



We're Going to Meeting for Worship

Overview

This lesson uses the book *We're Going to Meeting for Worship*, by Abby Hadley, which focuses on Quaker Meeting for Worship, what it means to a young child, and his feelings about quiet, silence and listening.



30 minutes



Preschool (ages 3-5)



Newcomer Friendly

Aims & Objectives

Reading this story and wondering with the children about it will provide an opportunity to introduce the concept of Meeting for Worship.

Reading List

Sparkling Still provides tools for teachers of children ages 3-12. Included are sample lessons, a master lesson plan, ideas for building classroom community, an introduction to wondering questions and more.

Sparkling Still provides useful instructions on:

- Creating the circle and other components of your time together: pages 5-22
- Reading out loud with children: pages 16-17
- Wondering with children and adults: pages vii-xi and 6-7
- Individual Art Responses: page 7
- Art Supplies: pages 20-22

Credits: Anne Collins, Sally Farneth, Susan Hopkins,
and Erika Mittag, Exercise Authors

Materials & Setup

Book: *We're Going to Meeting for Worship* by Abby Hadley

Video: 3 minutes (password = deepen) ([video link](https://vimeo.com/183923974): <https://vimeo.com/183923974>)

Suggestions for reading for teacher spiritual preparation before exercise/lesson

“Is there enough silence for the Word to be heard?”

T.S. Elliot in “Ash Wednesday” ([link for this website](http://www.friendsofsilence.net/): <http://www.friendsofsilence.net/>)

Matthew 6:6 “But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (RSV)

“This Still Room” by John Greenleaf Whittier

And so I find it well to come for deeper rest to this still room,

for here the habit of the soul

Feels less the outer world's control;

For strength of mutual purpose pleads more earnestly our common needs;

And from the silence multiplied

By these still forms on either side,

The world that time and sense have known

Falls off and leaves us God alone.

Faith and Play stories

“Prayer and Friends Meeting for Worship”

“Listening for God”

(Advance preparation needed to use Faith and Play stories with children.)

Worship in Song, A Friends Hymnal

#134 Be Still and Know

#137 Teach Me to Stop and Listen

#141 In the Silence

“Quiet Moments” by LaRue Evans (*Sparkling Still*, pg. 85)

Materials Needed for Activity Response

For Individual Art Response:

- drawing paper
- crayons, markers, or pastels
- other supplies

For Teacher-directed Activities:

- #1. Bring in something from nature such as a rock or flower for focusing upon.
- #2. To show how our minds can “center,” use a sand jar with swirling water and sand.
As the sand settles, so can we as we quiet our minds.
- #3. Cut out a small red heart from felt or other soft material to stroke during worship to help children “center” themselves.

Take Home Notes (one per family)

Note for children to take home after exercise/lesson or to email to parents during week prior to this lesson:

Today we read *We're Going to Meeting for Worship*, by Abby Hadley. We learned about Quaker Meeting for Worship.

Instructions

Welcome the children to the circle. Be sure to introduce everyone, if visitors are present.

Invite children and adults to go around the circle sharing one or two plusses and minuses from their day or week. It helps to ask for 2 items only, either 2 of one or one of each. Children are comfortable with a limit, unless another person's comment sparks another one for an individual child.

Sing a centering song, such as “God's Love is a Light,” hymn #218, *Worship in Song, A Friends Hymnal*, and/or one of the songs previously suggested under Materials. In addition, or instead of, use breathing or other exercise to center the group. The simplest way is to breathe deeply three times. Adding lifting arms up and down with the breath or holding tummy during deep breaths can help.

Show the cover of the book, read the title and author's name. Ask the children a question that invites them to wonder about the story.

“Let's see what happens.”

Read the story, holding the book so all can see. Depending on reader's comfort level with the children, allow comments during the story, especially from younger children.

After reading the story, invite the children to wonder about the story with you.

Wondering Questions

I wonder where you see yourself in the story today?

I wonder if you ever have sad thoughts and feelings?

I wonder what you liked in the story today?

After the children have finished wondering and are ready to go to the next activity, introduce the option for Individual Reflective Art Response or a Teacher-directed Activity.

Individual Reflective Art Response

Children choose from a collection of attractive art supplies and work individually for about 15 minutes to create something of importance to the child. It may or may not be a direct reflection on the story they just heard and wondered about.

Options for Teacher-directed Activities

Practice sitting quietly for a few minutes using something from nature (a flower, a rock) to focus upon.

Practice having a short Meeting for Worship in which everyone sits comfortably focused upon a sand jar to “center” themselves.

Use a small red heart cut from felt or other soft material to stroke during worship to help children “center” their minds.

Closing

Provide a 5-minute warning before the children need to clean up. After clean up, gather the children in a circle and ask them to name one thing for which they are grateful. Sing songs while waiting for their parents to pick them up, or before joining the adults after the rise of Meeting for Worship.

If the children join their loved ones while Meeting for Worship is still in progress, before you lead them back to the meeting room, invite them to remember how they still themselves and some things about the morning that they may want to think about during the final moments of Meeting for Worship.

Hand out the Take Home Notes, if using, as parents pick up the children in the First Day School room, or after the rise of Meeting for Worship, if joining loved ones in worship.