in I.
- III. Zacchaeus - a second example
- IV. Telling a Bible Story
- V. A list of other stories and teachings of Jesus which are appropriate for children.
- VI. A list of other resources for teaching about Jesus.

I. Teaching Children about Jesus - A Process

A. Planning

This planning process works best if at least two people work together. First choose the story or teaching of Jesus you wish to present. You may be teaching a series of stories or just one. If you want to teach more than one, tie them together in some way - for example, stories about the beginning of Jesus' ministry or about the value of sinners.

Read the story carefully. Together discuss the story. What is important about it to you? What do you hope the children will learn from the story? *Limit* the number of ideas you try to teach. For very young children choose just one central idea on which to focus.

From your discussion develop questions which lead from the story itself to the issues you wish to raise. Some of these questions will deal directly with the story; others will take the content of the story and move it into the children's own experience. See the stories of the Samaritan and Zacchaeus below for examples of questions.

Finally, decide on an activity. This activity can be drama, art, song, writing, etc.; the only restriction is that it be age-appropriate and relevant to the story. See the stories of the Samaritan and Zacchaeus below for examples.

How to Teach Children About Jesus

Using this process you can prepare a lesson in about an hour plus the time it takes to prepare space and materials. The major advantage is the way this process personalizes the story and thus deepens its meaning.

B. *Teaching*

Gather the children in a circle and tell or read the story. Telling is always preferable since the storyteller has eye contact with the children, is very familiar with the story and through that familiarity makes the story come alive. See Section IV. below on Telling a Bible Story. If you do read the story, the *Good News Bible* is the clearest, most easily understood version. Other excellent sources of Bible stories are: *A Child's Life of Jesus*, John Borner; *Beginner's Bible*, *The Young Children's Illustrated Bible (young children through elementary)*, NIV Young Discoverer's Bible (middle school and high school) the *Arch Books Series*, and *Stories to Read and Color*, all available from FGC.

After reading the story ask a few factual questions to be sure the children understand what happened. In II. below we suggest telling the story twice; the second time ask the children to imagine themselves as part of the story. Then ask your prepared questions. You may want to go around the circle for responses or just let children respond as they are ready.

Move on to your activity. (If your activity involves dramatizing the story, you may want to do that before you ask your questions.) If possible, regather in a circle to share what you have done and to close with some silence.

Note: This method works well with an intergenerational group. Tell the story and ask the questions of everyone. Then either do the activity with the children while the adults continue with the discussion or plan an activity such as a mural or role playing which everyone can enjoy.

II. The Story of the Samaritan - A Lesson

This lesson was prepared using the method described in I above.

A. *What Is a Parable?*

First tell the children what a parable is. Jesus used stories or parables to teach special messages. In some ways parables are like puzzles which can be solved several ways. They can mean different things to different people.

Ask the children: Who is your neighbor? Accept all responses.

B. *Tell the Story*

Now tell the story (Luke 10:25-37). Then ask the children to close their eyes and, while you are telling the story a second time, to imagine they are in the story. Ask some to be the Levite, some the priest, some the Samaritan, and some the injured man. Afterwards the group can talk about the feelings of each character. An interesting idea is to give each child a piece of clay to work with when they hear the story. Then they can talk about their creations.

Be sure to tell the children that Samaritans were so despised that Jews avoided walking through Samaria and that priests and Levites were respected members of the Jewish community. If you have a Bible atlas, a picture will show the wildness of the setting of this story.

If you decide to act the story out, do that before going on to the questions.

How to Teach Children About Jesus

C. Choose among these questions:

When have you felt like avoiding a person in need?

Have you ever stopped to help someone? When it was inconvenient? How did you feel?

Have you ever been ignored when you needed help? What did that feel like?

When have you been helped? Is it ever hard to accept help? Have you ever wished that it was someone else helping you?

(Unfortunately, in today's world, children will need to be reminded that they must find a grown-up before they help a stranger in need.)

D. Choose among these activities (many can be adapted to other stories):

1. This story is good for role playing. Be sure to *debrief* after the role play; this means letting people get out of character and talk about their feelings. An alternate way is to make paper plate masks on sticks for the role play. Directions:

Materials:

- ◆ Paper plates
- ◆ Popsicle sticks
- ◆ Stapler
- ◆ Materials for decorating

Insert one end of a flat stick between two paper plates and staple the plates together. Secure the stick with glue or a staple. Add facial features and hair using a variety of materials such as: crayons, felt pens, paints, felt scraps, yarn, ribbons, buttons, sewing scraps.



Be sure every child gets a chance to participate. Act the story out several times, if necessary.

2. Divide the class into four parts and have each part illustrate a piece of the story: the attack, the priest passing by, the Levite passing by, and the Samaritan stopping. This can be done in comic strip form on a roll of shelf paper. Or, instead of paper use felt and make a series of scenes to be used on a felt board. Or do 3-D scenes in shoe boxes.
3. Another idea for visually telling the story is a homemade movie theater. Directions (courtesy of Caroline Pineo) follow:

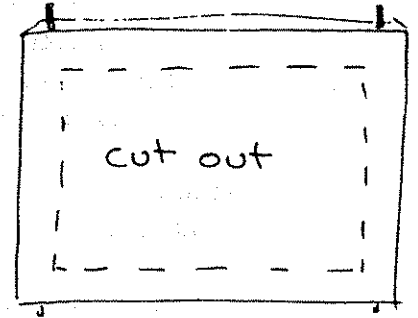
Materials Needed

- ◆ Grocery Box
- ◆ Two three-fourths-inch dowels (taller than box so they may be turned by hand on each side).
- ◆ Shelf paper
- ◆ Covering material for the box

How to Teach Children About Jesus

Method

- Cut square section from front of box; remove back of box.
- Cut two holes on each side of box, top and bottom, for dowels. (Dowels should fit very tightly in the holes.)
- Cut shelf paper a few inches wider than viewing hole.
- After story has been painted or pasted on paper, attach each end on a dowel.
- Cover the box either with paint or paper.
- Roll the story through the box.



4. Mural:

Supplies: roll of brown paper or shelf paper, crayons, scissors, construction paper, glue.

If possible hang up a long length of paper so children can work directly on the mural for immediate effect. Have someone sketch in or paste on the basic elements, e.g. the road, some trees, to set the scene. This activity is particularly good for a wide age-range, since even the littlest child can create stars, or bushes, or color in sky or grass. Before you begin, make sure everyone understands the basic facts of the story.

5. Do a puppet play of the story. Children can write or ad lib their own scripts.

Some easy-to-make puppets:

Paper bags

Supplies: paper bags, scissors, construction paper, newspaper, markers, string, yarn, cloth

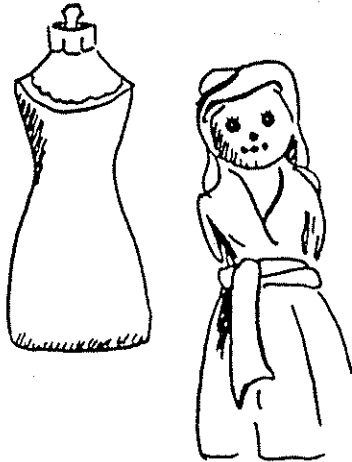
- Put crumpled newspaper in the bottom of a paper bag. Tie off the top to form a head. Insert a dowel into the head. Use crayons or felt tip pens for facial features or paste on cut-out features. Paste on yarn for hair. Dress with cloth pinned or sewn to neck, or color on clothes.
- Leave bag flat and color with crayons. Make face partly on body of bag and partly on bottom so the puppet can talk. Paste on construction paper details and decorations.



How to Teach Children About Jesus

Detergent Bottle Puppets

Materials: detergent bottles, dowels, decorating materials, cloth scraps, Styrofoam balls.



- Make a hole in a Styrofoam ball and place on the open end or mouth of the bottle and use this for the head. Covering the Styrofoam with an old nylon stocking gives a skin-like tone.
- Cut a hole in the bottom of the bottle and insert a long dowel.
- Draw or glue on facial features.
- Add a rectangle of cloth for a dress. Tie a sash around waist of puppets to hold robe in place. The draping of the robe gives the effect of arms. Cut-out hands may be attached to the robe and feet to the bottom of the bottle.

Note: There are many other puppet-making techniques in craft books. Use your favorite.

6. Have the children write their own "Samaritan" scenarios. Act out and talk about the scenarios. Groups of 4-6 can do this well. As an example read the *Cotton Patch* version of the Samaritan story; *Cotton Patch* Gospels are available from the Yearly Meeting Library, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, 215-241-7220.

7. Using color, show how you feel when you are in need. Then show how you feel when you are helped. Paint, crayons, markers are all appropriate, plus good-sized paper.

III. Zacchaeus

- A. *Tell the story* in the same way suggested for the Good Samaritan. Ask people to take on the identity of Jesus, Zacchaeus, or the crowd.
- B. *Questions to ask:* Why do you think Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus? Why didn't the other people like Zacchaeus? Why did Jesus choose to go to Zacchaeus' house? How do you think Zacchaeus felt when Jesus came home with him? Have you ever made someone feel special? Has any one reached out to you when you felt left out?
- C. *Activities*

1. Role playing and drawing are also appropriate to this story. Have small groups draw one scene each and then put the drawings in order and talk about them.
2. Here is a song about Zacchaeus which can be sung:

How to Teach Children About Jesus

Chorus: There was a man in Jericho called Zaccheus,
There was a man in Jericho called Zaccheus.
Now the Hebrews, they were tall, but Zaccheus,
he was small, yet the Lord loved Zaccheus, better than
them all.

The Lord went walking one day through Jericho town, and the people began to gather from miles around. But Zaccheus, he couldn't see, so he climbed a sycamore tree, and the Lord looked up and said: "Zaccheus, come down." (Chorus)

Words and Music by Miriam Therese Winter
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See song sheet at the end of this Chapter.
Accompany this with finger play: walking, looking, climbing, etc.

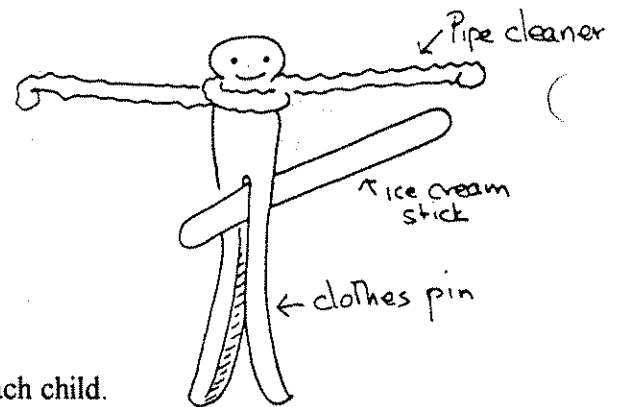
The Lord said: "Zaccheus", I am dining with
you today. Zaccheus, I come to your house,
come lead the way." Then Zaccheus, he gave a
cheer, but the people began to sneer.
"This man is a sinner, does the Lord seek
lodging here?" (Chorus)

Now Zaccheus was small of stature, but he could
show, that a man who is stout of heart can grow
and grow. "If I have cheated young or old, I
restore the goods fourfold." And salvation came
that day to his whole household. (Chorus)

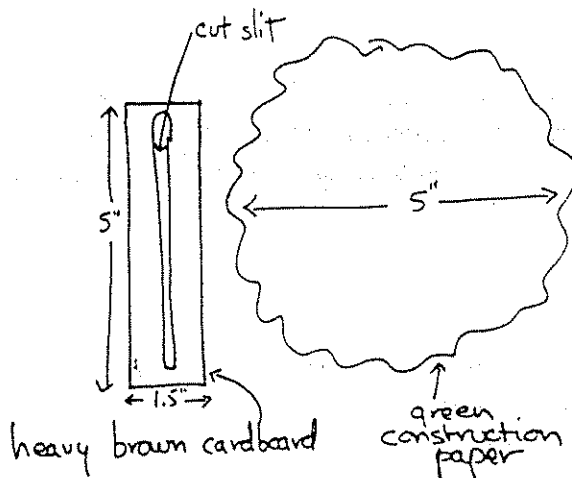
3. Zacchaeus in the Tree - a project

Materials:

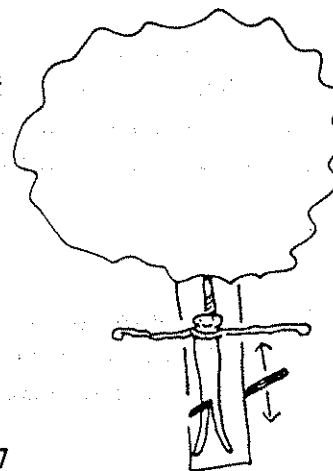
- ◆ Heavy brown cardboard for tree trunk
- ◆ Ice cream stick
- ◆ Clothes pin (the non-clip kind)
- ◆ Pipe cleaner (for arms)
- ◆ Glue
- ◆ Green construction paper for leaves



Cut out patterns of trunk and leaves ahead of time for each child.
Glue leaves to tree trunk and move Zacchaeus up and down in tree.



finished:



glue leaves to
tree trunk
and move Zacchaeus
up and down

IV. Telling a Bible Story

A. *Why tell a Bible story rather than read it?*

If you have ever watched people -- especially children -- listening to Bible stories being told and those being read, you will know how much more attention is paid to the stories which are told.

Most Bible stories were told before they were written down. In other words, they are out of an oral tradition and are meant to be told. They come alive between the narrator and the audience.

When you learn a story well enough to tell it, you are apt to use much more vocal and facial expression than if you just read it.

When you tell a story you are able to maintain eye contact with your listeners. And the faces of your audience spur you on to greater expression.

You can adapt the language of the story to your listeners.

When you learn a story well enough to tell it, it becomes a part of you and works in you, affecting you. As this happens you feel the depths of the story.

In this process you get more ideas for ways to present the story, for questions to ask, and for activities to use to help the group live into it.

B. *How to learn and tell a Bible story:*

If the story is a long story, such as the story of Joseph or the story of Moses, spend more than one session on it.

Find the meaning of words or phrases in the story which are unfamiliar to you. Use a good annotated Bible such as the Oxford Annotated Bible (RSV).

Learn about the characters in the story. Where else do they appear in the Bible?

Locate any geographical points on a map so that you will know distances, topography, etc.

Most Bibles have Tables showing modern equivalents of weights, measures, and money so that you can translate these things into terms of today.

This will all help you to put the story into context. When you tell the story it is important to give it some context for your listeners.

Two possible questions to answer are: What was happening at the time of the story? What happened just before the story began?

You can usually put the story into context in three or four sentences.

Notice the parts of the story and give those parts labels which connect to you; this will help you to remember the sequence.

Notice especially how the story begins and ends.

Look for key words in the story, especially those which are repeated.

Look at the pattern of the dialogue.

Say the story aloud to yourself several times. This will help you to fix it in your memory and to give it expression.

How to Teach Children About Jesus

Do not embellish a Bible story. Let your questions following the story help your listener to imagine how a character was feeling or what it must have been like to live in that situation. This allows the listener to interpret the story, rather than being handed your interpretation. You may need to simplify or update the language, but stick to the spirit of the text as closely as possible.

C. Making up questions about the story:

Avoid questions of fact that can be answered by merely quoting a sentence or phrase from the story, unless you need such a question to help the group clear up some mistaken notions.

Think of questions which will help your listeners put themselves inside the characters and to think how they felt.

Next think of questions which will help them think how they have felt or responded in similar situations.

Ask questions in such a way that they will have to be answered with "I" statements.

V. Other Stories and Teachings of Jesus

This list has three main sections: Stories about Jesus, Teachings of Jesus, and Stories Told by Jesus, plus a few stories appropriate for older children. We feel these selections can be taught to children. How you choose which ones to teach will depend on several factors: the theme or purpose of your lesson, your own familiarity with the selection, and the age of your class. You can group selections chronologically or thematically and teach several over a period of weeks or you can pick out one or two selections which fit into a theme your First-Day School is studying. In any case, begin with stories you are comfortable teaching; then move on to those which are less familiar and/or more difficult for you. The method described in I. above is appropriate for all these selections.

Stories of Jesus

Birth of Jesus - Luke 2:1-20

Story of Wise Men - Matt. 2:1-2

The Youth of Jesus - Luke 2:40-52 (Includes story of visit to temple at age 12)

Baptism of Jesus - Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22

Beginnings of his teaching - Luke 4:14-22

Jesus Wins Fisherman Followers - Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11

(Luke has the astounding catch of fish)

Healing of the Paralytic - Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26

Jesus Criticized for Associating with Sinners - Matt. 9:9-13

Appointment of Twelve Disciples - Luke 6:12-16

Jesus Calming the Storm - Mark 4:35-41

Loaves and Fishes - Mark 6:30-46

Who Shall be Greatest? - Mark 9:33-37 (Receiving a little child)

Attitude of Jesus Toward Children - Mark 10:13-16

Rich Young Man - Mark 10:17-25

Zacchaeus - Luke 19:1-10

"Palm Sunday" - Mark 11:1-11

Jesus Casts Money Changers out of Temple - Mark 11:15-18

The Widow's Mites - Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4

How to Teach Children About Jesus

Teachings of Jesus

Sermon on the Mount

- Beatitudes - Matt. 5:1-12
- Salt of Earth; Light of the World - Matt. 5:11-16
- On Prayer - Matt. 6:5-15
- Golden Rule - Matt. 7:12
- He That Exalts Himself Shall be Humbled - Luke 14:7-14

Stories Told By Jesus

- Parable of Two Builders - Matt. 7:24-27; Luke 6:47-49
- Parable of the Sower - Mark 4:1-9; Luke 8:4-10
- Parable of Mustard Seed - Mark 4:30-32
- Parable of Treasure Hidden in Field - Matt. 13:44
- Parable of Pearl of Great Price - Matt. 13:45-46
- Story of the Feast - Luke 14:15-24
- Cost of Discipleship - Luke 14:28-33 (Building Tower)
- Parables on the Worth of Sinners, Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, Lost (Prodigal) Son - Luke 15:1-32
- Story about Forgiveness - Matt. 18:21-34
- The Samaritan - Luke 10:25-37
- Teachings and Stories about Prayer - Luke 11:1-13
- Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee - Luke 18:9-14
- Parable of the Laborers in the Field - Matt. 20:1-15 (Do not use v. 16; it is a tacked-on ending)
- Parable of the Talents - Matt. 25:14-28

For Older Children

- Sermon on the Mount - Matt. 5:43-48
(In verse 48, Be ye "perfect" is a poor translation. Be ye "whole" or "all-inclusive" is more accurate. A better ending for the passage is Luke 6:36, "Be ye merciful (or compassionate), even as your Father is merciful.")
- Sermon on Mount, on anxiety - Matt. 6:24-34
- Sermon on Mount, on judging - Matt. 7:1-5
- Many Things vs. One Thing (Martha & Mary) - Luke 10:38-42
- Healing Sick - Mark 6:53-56
- "Last Supper" - Mark 14:12-25
- Gethsemane - Mark 14:26-42
- Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus - Mark 14:43-52
- Trial Before the Jewish Authorities - Luke 22:54-71
- Trial Before the Roman Authorities - Luke 23:1-25
- Crucifixion - Mark 15:21-41
- Burial of Jesus - Mark 15:42-47
- Visit to the Sepulchre - Mark 16:1-8
- Road to Emmaus - Luke 24:13-32

VI. Other Resources

Centerquest - This series of manuals includes several Bible stories for each age level. The preparation process is like that described in I. Some activities are suggested. The Yearly Meeting Library has copies. For further information or ideas, call Marty Smith at the Religious Education Office (1-800-220-0796, #7008).

Jesus, Teacher and Friend - Caroline Pineo. 32 sessions. The Yearly Meeting Library has copies.

Jesus Christ Superstar and *Godspell* - These two modern rock "operas" are good introductions to the Gospel story. Lessons can be designed around the lyrics.

The song "Zaccheus" can be found on the cassette "Joy Is Like the Rain", by Miriam Therese Winter, Medical Mission Sisters, Philadelphia, PA. Used with permission. Cassette tapes and Songbooks are available by writing to: Sr. Miriam Therese Winter, 77 Sherman St., Hartford, CT 06105.

3 / Zaccheus

Words and Music by
Sister Miriam Therese Winter

Calypso

D A7

There was a man in Jer-i-cho called Zac-

D A7

che-us. There was a man in

D

Jer-i-cho called Zac-che-us. Now the

G D G

He-bre-ws, they were tall, but Zac-che-us, he was

D A7 ⊕ D

small, yet the Lord loved Zac-che-us, bet-ter than them all.

Lk 19:1-10

D

1. The Lord went walk-ing one day through
2. The Lord said: "Zac-che-us, I am din-ing with
3. Now Zac-che-us was small of sta-ture, but

G A7 D

Jer-i-cho town. and the peo-ple be-gan to
you to-day. Zac-che-us, I come to your
he could show, that a man who is stout of

A7 D G

gath-er from miles a-round. But Zac-che-us,
house, com-e lead the way." Then Zac-che-us,
heart can grow and grow. "If I have chea-ried

D G

he couldn't see, so he climbed a syc-a-more
he gave a cheer, but the peo-ple be-gan to
young or old, I re-store the goods four-

D A7

tree. And the Lord looked up and said:
sneer. "This man is a sin-ner, does the Lord
fold." And sal-va-tion came that day to

D ⊕ D

"Zac-che-us, come down."
seek lodg-ing here?"
his whole house-hold. There all.

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THE GIFTS OF THE MAGI

Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2:11

This *Friendly Seed* includes material about the Wise Men as a way to focus on gifts at Christmas. A bibliography of good children's books on the theme of gifts accompanies the lesson. Although this is a Christmas theme, much of this material can be used at any time of the year.

I. Lesson Ideas on the Gifts of the Magi

A. Introduction:

There are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit ... In each of us the Spirit is manifested in one particular way, for some useful purpose.

1 Cor. 12:5-6

The goals for this lesson are for children to see:

1. that there are many kinds of gifts.
2. that each person has special gifts.
3. that not all gifts are material.
4. that they have the potential to give some of the nonmaterial "gifts of the spirit" as well as material ones.

B. *Reading Ideas* - Books available from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library, 1515 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102; 215-241-7220. The Library will mail you books.

Bible: story of three wise men, Matthew 2:9-12 (All ages)

The Friendly Beasts - beautifully illustrated by Tomie de Paola, G.P. Putnam's Sons, N.Y., 1981 (Younger children)

Gift of the Magi, short story by O. Henry (Older children)

A Christmas Story, recorded on the album "Merry Christmas from Sesame Street", produced by Children's Television Workshop. (This is the O. Henry story with Bert and Ernie for Preschool) - Available in most record stores.

Other gift references - not just Christmas

The Mothers Day Mice, by Eve Bunting, 1986. A book with lovely illustrations and a message about a non-material gift of love. (Primary)

The Gifts of the Magi

All below available at PYM Library:

The Giving Tree, Shel Silverstein, Harper & Rowe, 1964 - All ages
Stone Soup (how a group gift makes an impact) - All ages
The Boy With a Problem, (gift of listening) - All ages

C. Singing Ideas

"Jesus our Brother, Strong and Good", *A Hymnal for Friends*, #157; *Worship in Song, a Friends Hymnal*, #78.
"Simple Gifts", *Songs of the Spirit*, #46; *Worship in Song, a Friends Hymnal*, #271.

D. Discussion Ideas - Choose ones to fit the reading and listening material used. Adapt to various ages

1. For the Bible story:

What gifts did the kings bring?
Why were the gifts chosen by the kings to present to Jesus?
For small children ask what gifts we take to new babies and their mothers? Why do we give them gifts?
What could you have brought Jesus?

2. For the song, "Jesus our Brother":

What gifts did the animals bring?
Were their gifts material? (Clarify the word, "material", for young children.)
Why did they choose their gifts to present to Jesus?
What effect is created by the *group* of animals' gifts?

3. For *Gift of the Magi* or *A Christmas Story*:

What gifts were given and why were they chosen?
What did the gifts cost? (or What sacrifice was made to give the gift?)
What part did love play in the gift giving in the story?
Do all gifts cost money? Can some gifts be time, service, doing things for others, homemade, etc.?

E. Activity Ideas

1. Collect Christmas cards or other depictions of paintings of the kings. Use them in various ways:
 - Bulletin board
 - Mobiles
 - Decorate cover of "coupon book" (see below)

The Gifts of the Magi

2. Make a coupon book of 5-10 coupons that each represent a gift to another. Be sure the children are realistic. It is good to brainstorm ideas in class. (Ideas include: good for - a hug, a story, for setting the table, polishing shoes, folding laundry, raking the yard, making a drawing, etc. Directions for one kind of book are below).
3. The books *Making Things* and *Making Things 2*, by Ann Wiseman, Little Brown Co., have lots of gift ideas for children to make for adults or other children. Some suggestions: plaster of paris casts, sock puppets, (see directions below), wire jewelry, macramé, mobiles, candles, weaving, finger print pictures, simple toys.
4. Think of some gifts to the Meeting, such as leaf raking or serving at a coffee hour with class-baked muffins. Then choose one or more and do it!

F. Directions

1. Busy Books

Want to give your parents an extra-special present? What could be nicer than a helping hand!

You will need (for each book):

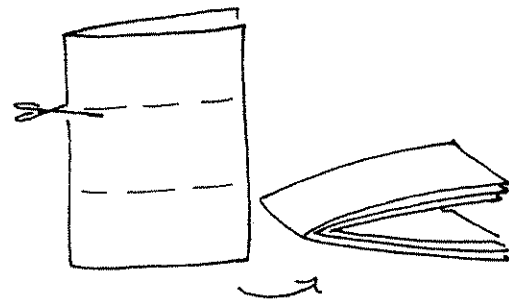
- 4 (3" x 6") pieces wrapping paper
- 2 (3" x 6") pieces cardboard
- glue stick
- 3" square of green construction paper
- scissors
- fine-tip markers
- scrap of white paper
- heart or star sticker
- 4 (4" x 7") pieces clear contact paper
- ruler
- hole punch
- 9" x 12" piece of construction paper
- broad-tip marker
- 1/2 yard of ribbon or two paper fasteners



- a. Glue the pieces of wrapping paper to the pieces of cardboard. Use these for the front and back covers.
- b. Fold the 3" square of green construction paper in half. Starting at the top of the fold, cut out half a tree. Open the tree and cut along the fold. Glue the tree to the cover, leaving a space between the halves.

The Gifts of the Magi

- c. Using a fine-tip marker and writing small, write *Mother's* or *Father's* and *Job Coupon Book* on a piece of white paper. Cut out the words and glue them on the tree. Add a heart or star sticker or other decorations, if you like.
- d. Put a piece of contact paper face down on the table and peel off the backing. Center the front cover on top of the contact paper and press. Cut off the edges of the contact paper. Cover the other side of the front cover the same way. Then cover both sides of the back cover.
- e. Punch two holes, one below the other, at the left end of the front cover. Put the front cover on top of the back cover and mark the holes. Punch holes in the marks on the back cover.
- f. To make the coupons, fold the 9" x 12" piece of construction paper from left to right so that the short ends meet. Measure 3" from the 6" edge and draw a line from side to side. Draw another line 3" below the first one. Cut along the lines.
- g. Draw a dotted line down the middle of each coupon. Using a fine-tip marker, write *Tear Along Dotted Line* to the left of the line. Using the broad-tip marker, write the job title to the right of the line.
- h. Stack the folded coupons inside each other, book style. Using one of the covers as a guide, punch holes in the coupons.
- i. Place the coupons between the covers. Use ribbon or paper fasteners to hold the covers and coupons together.



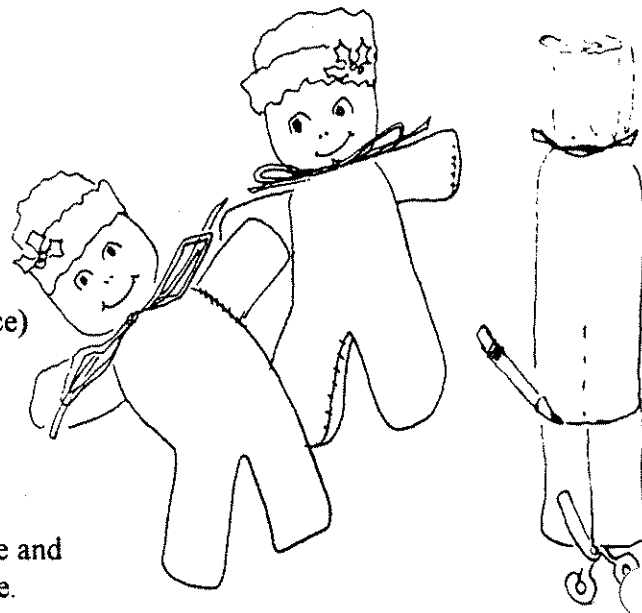
2. A Pudgy Pair

Stitch and stuff socks to make these plump snowmen for a friend or young brother or sister. They're very soft and snuggly.

You will need:

- 18"-long white tube sock (size 10-13)
- ruler
- pencil
- scissors
- sewing needle and thread
- polyester stuffing
- string
- fine-tip markers or
- embroidery needle and thread (for face)
- ribbon
- scraps of red and green felt
- white glue

- a. Turn the sock inside out.
- b. For the arms, measure 4" up from the toe and draw a line. Mark the middle of the line.



The Gifts of the Magi

- Draw a line from the middle mark to the toe.
Cut along the two lines.
- Sew together the long edges of each arm. Turn the arms right side out and stuff them with polyester stuffing. At the open end of each arm, turn under the edges and sew them together. Set the arms aside.
 - At the bottom of the sock, mark the middle of the edge. Starting at the mark, draw a 3" line up the middle of the sock. Cut along the line to make the legs. Sew together the bottom and side edges of each leg.
 - Turn the sock right side out. Measure 4" down from the top edge and draw a line. Stuff the sock from the legs to the line. Tie a piece of string around the line to close the sock.
 - To make the doll's head, tie another piece of string 3" below the first one.
 - Using the pencil, draw eyes, eyebrows, a nose and a mouth. Color the features, or embroider them, using satin stitch for the eyes and nose and backstitch for the eyebrows and mouth.
 - Sew the arms to the body, just below the neck. Tie a ribbon around the neck and make a bow.
 - Turn the top of the sock down on top of the head to make the hat. Turn up the edges to make a cuff. Cut holly leaves and berries from felt and glue them on the cuff. Let the glue dry.



The Gifts of the Magi

II. Bibliography

Compiled by Rita Varley on the theme of gifts. All are available from the PYM Library.

The Best Train Set Ever - Pat Hutchins (Picture book. Boy wants train for birthday. Each family member secretly gets a small section of it. On birth day, they discover they have given him whole train.)

A Christmas Carol - Charles Dickens

Christmas Present from a Friend - Yuriko Kimura (Picture book.)

The Christmas Train - Ivan Gantshev (Small girl sets fire to her Christmas tree to warn a train of disaster. Ends up with most beautiful Christmas ever.)

The Clown of God - Tomie dePaola (Picture book. Christmas miracle.)

Frederick - Leo Lionni (Mary-Martha question. Gift of work vs. inspiration)

A Gift for Mama - Esther Hautzig (Grade school child works very hard to surprise mother)

Happy Mother's Day - Steven Kroll (Picture book. Whole family gives presents according to their age, capacity and personality.)

How the Grinch Stole Christmas - Dr. Seuss

The Kitchen Madonna - Rumer Godden (Story of how an aloof and silent child is drawn out into the warmth of human society by his valiant efforts to give the Ukrainian maid in his London home a little shrine for Our Lady and the Holy Child, symbol of her own homeland.)

The Lace Snail - Betsy Byars (Snail pours out lace, giving freely to all as long as it lasts.)

The Little Brute Family - Russel Hoban (Family eats stones and sand for dinner, etc., till child one day comes home with a "happy feeling" which he shares and it turns the life of the family around. Picture book)

Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present - Charlotte Zolotow (Child looks for present. Finds one thing here, another there until finally each thing, when put with the rest, adds up to one very nice present--a bowl of fruit. Picture book)

A Pint of Judgement - Elizabeth Morrow (A Christmas Story)

Sam - Ann Herbert Scott (Picture book. Boy is unhappy, lonely and bored and finally feels rejected. He cries and his mother gives him a job to do and it makes him happy.)

The Selfish Giant - Oscar Wilde (Picture book. Giant keeps children out of garden. The garden stays in winter until one day the children sneak in and it brings spring back. Giant is kind to one small child who can't reach tree still wrapped in winter. Giant opens garden to children. At his death, small child returns and brings spring to lone tree in middle of winter.)

Shnook the Peddler - Maxine Schur (Easy to read story of boy who steals, feels shame, returns item and receives grace of forgiveness plus being given item at the end.)

The Shoemaker's Dream - Leo Tolstoy (Picture book. Shoemaker has dream that Jesus will visit him next day. All day, he watches and is kind to a series of needy people. At end of day wonders where Jesus was. Has another dream in which Jesus tells him how good a host he had been to Jesus.)

Stone Soup - Marcia Brown (Picture book)

The Story of the Other Wise Man - Henry Van Dyke

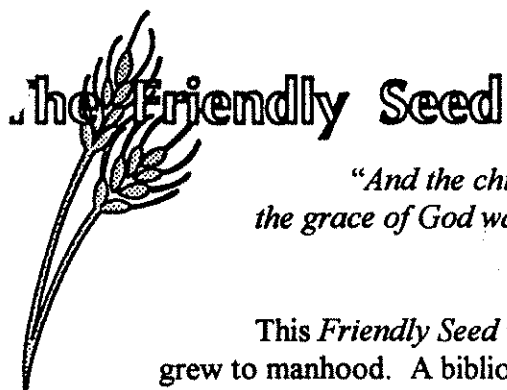
The Tears of the Dragon - Hiroduke Hamada (Child is kind to dragon and melts frozen feelings resulting in a river of tears and the friendship of the dragon toward his whole village. Picture book)

The Gifts of the Magi

A Toad for Tuesday - Russell Erickson (Easy to read story. Kind hearted toad's generosity warms heart of cold owl and results in saving him from being eaten.)

The Value of Giving: the Story of Beethoven - Ann Johnson

Woofy is Forgiven and *The Prodigal Son* - Cleo Duncan (Simple picture book. Little bear is forgiven by his family for some pretty selfish behavior. Tender and simple. Older brother a little jealous. Bible story follows.)



JESUS AS A BOY

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."

Luke 2:40

This *Friendly Seed* includes material on the boyhood of Jesus and the times in which Jesus grew to manhood. A bibliography follows the lesson ideas.

I. Lesson Ideas

A. Introduction:

The objective of these lessons is to help children appreciate what life was like for a young Jewish boy growing up in Nazareth. The areas covered include life in a village, school with Jewish law, and visits to Jerusalem and the temple.

One of the best resources available is *The Boyhood of Jesus* by Judy Gattis Smith. It contains three simple participation stories about Jesus. It is written for 11- and 12-year-old children; however, it can easily be used with a mixed age group. Each story is complete but all can be used together as a unit. The speaking parts are prepared and there are no props necessary. The PYM Library, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19102; (215) 241-7220, has a copy, or order from Contemporary Drama Service, Box 770, Colorado Springs, CO, 80933.

Sections B, C, & D below are based on the plays in *The Boyhood of Jesus*.

B. "A Walk with the Boy Jesus"

Especially good for younger children or a multi-age group. Jesus walks in his family's yard and neighboring area greeting animals and people. Children make animal noises in small groups while three narrators tell the story.

Questions (especially for younger children):

How was Jesus' life like yours?

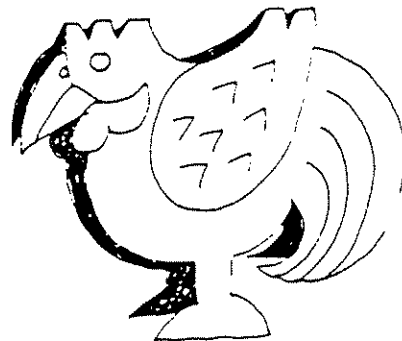
In what ways was it different?

Do farms here have the same kinds of animals as the ones in Palestine?

What sounds do you hear in your yard and neighborhood? Can you make some of them?

Would you like to have been a child like Jesus? Why?

Follow-up Activity - Have groups make out of paper the animals they represented in the play and accessories to be used in a village scene that all classes will help create. Be sure the animals can stand up. They can be made of stiff paper with a fold at top. Use crayons, yarn, cotton balls, pipe cleaners, etc., to make donkeys, sheep, roosters,



Jesus as a Boy

turtle dove, wolf. The barley field could be made from dried grasses. See *Making Things*, Vol 1, Ann Wiseman, Little Brown, p. 24.

C. "Jesus in School"

Especially good for children ages 8-12. Children sit as a school class with the Rabbi and learn Jewish law, and with Joseph and learn the carpenter's trade. The children ask questions and the Rabbi answers. A narrator provides background information. The children also make tool sounds as they learn from Joseph. The prayer used in the skit is in Deuteronomy 6:4-6. Let the children find it in their Bibles.

Questions:

Precede these questions with some background on the synagogue school and the law on Torah. The Torah consisted of the first five books of what we call the Old Testament. Another name for these five books is the Pentateuch. Jewish boys attended school from ages 6 to 16 in order to learn Jewish laws, customs, and history. The rabbi or teacher concentrated on teaching the boys the Torah, in which most of the laws governing Jewish life were enumerated. Memorization was the major teaching method, but question and answer was also used.

How would you feel about having laws that govern your every move?

How would these laws affect you and your family?

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-6 and Jeremiah 31:31-33. What does it mean to have God's law upon your heart?

Read the quotation from the elders at Balby at the beginning of Faith and Practice (quoted below). How is this different or the same as Jewish law in Jesus' day?

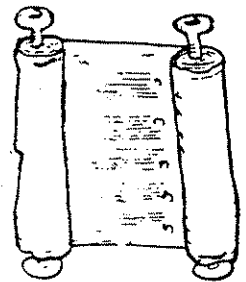
DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all with the measure of light which is pure and holy may be guided, and so in the light walking and abiding these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, - not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

Follow-up Activities:

1. Create more parts of the village scene. Using clothes pins, yarn, pipe cleaners and cloth scraps make a rabbi, Joseph, Jesus, and children, some to sit in class, others to learn about tools. Make scale similar to animals.

2. Make scrolls like the Torah on which the children write Deuteronomy 6:4-6, or another verse. Use shelf paper and dowel sticks for the scrolls.

3. With older children make a list of rules which govern their lives. Are any of these religious laws? Help children understand the difference between a secular community of which religious groups are a part and a religious community in which everyday life is governed by religious laws. In a secular community how do we bring our religion into our everyday life?



Jesus as a Boy

D. "A Trip to Jerusalem"

This story needs a large group - ages 8 to adult. In this skit Jesus visits Jerusalem and takes in the sights, sounds and smells of the city. Each participant stands and gives one (or more) impression of the city. There are 50 "impressions". Slides or pictures of Jerusalem are a good supplement. A Bible atlas will have good pictures, as will *National Geographic*, if you have a member with back copies and an index.

Questions:

Have you ever been to a new place, especially a new city? What did you notice?
How did you feel in a new, unfamiliar setting? How do you think Jesus felt in Jerusalem?

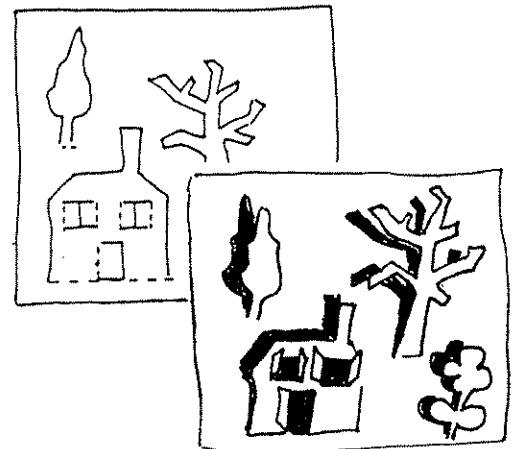
Follow-up Activity:

Using small cardboard boxes for bases, make one or more buildings for the village begun in B and C above. If time and talent allow use paper mache over the boxes. A temple could be created or more of the characters met in the third story. A simpler village could be made of construction paper in 3-D. Or, using the same materials, create a model of some of the buildings in Jerusalem. The following directions from *Making Things*, by Ann Wiseman are for a simple 3-D scene.

Use colored construction paper.

1. Draw: house; trees, pet, flowers etc., a city, town or village leaving space between each form.
2. Cut along the drawn lines except where things bend (dotted line). [If you don't have good sharp scissors, go over your pencil lines with a sharp pencil until they cut through. A sheet of newspaper folded under drawing helps lead score paper.]
3. Bend shapes up so everything is standing.

Good for dioramas, stage sets, Christmas cards, surprises, and learning about perspective.



E. "Jesus in the Temple"

This story is found in Luke 2:40-52. It can be used after the preceding stories. Read or tell the story. It can also be acted out. Include the scene where Joseph and Mary miss Jesus and search for him.

Questions:

What kinds of questions do you think Jesus was asking in the Temple?
What was the reaction of the people listening?
What made Jesus disobey his parents and decide to stay in the Temple?
Where do you find guidance other than law and social and religious conventions? or,
How do you decide what is the right thing to do?

Jesus as a Boy

What do you do when inner guidance is in conflict with outer law or convention?
What is there in common between Jesus as a seeker in the Temple and Quakers today?

Follow-up Activities:

1. Act out the story as suggested above.
2. Create a list of questions your children would like to ask the adult members of your Meeting. Schedule a session with some adults where the children can ask their questions.

II. Bibliography

A. Other resource books for Jesus as a boy if you are not using the Judy Gattis Smith participation stories (all available in the PYM Library):

Young Children:

When Jesus Was a Little Boy, Georgia Moore Eberling, Children's Press, 1954.
Once There Was a Little Boy, Dorothy Kunhardt, Viking, 1946.
Jesus Goes to School, Carrie Lou Goddard, Abingdon, 1954.
A Star Shone, Robbie Trent (One chapter on visit to Temple).
A Child's Life of Jesus, John Bomer, available from FGC.

Grades 1 and 2:

A Boy Named Jesus (Living Light Series) - out of print but available at PYM Library. A series of 13 lessons with activities.

Upper Elementary and Junior High:

Jesus, The Carpenter's Son, Sophia Lyon Fahs. Nice descriptions of Jesus' visit to Jerusalem and the Temple.
Jesus, Who Was He?, Mary Snyder, from FGC and PYM Library.

B. Other books, all in PYM Library, age levels indicated:

The Birth of Jesus - Catherine Storr (Picture book, beautifully illustrated).
The Bronze Bow - Elizabeth George Speare (Author of *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*. Book is a novel for junior and senior high level.).
The Boy Jesus and His Companions - Rufus M. Jones (Upper grade level).
The Child Jesus - Florence Mary Fitch (picture book).
Discovering the Boy of Nazareth - Winifred Kirkland (4th to 7th grade).
Jesus is Born, Augsburg press (picture book).
The Little Boy of Nazareth - Edna Madison Bonser (well-written story book, for 5th-12th grades).
Living in Jesus' Day - Nell Minor (Factual picture book).
The Sling and the Swallow - Eleanor Hull (Beautifully written stories for younger grades).

Jesus as a Boy

Stories of Jesus - Phyllis Hammond (Companion teacher's book for *The Sling and the Swallow*).

The Sphinx at Dawn - Madeleine L'Engle - (Two stories of the life of Jesus, profoundly moving and imaginative. Jesus is about 10 or 12 years old. Can be read by 5th grade, but appreciated by all ages through adult).

The Story of Jesus - Norman J. Bull (Beautifully illustrated book of the whole life of Jesus including a section describing life in Bible times. 157 pages. For 4th to 10th grade).

C. Some older books you might have in your Meeting library:

Ages 9-11:

Children of the Bible, Elizabeth Yates, 1958. There is one story on Jesus in the Temple.

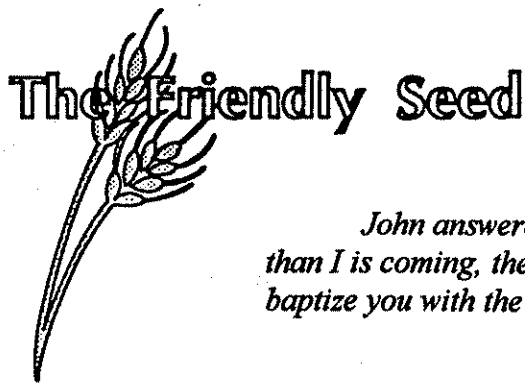
All ages:

A Picture Book of Palestine, Ethel L. Smither, 1947 - wonderful description of the houses, clothing, farming, customs, foods, etc., of the day.

For teachers' background:

The Life of Jesus for Young People, William Byron Forbush, Scribners, 1917 - old, but good background on home life, city life, politics of the day.

In addition there are many Bible atlases, dictionaries and reference books with good illustrations and background information. Check your local library.



THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

John answered them all, "I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

Luke 3:16

And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him.

Matthew 3:16

This *Friendly Seed* includes materials on Jesus' baptism and on the meaning of that event for Friends. It has three parts:

- I. Introduction
- II. Lesson Ideas
 - A. Telling the Story
 - B. Discussion Questions
 - C. Songs
 - D. Activities
- III. Bibliography of Additional Resources

I. Introduction

In the three Synoptic Gospels the references to Jesus' baptism are: Matthew 3, Mark 1:4-11, and Luke 3:1-21. The account in Mark is the oldest and least detailed; the other two vary in details and emphasis. One helpful way to familiarize yourself with the story and its variations is to use Henry Sharman's *Records of the Life of Jesus*, in which the three stories are placed side by side. John also has an account in Chapter 1, but unless you are doing an in-depth unit, stick to the synoptic accounts.

There are several ways of approaching this story; each way leads to a different emphasis, questions and activities. The questions and activities in Part II below reflect these varied approaches. The use of water and/or fire as a symbol of spiritual transformation; spiritual transformation itself; the historical context of the story; the personality and life of John the Baptizer; the concept and role of the Holy Spirit, and Friends' thinking on Baptism are all possible areas for discussion. This introduction touches on all of them; for more detailed information, make use of the references in Part III, the bibliography.

According to A.E. Harvey in the *Companion to the New Testament* (pp. 112-113), baptism as practiced by John was a new concept. While Jews did practice several forms of ritual washing and ceremonial cleansing of sin, John's practice was more than a token repentance. It was proclaimed as an act everyone, no matter what his background, should submit to as a preparation for things to come. "The essence of it was that the people, however scrupulously they had been

The Baptism of Jesus

abiding by the moral and ceremonial laws of their religion, came confessing their sins. John's baptism, like the teaching of Jesus, marked a new stage in the progress of religion from a system of *observances* to an attitude of uncompromising moral sincerity." (Harvey, p. 113)

This concept of personal transformation is developed further by John when he says that one follows who is mightier than he and who will baptize, not with water, but with the Holy Spirit and fire. Baptism thus represents a transition from one level of existence to another, an immersion in the life of the Spirit. According to Patrick Henry in *New Directions in New Testament Study*: "Baptism involves a return to the beginning of things, to the chaos over which the Spirit of God brooded (Genesis 1:2) and from which order was created." (p. 209)

Water, of course, is the primary symbol in Jesus' baptism. Patrick Henry, in his discussion of the meaning and importance of water as a symbol, quotes Mircea Eliade in *Rites and Symbols of Initiation* (pp. 188-189 in Henry):

In cosmology, in myth, ritual and iconography, water fills the same function in whatever type of cultural pattern we find it; it precedes all forms and upholds all creation ... immersion in water symbolizes a return to the pre-formal, a total re-generation, a new birth, for immersion means a dissolution of forms, a reintegration into the formlessness of pre-existence, and emerging from the water is a repetition of the act of creation in which form was first expressed.

Friends do not practice the outward form of baptism, because they believe that the reality of an inward transformation is greater than its symbolic outward form, the sacrament of baptism. This rejection of the form is not a rejection of the concept. The inner reality which that form represents (repentance and regeneration, or death of the old, birth of the new) is essential to our spiritual growth, or in traditional terms, to our salvation.

The following passages from Friends describe experiences of transformation of which baptism can be seen as an outward symbol. Studying baptism will help us understand the nature of this transformation.

It is an overwhelming experience to fall into the hands of the living God, to be invaded to the depths of one's being by His presence, to be, without warning, wholly uprooted from all earth-born securities and assurances, and to be blown by a tempest of unbelievable power which leaves one's old proud self utterly, utterly defenseless ...

Thomas Kelly, *A Testament of Devotion*

Baptism to us [Friends] means the Holy Spirit's power so known and yielded to in our hearts that we live in continual dependence upon His help and Guidance.

Elizabeth Emmott, *London Faith and Practice*, #213

Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword into the paradise of God. All things were new, and all creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter.

George Fox, *Journal*, 1647

The Baptism of Jesus

II. Lesson Ideas

- A. *Telling the Story* - Using one of the synoptic accounts, tell or read the story (see Introduction for references).

If you read directly from the Bible, the *Good News* version is the most accessible. Telling will, however, increase the power of the story. In any case, use a good annotated version to prepare; many technical and factual questions are answered in the notes.

Two supplementary ideas:

1. Act out the story. Prepare ahead or do it on the spot, after you've told the story once.
2. As you tell the story, ask the children to close their eyes and imagine themselves as one or another of the characters: Jesus, John, the crowd, the Scribes and Pharisees. Allow time for reactions to this exercise.

- B. *Questions* - Follow up the story with some of these questions. They are divided by topic:

On John the Baptist:

What kind of person do you think John was? What was his life like?

What does it mean to say he came from the Wilderness? Why is that important? (A map and pictures from a Bible Atlas will help here.)

Why did people listen to him?

What does John mean when he says people must repent their sins? How do you understand the word, "sin"?

How do you think John felt when Jesus came to be baptized?

On Baptism:

What does baptism mean? Is it symbolic? What is a symbol? (Give some other examples.)

Are there different kinds of baptism?

Have you been baptized? Or do you know someone who has been?

Why does John use water to baptize? Why is water such an important symbol?

What does John mean when he says that one follows who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire? Who is this "one"?

What is the Holy Spirit?

Why is fire an important symbol?

What do Quakers think about baptism?

If you are familiar with another denomination, describe its views on baptism.

On Jesus' Baptism:

How do you think Jesus felt after his baptism?

Did he really see a dove? Did everyone see the dove?

Who heard the voice?

Imagine yourself at the River Jordan: How would you have felt?

Why was it important for Jesus to be baptized?

The Baptism of Jesus

Why was it necessary for John to prepare a way for Jesus (Luke 3:4-6)? Why couldn't Jesus just start teaching? Was he different after his baptism?

C. Songs and Music:

1. "Peace Like a River" - #42, *Songs of the Spirit*, #246, *Worship in Song, A Friends Hymnal*
2. "Peace I Ask of Thee O River" - p. 109, *Winds of the People*
3. "Study War No More" - #32, *Songs of the Spirit*
4. Water Jar Music - Fill jars with different amounts of water. Use metal spoons to tap the sides of the jars. Note the different tones. With a little work you can play a song.
5. "Making Rain" - a round of sounds. Divide into three sections. The leader starts the first section rubbing its hands together; then the second, then the third. Now everyone is rubbing hands together. The leader then directs the first section to change to finger snapping; then the second; then the third. Now everyone is snapping. Next the leader directs the first section to start slapping its thighs; then the second; then the third. Now everyone is slapping. The leader then reverses the progression. The sections return to finger snapping, hand rubbing, and finally silence. This sounds like a rainstorm, if each group keeps up its sound until directed to change.

D. Activities - These are divided by topic.

On John and the Historical Context of the Story:

1. Write a news release about John's appearance and Jesus' baptism. This could be part of an ongoing project culminating in a newspaper about Jesus' ministry.
2. Make shadow boxes of the scene at the river. Use clothespins, cardboard or clay for people, paint, paper, etc., for the background.
3. Using a Bible or other Atlas, make a terrain map of the area where John baptized. Use paper mache or plaster gauze (available from medical supply and some drug stores) for the hills. Use different colors for different altitudes and fertility conditions.
4. Using a concordance, look up different references to baptism in the Bible. Compare them to the story of John. Good for older children and a terrific way to develop Bible skills.

On Water: Its Importance and Symbolism:

1. Use a concordance to look up references to water in the Bible. Compare them.
2. Look at drops of water from a pond or stream under a microscope or with a magnifying glass.
3. Make popsicles from juice or Jell-O. Talk about how the liquid changes.
4. Experiment to see if plants need water. Place two similar potted plants (in separate pots) in the sunlight. Water one plant daily. Do not water the other. What happens?
5. How does water get to the tops of trees from their roots? Inside all plants there are thousands of small tubes. To see how they work, do the following experiment. Put a few drops of colored ink into two glasses of water. Put a piece of spaghetti vertically into one glass. In the other glass place a piece of freshly cut celery. Leave for an hour

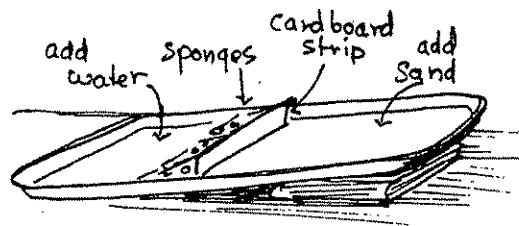
The Baptism of Jesus

and see what has happened. Water molecules are attracted to the sides of the tube and "creep" up the sides. This is called capillary action.

6. Seeing what floats and what sinks. Try fresh and salt water. Especially for young children.

7. Make a "River in the Desert" Scene

- a. Divide a waterproof tray in half with strips from a milk carton or similar material.
- b. Cut triangular pieces of sponge to fit up against the dividing strip on one side, as if forming a dike. Prop up one side of the tray so it is 1" higher than the other.



- c. Fill the higher side with sand, the lower with water. (Sponges on water side.)
- d. Cover the sponges with grass seed. Put seed on the sand too.
- e. Make houses or tents, palm trees, a boat, to complete the scene.
- f. Check the seeds the following week to see what happened.
- g. Point out that Jesus and John lived in a land where water was precious and river banks especially fertile places. Much of the rest of the land is desert. In such a place, water has a special significance.

8. Make Dropper Blends

Supplies: medicine droppers, Styrofoam egg cartons or muffin tins, thinned tempera or water paint.

Allow children to mix colors in the egg carton sections. Use the droppers to put the paint in the sections and create different shades. The mixed paint can then be used for painting.

9. Tissue Paper Collage - directions in most craft books, or send self-addressed, stamped envelope to RE Office for directions.

10. Dip and Dye

Supplies: paper towels, food color, muffin tins

Place 10 drops of each color into separate cups of a muffin tin. Add 1/4 cup water to each color. Make several folds in a paper towel or napkin.

Dip each corner of the paper towel into a color. Don't let the colors run into each other. Squeeze out excess liquid by pressing each corner between your thumb and forefinger. Open the paper flat and allow it to dry.

11. Make Oil and Water Color Prints

Fill a pan (13 x 9 x 2) with watercolor paint or water colored with food color. With a dropper, add several drops of salad oil to the water. Attach a paper clip or clothes pin to one end of a piece of paper for a handle. Pull the paper through the paint. You will have a printed design where the oil protected the paper from the paint.

On Fire and Its Transforming Power

1. Meditations Using Fire. *Meditating With Children* by Deborah Rozman, University of the Trees Press, 1975, has two meditations, one using a candle, the other a fireplace. Available from FGC or the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library [*Seed* editor strongly recommends this book to all FDS teachers].

The Baptism of Jesus

2. Nature sun prints - Place objects to print on top of construction paper in the sun and leave for a couple of days. The sun will bleach the color around the objects and leave a lasting print of leaves or whatever you printed.
3. Melted Crayon Collage
 - a. Shave crayons into bits with a grater or edge of a scissors and arrange on a sheet of wax paper.
 - b. Add bits of colored paper, cellophane, leaves, etc.
 - c. Cover with another sheet of waxed paper
 - d. Press with a warm iron until the two pieces of paper stick together.
 - e. Trim and display in a window.
4. Plants and Sunlight
 - a. Sprout bean seeds in three separate pots.
 - b. Place one pot in a paper bag; one in a window; one in a bag with a hole in the side. Keep all three watered and see how they grow. What happens?
5. The story of the Phoenix. Tell the story and follow up by using bright markers to illustrate the story. Here is a brief retelling adapted from *Dragons and Other Fabulous Beasts* by Richard Blythe:

There is only one Phoenix and all the birds worship her. She lives alone in the sky. She is born and dies in fire, like the sun which rises and sets each day. The Phoenix is as big as an eagle. Her feathers are all colors - purple, gold, red, orange, green, scarlet and rose. She is called the bringer of life and the birds believe she lives a thousand years, is born again when she dies and goes on for ever.

When it is time for her to die, the Phoenix makes a high nest in Arabia. The Phoenix enters the nest and opens her wings to catch the sun's rays. The bird and her nest catch fire. Scented smoke rises and all is burnt to ashes.

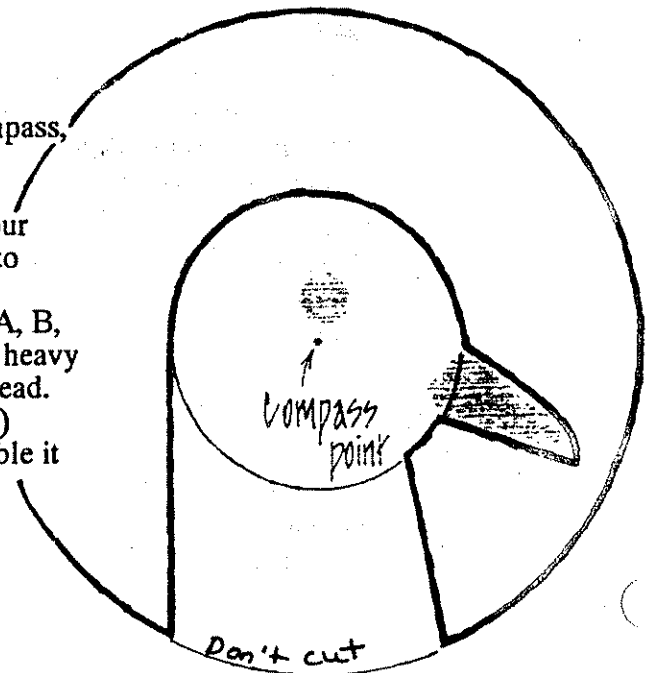
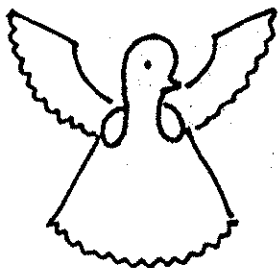
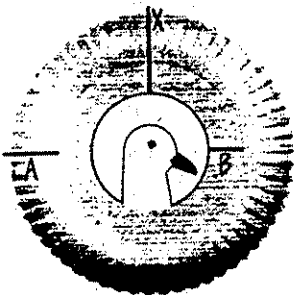
There is an egg in the ashes. The warmth hatches it and a new Phoenix is born - the only one in the world. The young Phoenix gathers the ashes of her dead mother and flies to Egypt, where she scatters them in the Temple of the Sun God. Now she is the only Phoenix and will live 1000 years.

On Jesus' Experience

1. Cardboard Doves

Supplies: 9" white paper plates, a compass, a ruler, felt-tip pens, scissors.

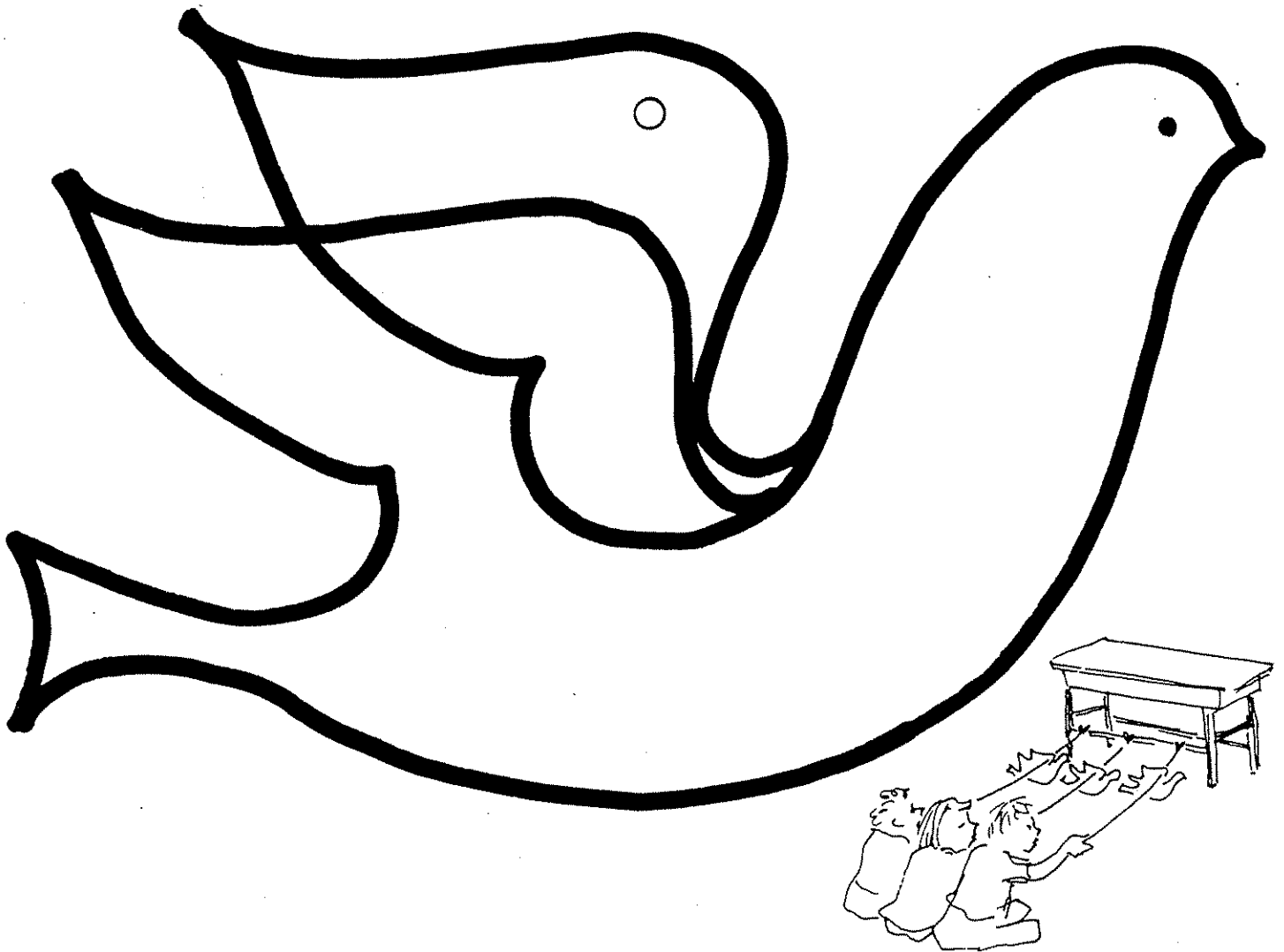
- a. Mark the center of each plate.
- b. Use the actual-size pattern to set your compass. Then copy the circles onto your paper plates.
- c. Following the diagram, draw lines A, B, and X on your plate. Cut along the heavy black lines and around the dove's head. (Be sure to leave the neck attached.)
- d. Color the dove as you like. Assemble it by inserting slot A into slot B.



The Baptism of Jesus

2. Make and Decorate Cardboard Doves to Race:

Use a shirt cardboard. Copy the dove from the pattern and decorate both sides with crayons or paint. Cut out the dove, and make a string hole where marked. Measure ten feet of string; tie one end of the string to a table leg; thread string through the hole. Pull string taut, and dove will stand. Release and he'll flop forward. Pull-flop to the top of the string; flip him over and pull-flop home. Make several doves and have a race.



The Baptism of Jesus

3. Journals - Write an imaginary journal entry by John the Baptist, Jesus, a Pharisee or a crowd member describing the event.

On Friends' Beliefs and Transformation

1. Read "Not Lost But Gone Before" in the *Friendly Story Caravan* (available from the PYM Library), and make dragonfly figures to decorate or hang as a mobile.
2. Read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. Make a) egg-carton caterpillars or b) butterfly prints: cut out butterfly-shaped paper. Put tempera paint on one side, fold the paper in half and open it again to see what your butterfly looks like.
3. Read Quaker Journal excerpts which describe experiences of spiritual transformation. An especially good source is *Christian Faith and Practice* from London Yearly Meeting, as is Isaac Pennington's work.
4. Ask someone from another religious group to speak to your group about baptism. Combine this with a visit(s) to another church where children can learn first hand about others' practices.
5. Look at the idea of transformation in other areas of life, such as science, mathematics, cooking (the crystal experiment listed above is a good example, as is breadmaking).
6. Perhaps someone in your Meeting can interpret Einstein's mathematics or Darwin's theories to your group.

The discovery of how one element is a transformation of another element is a theme that begins in infancy and carries the human mind to its most sophisticated limits.

George Forman and David Kushner, *The Child's Construction of Knowledge*

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*Available from PYM Library, 1515 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA, 19102; (215) 241-7220.

The Friendly Seed



JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS

... to make you understand that man does not live on bread alone but that man lives on everything that comes from the mouth of God.

Deuteronomy 8:3 and Luke 4:4



This *Friendly Seed* has five sections:

- I. Introduction - Background material on Jesus' wilderness experience for the teacher. Much of this material could be adapted for adult discussions.
- II. Questions - some for all ages, some for adults
- III. Songs
- IV. Activities
- V. Bibliography

Evil is a difficult subject for Friends. This story allows us a way to begin to talk about it. For children this story helps deepen understanding of all the forces which pull us away from righteousness. As part of Jesus' life, this event is a turning point, the prelude to active ministry.

I. Introduction

The story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness occurs in all three synoptic gospels (Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13). In all of these accounts Jesus is drawn to the wilderness not just to retreat before his active ministry begins but also to be tested by the devil. Scholars debate whether the devil was a construct of Jesus' mind or an actual presence, but Jesus' response to the devil, whether physically present or not, is really the central point of this story. Walter Russell Bowie (quoted in *Centerquest Teacher's Manual, Grades 4, 5, & 6*, The Educational Center, 1979, pp. 187-188) describes Jesus' response:

He would not let the material necessities of life blind him to the deeper hunger of the Spirit. He would not follow the short-cut of the world's expedients to seeming power and forfeit so the power of that real regeneration which could be accomplished only by an unwearying Spirit following the long road that led into men's hearts. He would not hamper his obedience to his Father's unfolding purpose by any expectation of ease or safety or even of life itself as his reward.

Jesus' clear negative answer to each temptation may obscure the potency of the devil's offers. Wouldn't feeding people make them more open to hearing God's message? Wouldn't worldly power provide ways to care for many, many people? Isn't leaping off the Temple a spectacular declaration of faith? Jesus shows great discernment as he rejects each temptation on the way to recognizing his true calling as a teacher. Jesus left the wilderness not only sure of what he should *not* do but also clear about what he *should* do.

Jesus in the Wilderness

... When he came down from the hills, he came invested with the radiant power of his positive choice. The shadows of the unworthy possibilities had passed away because of the great light which was within. He was aflame with God. He walked in the beauty of that high communion, and he saw life bathed in the light of its eternal meaning. If he could open men's eyes to know God as he knew Him, then for the first time they might rise to the stature of their diviner manhood [personhood].

Walter Bowie, as above, p. 188

Despite Jesus' clarity about his mission, the Bible says (Luke 4:13) that the Devil departed from Jesus for a season only and this implies that Jesus was tempted again in his lifetime. Of course the recurrence of temptation in whatever form is a fact of all human life. George Fox comments on the nature of these on-going temptations and on submission to God as the only response:

Friends, whatever ye are addicted to, the tempter will come in that thing; and when he can trouble you, then he gets advantage over you, and then you are gone. Stand still in that which is pure, after ye see yourselves; and there mercy comes in. After thou seest thy thoughts and the temptations, do not think, but submit; and then power comes. Stand still in that which shows and discovers; and then doth strength immediately come. And stand still in the Light, and submit to it, and the other will be hush'd and gone; and then content comes.

George Fox, 1652. #20.42, in *Quaker Faith and Practice of Britain Yearly Meeting, 1995*

The "other" in this passage may take many forms but our response must always be to:

Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts, and then thou wilt feel the principle of God to turn thy mind to the Lord God, whereby thou wilt receive his strength and power from whence life comes, to allay all tempests, against blusterings and storms. That is it which moulds up into patience, into innocency, into soberness, into stillness, into stayedness, into quietness, up to God, with his power.

George Fox, 1658. #2.18, in *Quaker Faith and Practice of Britain Yearly Meeting, 1995*

Neither the discernment nor the resistance of evil is easy - for adults or for children. James Nayler, an early Friend, recognized, after his own great humiliation (see #22-25, *Christian Faith and Practice*, 1961), that the source of his temptation lay within:

... but the greatest enemies were yet within me, which would upon every hardship be tempting with unbelief to destroy this faith and hope, which was all that I had set before me to encourage me to endure such hardships, and to follow the Light in a way I had not known ...

#23, *Christian Faith and Practice*, 1961

Jesus in the Wilderness

As we prepare to teach about Jesus' time in the wilderness, we can identify several stages we pass through as we seek clarity about direction and right action. Children and adults are able to understand that withdrawal to consider and pray, discernment of good and evil choices, rejection of the evil and acceptance of the good, and finally obedience to the good as revealed by our submission to God's will, are all part of a process by which we "stand still in the light." We as teachers will, of course, vary our examples and our questions according to the age of our students, but we must keep in mind that the reality of temptation is just as great for a six-year-old faced with the opportunity to steal as it is for the adult contemplating marital infidelity. Evil finds age-appropriate ways to tempt us and the issue therefore is powerful for all ages.

II. Questions

A. *The Wilderness Experience*

"And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness." Mark 1:12. Why did the Spirit drive Jesus into the wilderness?
Have you ever felt the call or need to retreat?
Many rites of passage from other cultures include a period of silent vigil and fasting in a lonely area. Why do you think that is? (Note: for examples see activities.)

B. *Temptations*

What kinds of choices did the devil force Jesus to make? How are these choices tempting to Jesus? What is the potential for good or evil in each choice?
What kinds of similar choices have you faced?
What are the things in everyday life that tempt you? (Food, drink, T.V., toys, clothing, etc.)
Where does Jesus find his answers?
Where do you find your answers to temptation? How do you handle temptation?
Have you ever given in to temptation? How did you feel?
Have you ever met another person who could persuade you to do things that were not really a good idea? Describe that situation without using names.
What is the difference between being tempted by something like candy, and having someone else try to persuade you to do something you know you shouldn't?
Why do you think both Jesus and the devil used biblical quotations in response to each other?

C. *The Devil and the Concept of Evil.* These questions are appropriate for age 12 and up. Before that age it is better to stick to specific examples rather than try to make generalizations about the nature of temptation or evil.

Do you think there is such a thing as evil? Why or why not? Can you define evil? Give an example of evil?

M. Scott Peck in *People of the Lie* (p. 42) defines evil this way:

... Evil is opposition to life. It is that which opposes the life force. It has, in short, to do with killing. Specifically it has to do with murder - namely, unnecessary killing, killing that is not required for biological survival ... When I

Jesus in the Wilderness

say that evil has to do with killing, I do not mean to restrict myself to corporeal murder. Evil is also that which kills the spirit.

How do you react to this definition? Does it ring true or false? What does killing the spirit mean?

Do you think a person can be evil?

Have you ever encountered anyone you thought was evil? Have you ever heard of anyone you thought was evil?

How do you respond to someone like this?

The following statements come from M. Scott Peck's *People of the Lie*, pp. 265-267:

... Specifically, I think we can safely study and treat evil only through the methods of love ... We run up against the old problem that the end does not justify the means. Although evil is anti-life, it is itself a form of life. If we kill those who are evil, we will become evil ourselves; we will be killers. If we attempt to deal with evil by destroying it, we will also end up destroying ourselves, spiritually if not physically ... It is in the struggle between good and evil that life has its meaning - and in the hope that goodness can succeed. That hope is our answer: goodness can succeed. Evil can be defeated by goodness. When we translate this we realize what we dimly have always known: evil can be conquered only by love.

How do you feel about these statements? How do they fit in with traditional Quaker values and beliefs?

D. Hope and Joy

Earlier questions referred to overcoming temptation and evil, but may not have probed that sense of deep spiritual joy and hope that comes with the positive step of moving away from temptation and *towards* communion with the living spirit.

What meaning does this story have for you in your life, both in periods of intense searching and closeness to the Spirit and on a day-to-day basis?

Would you be willing to share times when you have felt intensely close to a living Spirit and "invested with a radiant power of positive choice" (see introduction).

What ways do you use to be "still and cool in thy own thoughts"? How do you seek God's will?

III. Songs

Jesus Walked that Lonesome Valley

Jesus walked that lonesome valley
He had to walk it by himself
Oh, nobody else could walk it for him
He had to walk it by himself.

Jesus in the Wilderness

You got to walk your lonesome valley
You got to walk it by yourself
Oh, nobody else can walk it for you
You got to walk it by yourself.

You must go and stand your trial
You have to stand it by yourself
Oh, nobody else can stand it for you
You have to stand it by yourself.

Dona Nobis Pacem	#34, <i>Friends Hymnal</i> ; #296, <i>Worship in Song, A Friends Hymnal</i>
Amazing Grace	#51, <i>Songs of the Spirit</i> ; #185, <i>Worship in Song, A Friends Hymnal</i>
Wayfaring Stranger	#53 <i>Songs of the Spirit</i>
Every Time I Feel the Spirit	#30 <i>Songs of the Spirit</i> ; #147, <i>Worship in Song, A Friends Hymnal</i>
Standing in the Need of Prayer	#31, <i>Songs of the Spirit</i> ; #167, <i>Worship in Song, A Friends Hymnal</i>

Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God



1. Seek ye - first the - king - dom of God and its - right - eous - ness -
2. Knock and the door shall be opened un - to you, Seek and - ye shall find -



And all these things shall be added un - to you. Sing al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia



3. We do not live by bread alone, but by every word -
That pro - ceed - eth from the mouth of God, Sing allelu, alleluia

Jesus in the Wilderness

Songs of the Spirit is out of print, but many Meetings have copies and it can be borrowed from the PYM Library. For information call 1-800-220-0796, #7219 or 7220. *Worship in Song, a Friends Hymnal*, is available from Friends General Conference, 215-561-1700.

IV Activities

A. *Wilderness* - Have a Biblical atlas on hand to show where the "wilderness" is.

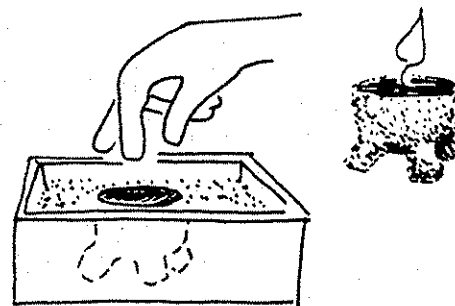
1. Sand activities - the Judean wilderness was a desert. Here are two activities using sand as a basic material.

a. Sand Casting - This process can be done at the beach or in outdoor sandbox areas to avoid some of the mess that working indoors with plaster may entail.

1. Pack damp sand one inch thick into a smooth area the size of the desired cast, building sand walls at least two inches high around the edges. If work is done indoors, use a cardboard box lid (greased or lined with plastic) to hold the sand, making sure the lid is more than two inches deep.
2. Using a finger or stick, make a line drawing in the sand.
3. Mix the plaster and pour it into the mold so that it covers the drawing and is at least one inch thick.
4. Allow the plaster to set until it is hard and cool.
5. Remove the cast and brush off excess sand. You may rinse it quickly with water if you like, but handle it gently and allow it to dry once more.
6. Try the same process, but substitute shells, pebbles, and other found objects for the drawing, or press them into the sand around the drawing. Leave these objects in the sand to become part of the cast, or press them into the sand and remove them, leaving impressions of their forms. Be sure to reverse any lettering which is to be part of the sand cast.

b. Sand Candles

1. Fill a box with sand.
2. Add enough water to dampen sand.
3. Scoop out a hole or screw your fist in the sand.
4. Poke thumb and two fingers into hole, down far enough to make leg molds.
5. Melt paraffin in double boiler. Melt crayon bits for color.
6. Pour melted wax into mold.
7. While wax is soft make wick hole with toothpick.
8. Introduce wick into candle. Pour tiny bit more warm wax to set wick.
9. When wax is cool, remove candle from sand. Make different shapes.



2. Silent Walk - Go on a walk as a class but don't talk. Spend some time apart from each other - perhaps writing in journals or contemplating a natural object. Return to meeting in silence. (Note: an excellent just-before-worship activity)

Jesus in the Wilderness

3. Act out the story, either sharing parts or using puppets. Use the directions for puppets on Page 5 of this Packet, in "How to Teach Children About Jesus".
4. Create a mural of the story. Brown wrapping paper makes a good background. Cut out figures from construction paper and paste on. You can pre-draw the background or if your class is wide-age range, let little ones fill in grass and sky. An alternative: make a diorama of the scene.
5. Each person learns to tell the story (appropriate for ages 8 and up; wonderful for adults.)
 - a. First listen to the story as a group.
 - b. Try to remember as a group what happened and in what sequence.
 - c. Move away from each other and draw pictures of each major event in the story.
 - d. Practice telling the story to one other person. Try to memorize the quotes from Deuteronomy which Jesus and the devil use. Do this in pairs, each taking turns telling and listening.
 - e. Share your rendition with the rest of the group.
6. Go on a wilderness retreat as a group, for an afternoon or longer.
7. Make bread, remembering that it is more than bread we hunger for. Try doing this in silence, finding ways to communicate "pass the flour" without talking.
8. Bible Study
 - a. Find other wilderness experiences in the Bible, e.g., the Exodus, Jacob's flight. Compare these stories to Jesus' experience.
 - b. Look up the Old Testament verses which Jesus and the devil use. Point out how deeply familiar Jesus was with scripture. This is also a vivid example of Bible quotations which can be put to good or bad use - a real confirmation of Friends' approach to the Bible.
9. Many other cultures have rites of passage involving a "wilderness experience." Bring in some books from your local library and let the children do their own research. For example: Many American Indian tribes had such rites; medieval knights spent a night alone before being knighted; monastic communities often require a period of solitude.

B. *Temptations*

1. Make collages of things that tempt you. Use magazine pictures.
2. Write scenarios of situations that might be tempting. For example:

You are in a store and you see something you know your best friend wants badly for an upcoming birthday. You don't have enough money and no one is looking. Another friend who is with you urges you to take it.

Act these out, don't just talk about what you might do. With a larger group, break into smaller groups and write scenarios for each other.

Jesus in the Wilderness

3. Go on a temptation scavenger hunt. Some ideas of things to look for are: candy wrappers, a store selling tapes and records, a TV Guide, a clothing retailer, a bank or a piece of change, a bakery, etc.
4. Jesus answered the devil with scripture. Edward F. Edinger in the *Centerquest* manual (available in PYM Library) suggests that rejection of temptation requires more than one's own authority, that "only trans-personal wisdom is adequate to meet the threat." George Fox emphasizes the necessity of turning to God when tempted. Encourage your children to memorize a Biblical passage which will help them respond to temptation. For example:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want (Ps 23)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (Ps 51:10)

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (Mt. 6:13)

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts. See if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)

Or write prayers for difficult situations. Encourage specificity, e.g., "O God, help me to study hard and not consider cheating if I am not prepared."

5. Invite people in the meeting to talk about times they have encountered stress and temptation. Encourage sharing on how they faced this difficult time positively. Children need to see that difficult times often lead to growth and strength. *Pinocchio*, by Carlo V. Collodi, is a wonderful book for young children about conscience and temptation.
6. Read the book *Frederick*, by Leo Lionni to your class. This fable about being true to yourself is a perfect response to the "turn the stones to bread" temptation. It also helps children recognize their particular gifts. Poetry writing is a good follow up.

V. Bibliography

A. Good stories

Friendly Story Caravan, Anna Petit Broomell, Pendle Hill, 1935, esp. "The Silver Peso", "The Old Lady of Purchase," and "The Sermon in the Wilderness".

Candles in the Dark, compiled by M.C. Brinton, M.E. McWhirter and J.E. Schroeder, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Religious Education Committee, 1964, esp. "The Turning Point" - (Out of print; in most meeting libraries).

Frederick, Leo Leonna, Pantheon, 1967

B. Books about wilderness experiences from which excerpts may be helpful. All generally available in libraries.

Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Scott O'Dell

The Cay, Theodore Taylor, Doubleday, 1969

C. Other Resources

Small Rain, Jessie O. Jones, Duenwald Printing Corp, 1943

There Is a Spirit: The Nayler Sonnets, Kenneth Boulding, Fellowship Publications, Nyack, N.Y., 1945.

The World In Tune, Elizabeth Gray Vining, Pendle Hill Publications, Wallingford, PA, 1954.

Red Man's Religion, Ruth M. Underhill, University of Chicago Press, 1965 (esp. for cross-cultural rites of passage)

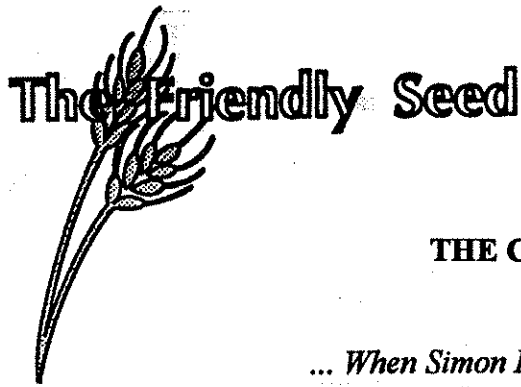
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Centerquest, a series of manuals on using stories for inner growth. The Educational Center, 1979

New English Bible: Companion to the New Testament, A.E. Harvey, Cambridge, England, 1970

People of the Lie, M. Scott Peck, Simon and Schuster, N.Y., 1983

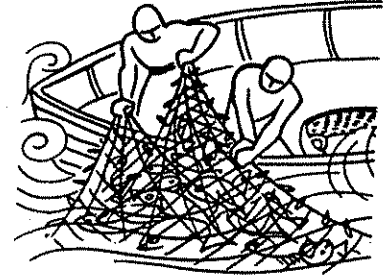
Screwtape Letters, C. S. Lewis, Macmillan, 1961



THE CALLING AND MISSION OF THE DISCIPLES

... When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, "Leave me, Lord, I am a sinful man." For he and all his companions were completely overcome by the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. But Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on it is men you will catch." Then, bringing their boats back to land, they left everything and followed him.

Luke 5:8-11



Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who prefers son or daughter to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and those who welcome me welcome the one who sent me.

Matthew 10:37-40

This *Friendly Seed* has five parts:

- I. Introduction
- II. Questions
- III. Songs
- IV. Activities
- V. Resources

I. Introduction

Passages in the Bible which refer to the calling and mission of the disciples include:

Matthew 4:18-22; 10:1-42; 29:9

Mark 1:16-20; 3:13-19; 6:7-13

Luke 5:1-11; 6:12-16, 39-49; 9:1-6, 9:57-62; 10:1-16

The stories of Jesus calling his disciples and of the instructions he gave them relate to the development of the church as a community of the faithful devoted to the spreading of the gospel. Jesus calls specific men and women, but his call is really to anyone who will hear it. Jesus says clearly that this call to spiritual wholeness takes precedence over all else (see Matthew 10:37-40 above); it must become part of the fabric of life itself.

The Calling and Mission of the Disciples

Carl Jung makes the following statement on Jesus' call:

We protestants must sooner or later face this question: Are we to understand the "imitation of Christ" in the sense that we should copy his life ... or in the deeper sense that we are to live our own proper lives as truly as he lived his in its individual uniqueness? It is no easy matter to live a life that is modeled on Christ's, but it is unspeakably harder to live one's own life as truly as Christ lived his.

(Quoted in *Centerquest: Teacher's Manual Grades 7-9*, p. 200)

When Jesus calls him at the seaside, Simon Peter tells Jesus to leave him. He recognizes the power of the call and the depth of change which following Jesus will require. He is afraid. Scott Peck in *The Road Less Traveled* suggests that only love can help us overcome inertia and move us towards spiritual growth:

In debating the wisdom of a proposed course of action, human beings ... fail to consult or listen to the God within them, the knowledge of rightness which inherently resides within. It is work to hold these internal debates. And if we take them seriously - if we seriously listen to this "God within us" - we usually find ourselves being urged to take the more difficult path, the path of more effort rather than less. To conduct the debate is to open ourselves to suffering and struggle. (p. 273)

However, once we do listen, the love needed to undertake the task of inner growth floods in, as the following two passages illustrate:

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

Tw'as grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

First two verses of "Amazing Grace" by John Newton

I could find none to open my condition to but the Lord alone, unto whom I cried night and day. And I went back into Nottinghamshire, and there the Lord shewed me that the natures of those things which were hurtful without were within ... And I cried to the Lord, saying, "Why should I be thus, seeing I was never addicted to commit these evils?" And the Lord answered that it was needful I should have a sense of all conditions, how else should I speak to all conditions, and in this I saw the infinite love of God.

George Fox in his *Journal*, 1647

The Calling and Mission of the Disciples

Jesus answers Peter's fear with reassurance: "Do not be afraid, from now on it is men you will catch...." Jesus' mission for the disciples is demanding; he is able to choose people who are both willing and able to undertake his work. He is able to discern what is already there in the hearts of the men and women he calls.

...We ask to know the will of God without guessing that his will is written into our very beings. We perceive that will when we discern our gifts. Our obedience and surrender to God are in large part our obedience and surrender to our gifts. This is the message wrapped up in the parable of the talents. Our gifts are on loan. We are responsible for spending them in the world, and we will be held accountable.... Even though we feel [God] is away a long time... we perceive his presence in the consequences of our actions.

Elizabeth O'Connor, *Eighth Day of Creation*, p. 15.

Jesus gave many instructions to his disciples requiring great faith on their part. The root of each instruction is a call to action: to go out in the world to heal and to teach. That call has come to many since:

I was at the plough, meditating on the things of God, and suddenly I heard a voice saying to me, 'Get thee out from thy kindred, and from thy father's house.' And I had a promise given with it, whereupon I did exceedingly rejoice that I had heard the voice of that God which I had professed from a child, but had never known him ... And when I came at home I gave up my estate, cast out my money, but not being obedient in going forth, the wrath of God was upon me, so that I was made a wonder to all, and none thought I would have lived. But after I was made willing, I began to make some preparation, as apparel and other necessaries, not knowing whither I should go. But shortly afterwards going a gate-ward with a friend from my own house, having on an old suit, without any money, having neither taken leave of wife or children, not thinking then of any journey, I was commanded to go into the west, not knowing whither I should go, nor what I was to do there. But when I had been there a little while, I had given me what I was to declare. And ever since I have remained not knowing today what I was to do tomorrow... [The promise was] that God would be with me, which promise I find made good every day.

From the examination of James Nayler at Appleby, 1652; #19.09, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, Britain Yearly Meeting, 1995.

In 1843 when suffering acutely in an illness Elizabeth Fry remarked to one of her daughters: "My dear Rachel - I can say one thing: since my heart was touched at seventeen years old, I believe I never have awakened from sleep, in sickness or in health, by day or by night, without my first waking thought being how best I might serve my Lord."

"Memoir" (1877) - #67, *Christian Faith and Practice*, London Yearly Meeting, 1960

The Calling and Mission of the Disciples

These examples remind us that in both dramatic and simple ways God is still calling men and women. We can make these stories come alive for children if we encourage them to consider their own calls.

The questions, songs, and activities which follow are meant to explore: 1) the idea of being "called", 2) what mission the disciples had and why, 3), what are our gifts, 4) what it means to have a "willing heart", to be obedient to a call.

II. Questions for Discussion

Before using the questions with your class, read or tell one story of Jesus calling the disciples. Luke 5:1-11, in which Jesus calls the fishermen, Simon, James and John, is good for all ages.

What do you think Jesus' work was to be?

How do you think Peter felt when Jesus got into his boat? What did he think as he cast out his net, sure there were no fish? How did he feel when the nets came up overflowing?

Why do you think Peter fell down at Jesus' feet and said what he did?

What do you think "fishers of men" means?

Why do you think the disciples chose to follow Jesus?

What do you think they gave up to follow Jesus?

Have you ever felt "called"?

What sorts of choices did you have to make to follow this call? Define the word "mission".

What was the disciples' mission?

(For older children and adults) Consider the following words of Jesus. What do they mean to you? to your inner life? Use a worship-sharing format.

- Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.
- Find out who is worthy ... and stay with him until you depart.
- And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.
- Nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.
- Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.
- He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me.
- Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me.

III. Songs

"Amazing Grace" - #51, *Songs of the Spirit*; #185, *Worship in Song: A Friends Hymnal*, FGC.

The Calling and Mission of the Disciples

"Michael Row the Boat Ashore":

Spiritual

Refrain Mich-ael row the boat a - shore Hal - le - lu - jah.

Mich-ael row the boat a - shore, Hal - le - lu - jah.

Detailed description: The image shows two staves of musical notation for the hymn 'Michael Row the Boat Ashore'. The first staff is in G major, 4/4 time, with a 'Spiritual' label. It begins with a D chord and contains the lyrics 'Refrain Mich-ael row the boat a - shore Hal - le - lu - jah.' The second staff continues the melody with A7, D, and A7 chords, with the lyrics 'Mich-ael row the boat a - shore, Hal - le - lu - jah.'

2. Jordan's river is deep and wide . . .
Milk and honey on the other side . . .
3. Jordan's river is chilly and cold . . .
Chills the body but not the soul . . .

"Steal Away":

1-3. Steal a - way, steal a - way, steal a - way to Je - sus.

Detailed description: The first staff of musical notation for 'Steal Away' is in G major, 4/4 time. It contains the lyrics '1-3. Steal a - way, steal a - way, steal a - way to Je - sus.'

Steal a - way, steal a - way home, I don't have long to stay here.

Fine

Detailed description: The second staff of musical notation continues the melody with the lyrics 'Steal a - way, steal a - way home, I don't have long to stay here.' It ends with a 'Fine' marking.

1. My Lord _____ calls me, He calls me by the thun - der;
2. Green trees _____ are bend - ing, Poor sin - ners stand _____ trem - bling;
3. My Lord _____ calls me, He calls me by the light - ning;

Detailed description: The third staff of musical notation provides three variations of the lyrics for the phrase 'My Lord calls me'. Each variation is aligned with the notes of the staff.

1-3. The trum - pet sounds with in - a my soul;

Detailed description: The fourth staff of musical notation contains the lyrics '1-3. The trum - pet sounds with in - a my soul;'.

Chorus

I don't have long to stay here.

D. C. al Fine

Detailed description: The fifth staff of musical notation is the chorus, starting with a piano (p) dynamic. It contains the lyrics 'I don't have long to stay here.' and ends with a 'D. C. al Fine' marking.

IV. Activities

A. Walnut Boats

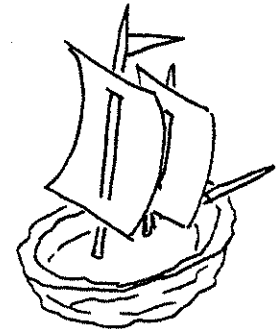
Materials: walnuts, coping saw, sandpaper, round toothpicks, household cement, paraffin, white paper, scissors, felt or other fabric for pennants

Procedure: Saw the walnuts in half at the seam and remove the meat and fibers. Sandpaper any rough areas. Break off 1/2 inch from a toothpick and glue it to the

The Calling and Mission of the Disciples

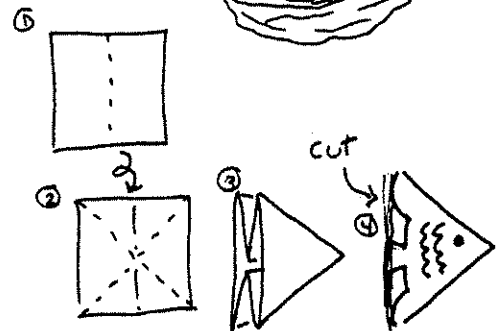
front of the walnut for a bowsprit. Break off 1/4 inch from another toothpick. This will give you two masts, one 1/4 inch shorter than the other. Cut two sails, one larger than the other, from the white paper. Make two tiny holes in each. Thread the taller toothpick through the larger sail, the shorter through the smaller sail. Glue a small felt or fabric pennant at the top of the taller mast.

Pour melted paraffin into the walnuts, and when it starts to harden push the shorter mast in front by the bowsprit and the taller in the center. The sails should curve toward the back of the boat. Check the masts to be sure they are parallel.



B. Origami Fish

Fold a square of bright paper in half vertically; unfold, turn over and fold on both diagonals. Using these creases as guides, fold into a triangle. Cut fins and tail; draw eyes and scales with markers. Make several and create a mobile.



C. Tissue Paper Fish

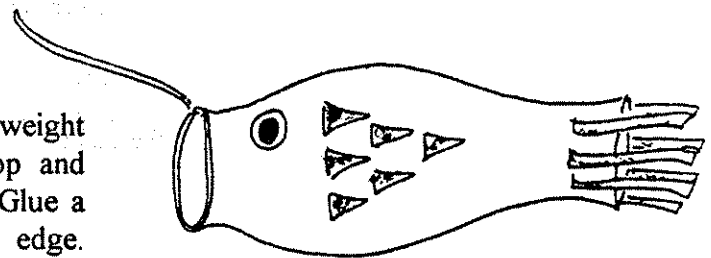
Cut tissue paper fish and make collages, using a mix of one part white glue to one part water to "paint" the tissue paper onto watercolor-weight paper. (See the book *Swimmy* by Leo Leoni for examples of this technique).

D. Clay Fish

Make fish out of clay. Have each person describe what makes his/her fish special or different.

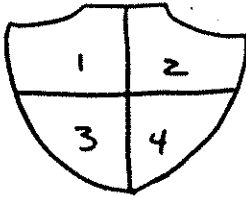
E. Carp Kites

Cut two matching fish shapes of lightweight paper and glue together along the top and bottom edges to form a hollow fish. Glue a ring of pipecleaner around the mouth edge. Overlay tissue triangles and glue to the body of the fish. Glue streamers to the tail, taking care not to glue the front to the back. Attach a string to the mouth so that when the kite is pulled the wind will pass through the fish.



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F. Personal Shields



For each person have a precut coat of arms divided into four or six spaces. In each space participants are to *draw* responses to the following questions: (choose as many as you need or add your own)

1. What is something you are good at?
2. Which of your physical characteristics do you like best?
3. Depict 3 words you would like to have associated with yourself.
4. What makes you different from others?
5. What do you like best about yourself?
6. What makes you happy?
7. What makes you sad?
8. What have you done recently of which you are proud?
9. What do you value most in life?

G. Discovering Gifts (for older children and adults)

1. Share and discuss the parable of the talents, Matthew 25:14-30, and selection #288, "Obedience to the Call" from *Christian Faith and Practice*, London Yearly Meeting, 1960.
2. Consider the following means of gifts discovery. Ask people to talk about the one(s) they have experienced.
 - The unexpected call for which a person may feel inadequate or unprepared (Moses in Exodus).
 - The awareness of what one should do coming from the depths of oneself, a strong interest or special talent.
 - The discovery of a "gift" while doing it. We try something and find it works well, feels right and has a positive impact.
 - The call comes in the form of desire or even envy, and we discover a neglected gift crying to be developed.
- H. Explore biographies of people who have followed a call. The Religious Education Concerns Group publication *Quakers Answer the Call* (available from FGC) has good ideas and can be borrowed from the PYM Library.
- I. Interview members of Meeting and write "news articles" concerning times when they felt "called" to a certain action; include how it felt and what happened.
- J. (For older children and adults): try writing or drawing images on the following topics, or use clay for 3-D responses:

- What do you "treasure"? Which of these get between you and God? Which lead you to God?
- Deepest hungers of your heart
- Deepest questions
- Doubts - ten most disturbing ones about faith and meaning
- Turning points

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- Most cherished wishes
- What do you like about yourself?
- What is God asking of you today?
- Do you want anything enough to give up everything else?
- What are the hardest things God could ask of you?

V. Resources

Lighting Candles in the Dark, Religious Education Committee of FGC, 1992.*

Centerquest - A series of manuals on using stories for inner growth. The Educational Center, 1979.*

Christian Faith and Practice in the Society of Friends, London Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1960.*

The Eighth Day of Creation, Elizabeth O'Connor, Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1971.*

Friendly Story Caravan, Anna Pettit Broomell, Pendle Hill, 1935*

- Esp. The Sermon in the Wilderness
- The Bishop's Chairs
- The Invincible Leader
- The Sacred Flame
- The Squire's Half Crown
- The Water Barrel
- Susan and the Witch
- When Gandhi Came

A Gift From the Sea, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Vintage Books, New York, 1978*

Good News Travels Fast, American Bible Society, 1988 - available from FGC.

New English Bible: Companion to the New Testament, A.E. Harvey, Cambridge*

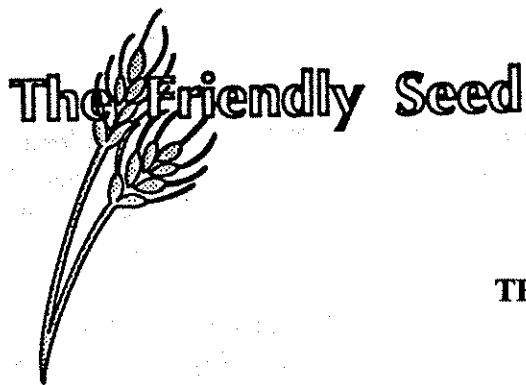
Resources for Creative Teaching in Early Childhood Education, compiled by Bonnie Mack Flemming/Darlene Softley Hamilton and JoAnne Deal Hicks, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., New York, 1977.

The Road Less Travelled, M. Scott Peck, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1978.*

Swimmy, Leo Leoni, Pantheon, 1963*

The World in Tune, Elizabeth Gray Vining, Pendle Hill Publications, Wallingford, PA, 1954*

*Available from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19102, (215) 241-7220.



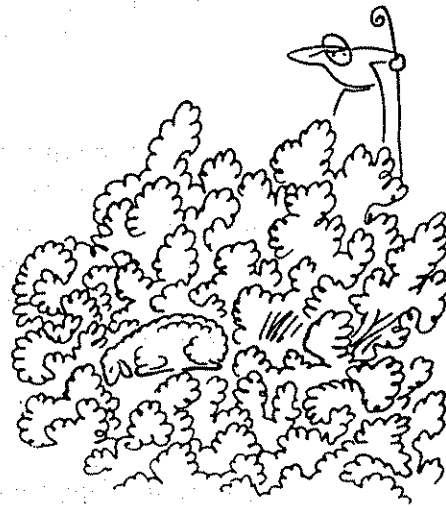
THE PARABLES OF THE LOST

"... I tell you, there will be greater joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to repent."

Luke 15:7

This *Friendly Seed* includes materials on the parables of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:1-7), the Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10), and the Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32). It has six sections:

- I. Introduction
- II. Questions for discussion or worship-sharing
- III. Songs
- IV. Games
- V. Activities
- VI. Bibliography



I. Introduction

At this time in his ministry, Jesus was being criticized by the Pharisees (members of a sect that separated themselves by following the Mosaic law of purity) and teachers of the Law, for welcoming tax-gatherers and other outcasts and even eating with them. (Luke 15:1,2). These people were felt to be sinners, socially and morally abhorrent. At a time of rigid rabbinical law, to eat with those deemed unworthy was reprehensible. But Jesus answered his critics with gentle searching questions: "If one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the missing one until he has found it?" (Luke 15:4).

The recurring theme of Jesus' message in these parables is that *God cares about each and every one of us*. We can never remove ourselves, nor can anyone else remove us, from God's loving care. If we feel "lost", if we are "lost", God will seek us out because we are precious to Him. There is "no place that God is not". Harold Bosley in *He Spoke to Them in Parables* (p. 152) says we are creatures "...of absolute worth in the sight of God" and "God seeks all ...through love and will never give up until He finds them".

George Buttrick in *The Parables of Jesus* feels the message of the parable of the Lost Sheep is contained in three of its words: Lost, Seeking, Until. We are "lost", sometimes through circumstance, sometimes through self-will, deliberately turning away from what is right or from what is needed. The Pharisees never thought they were lost but their self-righteousness and judgment of others as sinners marked them as more truly lost than those they condemned.

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But through the parables, Jesus tells that God is always *seeking* us. When a shepherd loses a sheep, he will not rest until he finds it. So it is with God, the Good Shepherd of the human flock. He will seek us out *until* he finds us, and when He does there is no greater joy in heaven. "Rejoice with me! I have found my lost sheep".

The parable of the Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10) is the second of the "twin parables". It is interesting to note that in the first story the central figure is a man; in the second story a woman; the shepherd has the wealth of a large flock; the woman appears to be poor. But again the loss is dramatic.

The ten silver coins may represent the woman's dowry and the loss of even one coin would be devastating. She lights a lamp, much as God may pour light into our darkness to find us; she sweeps out the house to uncover every niche and corner in her search, even as God is diligent in finding us beneath the accumulated debris of our lives. Again the rejoicing when the coin is found. "Rejoice with me! I have found the piece that was lost." "In the same way," Jesus tells us, "there is joy among the angels of God over one sinner who repents". Buttrick refers to the "Divine Search", saying "God is plunged in loss when any soul is 'lost' and glad with exceeding joy in the day of recovery."

The parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24) is also the parable of the Elder Brother (Luke 15:25-32). Jesus reaches beyond the symbols of the sheep and the coin to the heart of human nature. In an assertion of self-will, the younger son demands his inheritance with which he hopes to buy his freedom from discipline and responsibility.

With infinite wisdom, the father does not try to find the son (in contrast to the seeking in the previous parables) but knows that "The boy must first find himself." (Buttrick, p. 189, 190). When the younger son "...came to himself" his first motive to return home was to relieve his hunger. Repentance came later. Though the father did not actively seek the son, he clearly was watching for him and "was moved with compassion" when he saw him, embracing and kissing the son.

The father heaped honors on the younger son - robe, ring, shoes, fatted calf - perhaps extravagance but akin to the joy of heaven in the previous stories. That which was "lost" is found. John Miller, in *Step By Step Through the Parables* (p. 72), reiterates: "... found ... through compassionate love reaching out to small 'turnings'. Only through risky readiness to embrace before the repentance has quite arrived." Buttrick sees the father as "... the picture of God ... eager to forgive utterly, and to restore."

But the Elder Son, Pharisee-like, and true to life, is angry. Where the younger son had to leave home to recognize what he really had, The Elder Son has not yet come to knowing all that he has. He certainly was faithful to his duty, staying home and working in the fields, never disobedient, serving his father well but one wonders if he served joylessly.

Now that the younger brother was being celebrated, "this thy son", the Elder Son says sarcastically, he is angry and scornful - ungrateful and loveless according to Buttrick's interpretation. He lacks the compassion of the father who says, "... this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found."

The Parables of the Lost

The Prodigal Son was at home with his father but now the "Elder Son was outside. No one shut him out. He shut himself out. He would not go in. He was barred from heaven by his lovelessness." (Buttrick, p. 201).

II. Questions for Discussion, or for Worship-Sharing - Use these after you read or tell the parable or parables to your group.

For Children:

The Lost Sheep: (for very young children, ask if they know what a shepherd is - have a picture to show them)

Choose among the suggestions below for a discussion. The point is to get to the idea that each sheep is special and, if possible, the idea that each of us is special. It can be difficult for children to think of themselves as unique.



Why does the shepherd go to seek the lost sheep?

Have you ever lost something special? Did you try to find it? How did you feel when it was lost? (If you have preschoolers, talking about a lost "blankie" or special stuffed toy will be effective.)

Why doesn't the shepherd just buy another sheep?

Have you ever been lost? How did you feel? Who came to find you? How did you feel when you were found?

The Lost Coin: The symbolism of the coin is hard for small children to understand, and using the parable is not recommended for them.

The Prodigal Son:

What do you look forward to when you go home after school?

What do you look forward to when a parent comes home from work?

What makes home special? (i.e., hugs, warmth, food, acceptance)

How would you celebrate a mother, father, or sibling coming home after being away?

What kind of celebration would you like to have coming home after you have been away?

For Older Children and Adults:

The Lost Sheep; The Lost Coin

Have you ever felt "lost"? (i.e., unwanted, misunderstood, out of place, worthless)

What makes you feel "found"?

Do you know someone who is feeling "lost"? (i.e., a friend, perhaps who is into drugs or alcohol; of a different race or ethnic group; disabled; homeless)

How do you feel toward these "lost" people?

What can you do to relieve their sense of "lostness"?

The Parables of the Lost

The Prodigal Son

Have you ever felt like running away from home? Why?
What would you do if you ran out of money?
Would you be afraid to go home?
How do you think you would be received if you came home?
How would you like to be received when you came home?
If you made a mistake (i.e., dented the car, lost your keys, wallet, hurt someone's feelings), how would you want to be treated when you returned home or owned up to the mistake?
If someone in your family, a child, spouse, parent, was "lost", how would you respond to them when they returned or "came to themselves"?
Instead of playing the martyr, what could the Elder Son have said to the father and even have said to the brother? Can you recall a time or circumstance when you may have chosen to shut yourself out because of anger or pride?
How did the Elder Son see his work? Did he enjoy his work? Why did he keep doing it? Ask the same questions of yourself. With children, ask about obligation rather than work.

III. Songs

In Songs of the Spirit:

- #7 You Are Always You
- #21 The Prodigal Son
- #41 He's Got the Whole World in His Hands
- #43 Rise and Shine, #23, *Worship in Song: A Friends Hymnal*
- #51 Amazing Grace, #185, *Worship in Song: A Friends Hymnal*

In A Hymnal for Friends:

- #25 Brother James's Air, #211, *Worship in Song: A Friends Hymnal*

IV. Games (From *For the Fun of It*, by Marta Harrison)

Choose a game which you feel is most suitable for your group and the amount of time available. These games are to emphasize and celebrate individual differences but a main consideration is to have fun together.

Oranges

Have enough oranges (or any fruit: apples, lemons, etc.) for every member of your group. Pass an orange out to each person. Tell them to study their fruit by feeling it, smelling it, looking at it. The purpose is to get to know the fruit so well that it can be identified among all the other oranges. Gather the oranges in a paper bag. With everyone sitting in a circle dump the bag in the center. Now ask everyone to find their orange. Once everyone has the orange they are sure is theirs ask them to tell the group what qualities helped them to identify the orange. You might then

The Parables of the Lost

have a brief discussion on what it would be like to be an identical twin. Or ask if any of them have known twins that were hard to tell apart; how did they do it?

Shoes

Ask everyone to take off their shoes and put them in a pile in the middle of the room. When this has been done, ask everyone to pick a pair out of the pile that is *not* theirs and ask them to sit down again. Taking turns, each person will try to locate the proper feet for the shoes. This can become extremely funny. When everyone is properly shod take a few minutes to focus on the idea that we are all unique and even our feet point to "I Am Special". Remember Cinderella?

Barnyard

People stand in a large circle, choose six animals (less for a group smaller than 20) and count off by animals; or a slip of paper with the name of an animal on it is passed out to each person. Then, with everyone's eyes closed (or a dark room could be used), each person finds all the others of his or her kind by constantly calling the animal sounds, "Baa-a-a," "Meow, meow," etc. When two of the same animals come across each other, they hold hands and find others until they are all together. It is a very funny game! *Note:* The idea is *not* to finish first, but merely to find your own kind.

V. Activities

Lost Sheep:

Make a Story Mural: roll out a long piece of brown wrapping paper or shelf paper for the mural. Glue cotton balls on the paper and add heads, tails, and legs with magic markers or crayons. The shepherd, his crook, grass, sun, clouds, etc., may be added with cutouts from construction paper glued on the mural or they may be drawn directly on the mural.

If the mural is made by one age group or class, have them tell the story using the mural to another age group.

The Prodigal Son:

This story easily lends itself to being acted out by having the different characters in the story make up their own words as they go along with the narrative. Change roles so that the "sons" have an opportunity to play the part of the father. Change "sons" into "daughters" for the girls, and "father" into "mother". Then ask people how they felt in the roles. How would they change the story? What could the Elder Son have said to the father instead? How could he have greeted his brother with rejoicing? Act it out. Children can act out the story with paper bag puppets of each of the characters.

To Affirm Individual Uniqueness:

Think about and then draw what would be missing if you were not with your family: a special gift that you bring to your family; something that is unique about you: a smile, making others laugh, a good appetite, repairing things, cheerfulness, hugs, sympathy and understanding, good organizer, etc.. This is a good project for all ages. With very small children, it sometimes helps to work in pairs or small groups.

The Parables of the Lost

Fingerprints and Fingerprint Pictures:

Using a stamp pad with washable ink, have everyone make a fingerprint on a piece of paper and look at it with a magnifying glass. Explain that there are no fingerprints exactly alike in the whole world. Pictures can also be made with fingerprints: draw a long flower stem on a paper and put fingerprints on either side of the stem; they will look like pussywillows. A small sideways fingerprint with a head and tiny feet added will look like a lady bug. Several prints in a row with long ears added look like rabbits, and with shorter ears and a long tail may look like cats. Use your imagination but stress that no two fingerprint pictures will be alike because each person is unique.



VI. Bibliography

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The Lord Will Love Thee, Sara Klein Clarke, Westminster Press

The Son Who Left Home, Augsburg Publishing House

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The Taize Picture Bible, Jerusalem Bible, Fortress Press, 1968

The Children's Bible in 365 Stories, Mary Batchelor, Tring, Herts, England, 1985

C. For adults:

He Spoke to Them in Parables, Harold A. Bosley, Harper & Row, 1963

Interpreting the Parables, Archibald M. Hunter, The Westminster Press, 1960

**The Parables of Jesus*, George A. Buttrick, Harper & Brothers, 1928

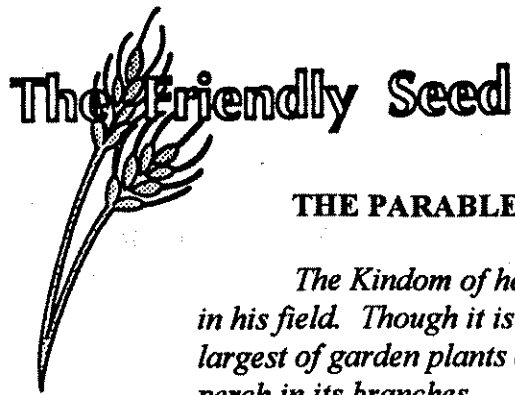
Perspectives on the Parables, Mary Ann Tolbert, Fortress Press, 1979

Rediscovering the Parables, Joachim Jeremias, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966

**Step by Step Through the Parables*, A beginner's guide to the stories Jesus told - their meaning in his time and ours, John W. Miller, Paulist Press, 1981.

* Very helpful

All the books are available from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19102, (215) 241-7220.



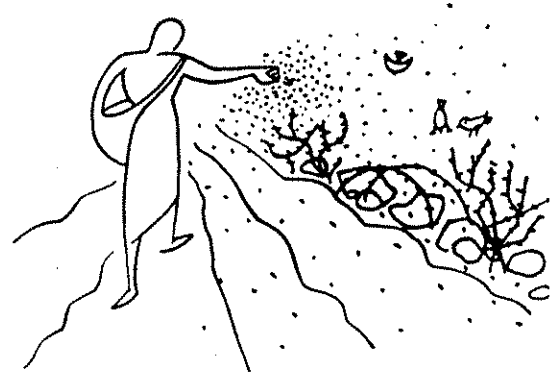
The Friendly Seed

THE PARABLES OF THE MUSTARD SEED AND THE SOWER

The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.

Matthew 13:31-32

A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop - a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.



Matthew 13:3-8

This *Friendly Seed* has seven sections:

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I. Introduction

According to Mark 4:34, Jesus rarely or never taught "without a parable". It was the most striking characteristic of his teaching style. This is confirmed by the proportionately large number of parables in the Gospels. About a third of all the teachings of Jesus recorded in the Gospels are "in parables."

The parables of the Mustard Seed and the Sower occur in all three synoptic gospels:

The Mustard Seed:	Matthew 13:31-32	Mark 4:31-32	Luke 13:18-19
The Sower:	Matthew 13:3-9	Mark 4:3-9	Luke 8:5-8

What is a parable? A parable is a comparison drawn from nature or daily life and is designed to illuminate some spiritual truth, on the assumption that what is valid in one sphere is valid also in another.

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II. Seed Activities

It is important for children to have experiences they can relate to later learning. By having different experiences with seeds before the parables are told, the children will have an expanded awareness of seeds and things that grow.

A. Where do seeds come from?

1. For Young Children

Materials: One apple per child, paper towels, cups, knife, apple juice.

Procedure:

The purpose of this activity is to introduce the children to one place where seeds may be found. As the children examine the seeds of the apple, they can learn many things about seeds - size, color, shape, number, location. One way to begin this activity is to introduce it at snack time. Tell them they are going to have apples with their juice.

Ask questions about the apples, such as:

What color are the apples?

Where do apples grow?

What is inside an apple?

Help each child cut the apple. Have them look for seeds. Ask children:

Where are the seeds in your apple?

How many seeds are there?

What color are they?

Are all the seeds alike?

How do they feel?

Does everyone have the same number of seeds?

When everyone has had a chance to respond to a question, serve the juice and eat the apples.

2. For Older Children

Materials: A paper bag for each child with the child's name on it.

Procedure:

The purpose of this activity is to show the children that there are many places where seeds come from. Take a seed walk and collect a variety of seeds. Try to find a place that has a variety of trees. The seeds of trees (nuts, cones) are easier to identify than seeds of flowers and weeds. Ask questions as you walk:

Where do you find the seed of the pine tree?

This is an oak tree. What does its seed look like?

Can you find any grass seed?

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questions about the similarities and differences in the seeds (color, size, shape, texture, hardness, etc.) Some questions you might ask:

Why are there so many seeds outside?

How do seeds travel? (wind, animals, water)

Do big seeds grow into big plants and little seeds into little plants?

B. What's inside a seed? - for ages 5-13

Materials: one bag of large dried lima beans. (Soak about 1/4 of them overnight)

Procedure:

Place dried lima beans on the table. Ask children, "What is inside a seed?" Ask them to try to open a few of the dry seeds. The children will find it difficult to open the dry seeds.

Tell the children that if the lima beans are soaked in water overnight, it will be easier to open the beans. Take out the soaked beans. The children will discover the beans are much larger and easier to open. Identify the seed coat, baby plant (embryo) and the food for the plant.

Questions to ask:

What happens when you soak the seeds?

Which seeds are larger - the dry ones or the wet ones?

Can you find the baby plant?

Where is the food for the baby plant?

Why does the seed have a seed coat?

C. What happens when a seed sprouts? - for ages 3-13.

Materials: Clear plastic tumblers (one per child), paper towels, dried lima beans

Procedure:

Dampen several paper towels and place towels in tumblers. Place several bean seeds along side of tumbler next to the dampened towel. This way the children will be able to observe the seeds through the side of the tumbler as they begin to sprout and grow. Keep the paper towels moist and in a few days the seeds will sprout. Have the children observe the new plants.

The children can do the procedure in class, take the tumblers home and observe the bean seeds at home, or the teacher can do the procedure at home and bring the sprouted plants to class on Sunday. Questions to ask:

What do you see happening to the seeds?

Can you name the parts of the tiny plants?

What color are they?

Where does the baby plant get its food?

What is happening to the part of the seed that is being used by the tiny plant for food? (As the food inside the seed is used up, the seed gets smaller and the plant gets larger.)

III. Telling the Parable of the Mustard Seed - This procedure will work best with elementary age children and older.

First tell the children what a parable is. Jesus used stories or parables to teach special messages. In some ways parables are like puzzles which can be solved several ways. They can mean different things to different people.

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Explain that one of the reasons Jesus was such a good teacher was that he talked to people about things they knew. Everyone in Palestine knew about farming, about planting seeds and watching them grow.

Procedure

Tell the children: One day Jesus was talking about seeds. He said ... (read or tell the parable of the mustard seed - put it into simple language for younger children.)

Ask the children: Can you imagine a little, tiny, tiny, seed, smaller than any we have here, so small you can hardly see it? Imagine a seed that small growing as tall as this room (10' - 12'), its branches big and strong enough for birds to find shelter in its shade.

Maybe it is hard for us to believe that a little seed can grow to be as big as a tree, but the men and women, boys and girls listening to Jesus that day knew that it was true. They had seen it happen. It is all part of the wonder of the mustard seed, the wonder of growing in God's world. For in the little seed is the power to grow, to push through the shell that protects the plant, to sprout and then to keep right on growing into the tree or bush or flower or whatever it is intended to be.

Questions for older children:

What do you think Jesus is trying to tell us in this parable?

We are not familiar with the mustard seed like Jesus' listeners were. If you told this parable today, what seed would you use that people would be familiar with?

We understand why the mustard seed grew (scientists have explained this to us). That information was not available when Jesus was teaching. Why do you think the farmer thought the seed grew?

Questions for high-school age or adults

What do you think Jesus is trying to tell us in this parable?

Do you see the activity of God in the affairs of our time? Where?

Are you an optimist or a pessimist? Why?

Compare the parable using the versions in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. How are they alike? How do they differ?

IV. The Parable of the Sower - Appropriate for all age children.

Procedure

Listen to another story Jesus told about a farmer who went out to plant seeds. Read or tell the parable of the sower. Then tell the parable again. This time tell the story while demonstrating with four boxes of dirt: (1) hardpacked, a walking path with children making clay birds to eat the seed; (2) Children put rocks in a box and add a little dirt; (3) dirt to which children add twigs representing weeds and thorns; (4) well mixed soil. Ask:

What would happen to the seed that fell into dirt like box 1? box 2? box 3? box 4?

Seeds need soil to grow. What other things do seeds need to grow? (water, sun).

How do birds, animals and the wind help seeds?

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Other questions for all ages:

What happened when the seed fell on the walking path? on the rocky soil? among thorns? good soil?

Why do you think Jesus told this parable?

Ask the children to form a question about the parable.

You may want to take the children outside and try to plant seeds in soil types similar to those talked about in the parable. Plant some seeds and see what happens.

Questions for high-school age or adults:

Using reference materials, describe the method the Palestinian farmer used when planting seeds. It differs from methods farmers use today.

What is the main interest of this parable?

Where does the emphasis lie: on the sowing or on the harvest as the result of the sowing?

How does this parable show confidence in God?

How does this parable fit into the first year of Jesus' teaching ministry? What were the difficulties he faced?

How do you react to difficult problems? What part does your faith (or lack of it) play in your response?

How would you interpret "He who has ears to hear, let him hear"?

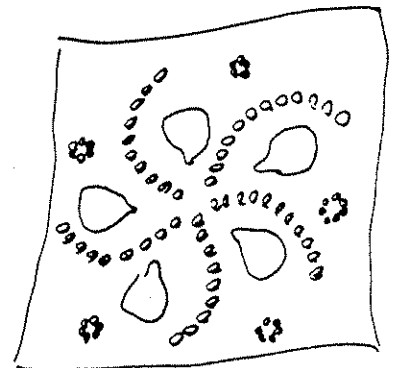
V. Activities for Either Parable

A. Making a Seed Picture

Materials: seeds, white glue, light-weight cardboard

Procedure:

- Gather many different kinds of seeds. Use the leftover seeds from your seed walk. Use dried lima beans, peas, kidney beans and so forth from your kitchen or grocery store. Sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds are also good.
- Have the children draw a picture on the cardboard. Try not to make it too complicated (flowers, fish, animals, house and tree).
- Put some glue along the most important lines in the child's picture to make the outline. Have the younger children use the larger seeds.
- Older children may want to fill in the entire picture with seeds. Spread glue over the section to be filled in and put seeds in place.
- After the glue has dried, shake the picture so that seeds that were not glued properly fall off. Check your picture and reglue seeds that have fallen off.



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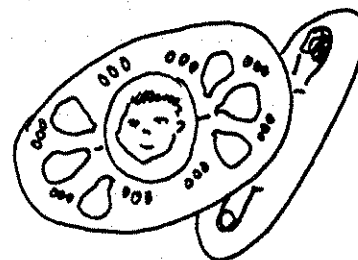
If you have the children bring in a picture of themselves, you can insert it in the center of the seed picture and make a card.

B. Making a pin

Materials: Light-weight cardboard cut in a circle; large pins, seeds, white glue.

- Cut slits for pin and put pin through and fasten.
- Glue pine cone petals around outside of pin.
- Fill center with small seeds

Again a picture of the child cut in a circle could be used as the center and smaller seeds glued around it.



C. Making a bulletin board titled "Name that Seed"

1. Materials: small plastic bags, masking tape, markers, push pins, variety of seeds.

- Identify seed.
- Put the seed (or seeds, if they are small) in a plastic bag.
- Using a dark marker, write the name of the seed on masking tape.
- Press masking tape to top of seed bag (so you can see seeds).
- Attach the seed bag to the bulletin board.

OR:

2. Materials: cardboard, glue, markers, push pins

If you would rather have the children work individually, use a large piece of cardboard per child and have the children divide the cardboard into equal parts. (Use fewer squares with younger children and more squares with older children)

- Identify seed
- Glue the seed (or seeds if small) to the cardboard
- Use the marker and write the name of the seed at the bottom of the square.
- Continue until all squares are filled, if you can.
- Hang each seed chart on the bulletin board, or have the children take them home.

D. Spatter Painting

Materials: variety of seeds, spatter paint screens, toothbrushes, tempera paint, construction paper, newspaper.

Procedure:

Spread newspaper on floor. For spatter painting use construction paper. Ask the children to arrange their seeds on the paper. Place the screen over the arrangement, dip the toothbrush in

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tempera paint and brush briskly back and forth over the screen until the paper is darkened by paint. When paint is dry, carefully remove the seeds.

E. Have a Seed Party

Materials: a variety of edible seeds: pumpkin, walnut, sunflower, popcorn, peanut.
Butter, oven for toasting/or skillet for sautéing, popcorn maker, paper plates, napkins.

Procedure:

Let the children help in preparing for the seed party. The time needed for preparation and the sequence of preparation activities will depend on the seeds chosen for eating.

Pumpkin seeds can be toasted or sautéed. If it's near Halloween, children can carve a pumpkin and save the seeds for cooking. Pop some popcorn. As you are eating, some questions that might be asked:

Which seeds do you like best?
Do you like toasted seeds?
Which seeds grow underground?
Which seeds are called nuts?

F. Junior and Senior High Activities

1. Plan a bulb- or seed-planting day for the First Day School or the entire Meeting. Order a seed catalog from Burpee or Spring Hill. There are fall and spring catalogs. You can pick up a catalog from:

W. Atlee Burpee Co.
300 Park Ave.
Warminster, PA 18991-0002

You can have one sent free of charge by phoning: 1-800-888-1447.

Decide what seeds or bulbs you want to order. When your order comes, sort seeds or bulbs and put in paper bags according to classes. (There is a pull-out that shows sequence of bloom and approximate height in the Burpee catalog.) Have the class organize the entire planting.

2. Cooking

Sesame and Sunflower Seed Candy

Put in a two-quart saucepan:

1 cup honey
2 teaspoons Karo Syrup
2 teaspoons butter
2 cups raw sunflower seeds
1 small package sesame seeds

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Mix all the ingredients and cook over medium heat to almost crack: 300 F. (A candy thermometer will help.) Pour into a buttered dinner plate. Cool. Break into pieces. Makes 36-40 pieces.

Honey "Cracker Jacks"

1/2 cup (6 Tbs.) honey
1/4 Cup butter or margarine
6 cups popped corn
1 cup shelled peanuts

Heat honey and shortening in a saucepan until blended. Cool. Pour over popcorn which has been mixed with peanuts, stirring as you pour. When well coated, spread on a pan in a single layer. Bake at 350 F 5-10 minutes or until crisp, stirring several times. The difference between crisp (not brown) and burnt can be a matter of minutes.

VI. Songs

All Things Bright and Beautiful - #10, *A Hymnal for Friends*, #1, *Worship in Song: A Friends Hymnal*

This Is My Father's World - #26, *A Hymnal for Friends*, #29, *Worship in Song: A Friends Hymnal*

Morning Has Broken - #64, *Songs of the Spirit*, #32, *Worship in Song: A Friends Hymnal*

VII. Bibliography

A. Parables

Harold A. Bosley, *He Spoke to Them in Parables* *

George A. Buttrick, *The Parables of Jesus*

Tomie DePaola, *The Parables of Jesus* *

Archibald M. Hunter, *Interpreting the Parables* *

Joachim Jeremias, *Rediscovering the Parables* *

John W. Miller, *Step by Step Through the Parables*

Katharine H. Paton, *The Message of Jesus in the Parables*

Caroline Pineo, *Jesus, Teacher and Friend* *

Mary Ann Tolbert, *Perspectives on the Parables* *

*Can be borrowed from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library by phoning
1-800-220-0796, #7220

B. Other

Rosemary Althouse and Cecil Main, *Seeds*

Vicki Lansky, *The Taming of the C.A.N.D.Y. Monster*

Jackie Vermeer and Marian Lariviere, *The Little Kids' Craftbook*