The Good Seed

Overview
Create and share art that represents the “seed” that God sews in your heart.

60 min.  Middle School & Up  Newcomer Friendly

Aims & Objectives
When you have completed this exercise, you will have considered the “seed” as a metaphor for the inward work of Spirit in our lives, which requires an open and receptive place in our hearts to be planted.

Materials & Setup
Write the attached four quotations onto four index cards or pieces of paper. Bring a CD player or smartphone to play the musical track. (There will certainly be someone in your group who will offer their smartphone for use if you don’t have one).

Gather a variety of art supplies, including: paper, scissors, crayons, markers, colored pencils, and plenty of glue and tape. If possible, bring a selection of seeds, such as sunflower seeds, grass seeds, or mixed birdseed, that could be used to make a collage.

Credits: Connie McPeak Green and Elise Hansard, Exercise Authors
Instructions:

Arrange art supplies on a table in the center of the room. Make sure there is plenty of space for each participant to work.

Distribute the index cards with the four quotations and invite volunteers to read each one to the group.

After listening to the quotations, settle into worship for about ten minutes. From the silence, invite participants to create an art reflection, focusing on this question:

What is the “seed” that God has sewn in your heart?

This activity will be done in worshipful silence. Everyone is invited to use the art supplies to express their response to the quotations and the query.

When you sense that most of the participants are finished working, announce that the group will be coming back together in a few minutes.

When settled back into a circle, invite folks to share their art response and say a little about their “seed.” Continue your discussion by asking one or more of the queries below, as needed.

Queries:

• How am I already cooperating with the Inward Work of God?
• What will provide an open and receptive place in me for the Seed of God to grow this year?
• How can I help to prepare the soil, and open up my heart, mind, and soul to be receptive to God’s presence in my life and be more centered on that Presence?
• What plowing needs to be done to make way for the seed to grow? What are the weeds or thorns competing with or choking out the growth of the Seed?
• What needs to die for new life?
• What fruits am I being called to bring forth?
• How do we help each other this year to allow the Seed to grow?

Closing:

Begin your closing worship by listening to *Give Over Thy Own Willing*, an Isaac Penington quotation from 1681 that Quaker musician Paulette Meier has put to song. You can play the track on a CD player or using a smartphone connected to the Bandcamp streaming website. (Link: https://paulette.meier.bandcamp.com/track/give-over-thine-own-willing)

“Give over thine own willing, give over thine own running, give over thine own desiring to know or be anything, and sink down to the seed, which God sows in thy heart, and let that be in thee and grow in thee and breathe in thee and act in thee, and thou shalt find by sweet experience that the Lord knows that and loves and own that, and will lead it to the inheritance of life, which is God’s portion.” -- Isaac Penington
Quotations:

“Once there was a man who went out to sow grain. As he scattered the seed in the field, some of it fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some of it fell on rocky ground where there was little soil. The seeds soon sprouted because the soil wasn’t deep. But when the sun came up, it burned the young plants; and because the roots had not grown deep enough, the plants soon dried up. Some of the seed fell among thorn bushes, which grew up and choked the plants. But some seeds fell in good soil, and the plants bore grain....”  
Matthew 13:3-8

“In the good ground which yields its whole nourishment to the good seed, and will not yield nourishment to any bad... the good seed not only springs up, but brings forth fruit to perfection. The thorns, the cares, the worldliness, the fear of persecution, that spring up from another root, and are of another nature, choke the good which the seed brings forth in the thorny ground, and stifle and choke the seed itself also.”  
Isaac Pennington

“...I can truly say that my mind has been more and more concerned for the working down everything which would get above the good Seed. I think we are never safe unless we feel the plough of God’s power and the hammer thereof so operating in us as to break us into tenderness”  
Susanna Morris, Travelling Friend, 1744

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”  
Galatians 5:22
Additional Materials:

This exercise is adapted from *Light, Seed, Life* from the Quaker Spiritual Formation project of Baltimore Yearly Meeting and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Link to these resources: [http://bit.ly/2d16NXp](http://bit.ly/2d16NXp)

Paulette Meier’s Timeless *Quaker Wisdom in Plainsong* is available for purchase. The album features 21 Quaker quotations sung in plainsong and is a beautiful addition to group spiritual deepening and personal spiritual practices. Learn more at: [http://www.paullettemeier.com](http://www.paullettemeier.com)