



Photo by Joann Clapp Fullagar

Silence and Expectant Waiting

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Credits: Adapted from Opening Doors to Quaker Worship. A Project of the Religious Education Committee of Friends General Conference. QuakerPress Philadelphia, PA., page 55



Mindfulness Jars ("Friends Meeting in a Bottle")

Overview

Creating "mindfulness jars" to illustrate and practice the process of centering and being open to the Spirit in worship.



45 min.



All Ages



Newcomer
Friendly

Aims & Objectives

Participants will create their own mindfulness jars and have an opportunity to explore individually and as a group their experience of using it to center. Participants will take their jar home to use in individual or family practice.

Materials & Setup

Small glass jars with lids (4-8oz, e.g. jam jars)

- Water
- Sand or glitter (different colors of glitter are fun)
- Optional: liquid glycerin (settles material in jar more slowly)

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Instructions

Introduction

Often when we enter a space for worship, we bring a lot of the world with us: feelings about how our day is going, concerns or joys on our mind, tasks on our “to-do” list. How do we set aside those thoughts to enter into the silence and stillness of worship? Sometimes we need help to do this, and in this activity we’ll create something to support us.

Activity

1. After introduction, make jars (consider your space, need for adults to support children, surfaces to use, and cleaning up space afterward).

- Use clean jars, and fill 2/3 full of warm water.
- (Optional: add glycerin to water, until ¾ full. Put on lid and shake to combine, then remove lid and continue.)
- Add sand (pebbles are OK with sand) OR glitter to jar.
- Put lid on tightly, and shake to combine.
- Use permanent marker or other means to put participant names on lids.

2. Gather the group and jars, and sit together (perhaps in a circle).

3. Practice using your jars: shake gently and then set down in front of you. Breathe slowly in and out, and notice what’s happening in the jar. Stay focused on the material inside settling, and on the light coming into the water as it clears.

4. Settle into silence for a period, inviting participants to repeat #3 above as needed during this time. (Consider the energy of the group, and practice together or 10-20 minutes. Don’t rush to end the time if there are children involved; repeat the invitation to use their jars and trust the process.)

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5. End the practice time with the group: ring a bell or chime, or shake hands around the group.

6. Gather the group to discuss this experience:

- I wonder what you liked best about doing it?
- How did the process of making your jar, and then using it, feel?
- What did you experience when you watched the jar settle?

Closure

You won't need this every time you come into meeting, and sometimes you can just call up the image of the jar's contents settling as you settle your mind and body and enter into the stillness and silence of worship.

Variations

Create one LARGE jar as a group – invite group members to each add a handful of sand or their choice of glitter color. Gather around the shared meditation jar to center as a group.

Additional Materials

Reading List:

Read to the group the book *Moody Cow Meditates* (Kerry Lee McLean) as an introduction to this activity. The book focuses on using the meditation jar to diffuse anger, but has broader application as a mindfulness exercise.

See also the FGC publication *Opening Doors to Quaker Worship*, pages 55-56, for additional language to use around this activity.