

Lesson from a Book: *Friends and God*

by Mary K. Blackmar, Leaflet (tract) published by Quaker Press of Friends General Conference, 1997.

May be purchased from QuakerBooks of Friends General Conference or downloaded from their website at www.QuakerBooks.org.

Description:

This is a short, easy to read, pamphlet that attempts to give some clarity to Friends' concept of the "experience of God" and "that of God within." It also touches on inward rather than outward rituals, the Quaker perspective on the scriptures, and good vs. evil.

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

Opening:

For a newcomers' class where participants do not know one another, one might begin with introductions and a brief statement of each person's religious background or journey. This introduces the diversity of experience within the group. If the group is already established, begin by worship-sharing on our concept of "God within." Review the worship sharing guidelines. How worship sharing differs from discussion will need to be emphasized.

Quotations:

The quotations from George Fox on "That of God within" or on the "experience of God" would be good introductions.

Reading:

The pamphlet is small enough that if it hasn't been pre-read, it can be read aloud by the group.

Discussion questions:

1. The author states of George Fox: "In his long, anxious search for eternal life and peace, he found no help until he learned to listen to the inner voice." How do we listen to the inner voice and how do we distinguish this voice from our own or from other voices?

Lesson plan age level:

Adult or late teenage newcomers who have had several months experience in a monthly meeting context.

Lesson or values illustrated in story:

Foundational Quaker precepts.

2. If, in the words of John, "the Light that enlighteneth every man who comes into the world" is one of our guiding principals, how does this change the way we view other people with whom we may disagree or take issue? How does this impact our manner of response to every day situations in daily life?
3. The author says of Friends: "They were and are individualists, as well as group seekers . . ." What have been your experiences of the joys and/or challenges of being held accountable to a group?

Activitie suggestion:

Ask the group how the principles discussed in this pamphlet are being manifested in their monthly meeting. (It would be wise to have two seasoned facilitators on board for this topic).

Song:

Participants may want to sing *Blest Be the Tie That Binds*, #331 in *Worship in Song*, Quaker Press of Friends General Conference, 1996.

Closing

Lesson plan by: Suzanne Siverling, Lake Forest Friends Meeting, ILYM

