

# Silent Squares

Melinda Wenner Bradley

This activity is meant to be playful, kinesthetic, and support listening and sharing our stories. Like the games “The Big Wind Blows” or “Musical Chairs,” this activity involves movement, but in silence, like we’re on a meditative walk.

## *Materials:*

- 5-6 carpet squares or cloth placemats to put on floor around space
  - 5-6 queries printed and placed in fun, small containers
  - bell, chime, or singing bowl
1. Set up the carpet squares, placemats, or whatever you’re using to mark spaces in the room. Place a container with a query in it on each space.
  2. Gather the group, share introductions and explain the activity.
  3. When the bell/chime is heard, participants should walk quietly around the room, moving between the “squares” and wait to hear the bell/chime a second time.
  4. When you hear the second bell/chime, find a square closest to you, and gather with others close to it. (These should be small groups — the wandering in the room is meant to help the group spread out and not move in a pack!)
  5. Open the container you find at the square, read the query out loud, and share for 3-5 minutes. Each person should be given time to respond — be mindful of the length of each sharing. You may pass, by saying, “Listening,” to indicate that choice.
  6. When the bell/chime sounds again, it is time to thank your group and return to silence and walking around the room to find new square and new groups that form there.
  7. Continue to move around the room in silence, stopping to share at the squares when indicated.
  8. The facilitator indicates when the last sharing is happening, and invites participants back into a circle together.
  9. Reporting back and Discussion with Whole Group:
    - What did you learn, listening to others and sharing?
    - What were some responses to queries? (You could list these on flip chart paper as a group, or add another silent/individual component first — Have participants go to sheets of paper around the room and write what they heard, then review the sheets as a group.)
    - Where else could something like this work with children or a multigenerational group? With what other queries?

### ***Sample Queries:***

*Describe a place or space (physical or temporal) where you have felt awe, wonder, or a feeling of deep peace.*

*How do we make space for children at the "big table" of our meeting community, and create a nurturing "children's table" at First Day School?*

*Share about an activity that feels like "play" for you – when you lose track of time, and let go of the outcome but are deeply present in the moment.*

*Where are the spaces and times in your life to use imagination, and how is this connected to leadings and openings?(alternatively: how is it connected to creativity for you?)*

*Wonder together about this idea: For Friends, gathering in waiting worship is an act of both relational intimacy and trust in the process as we enter into silence individually and as a community.*

*What gives you joy?*

*Describe the ingredients for a wonderful meal with family and friends . . . What do you need in that place to feel included and safe to be yourself?*