

First Day School Sampler of Activities for Mixed Aged Groups

Below are notes from activities that have worked well with young friends of Toledo Friends Worship Group. This is an informal list. Some entries are more detailed than others. Hopefully, these notes will inspire you in your preparations for your own FDS programs. I have tried to note sources used and apologize if I failed to credit the creator of a particular idea or activity. Amy Heritage

BIBLE STORIES

Ecclesiastes 3 To Everything there is a Season

Read: Ecclesiastes 2 and “Turn, Turn, Turn,” picture book by Pete Seeger

Activity: Create a blank template like the divided pictures in Seeger’s book and invite children to illustrate a phrase from the text with their own examples.

23rd Psalm

Activity: Divide psalm into 10 phrases and hide each phrase outdoors for a scavenger hunt. Possible hints related to text: “look along the path”, “beside still waters”, “in the valley of darkness”, “on a table,” “in a house”.

Text Resource: Phillip Keller, A Shepherd’s View of the 23rd Psalm

Sing: #206 My Shepherd Will Supply My Need, #207 Tender Shepherd #211 Brother James Air

Moses

Baby Moses

Read: about baby Moses (We used DK Children’s Bible).

Activity: Make pipe cleaner babies and reed boats and float them down a stream, taking turns acting as the mother, sister, and Pharaoh’s daughter. (Our meeting has a small stream on-site. You could also create a “stream” with blue fabric.)

Read: about Moses and the burning bush. Use small dolls (we used a Playmobil nativity set) to tell story of Moses and the burning bush. If there is a burning bush on the grounds, take a walk and visit it.

Sing: Take off your shoes, and sing #152 in Friends Hymnal “This is Holy Ground”.

Discuss how 2nd verse “these are holy hands” relates to Moses being God’s instrument.

Discuss idea of “everything holy” and invite students to create additional verses. (ie. we are holy kids/this is holy sky/these are holy words.)

Activity: Make clay figures to represent and retell the story of the burning bush.

Sing: Go Down, Moses, Friends Hymnal #294

Sing: Take Off Your Shoes, Friends Hymnal #311

“Earth’s crammed with heaven
And every burning bush aflame with God;
But only he who sees
Takes off his shoes.”

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Harriet Tubman was called the “Moses of her People”

Read: “Harriet and the Promised Land”, Lawrence and “Show Way” Talbott

Activity: make construction paper “quilt” squares of things that guide us (use an old dictionary to cut out words, maps, pictures)

Sing: Steal Away, Friends Hymnal #214

Sing: Harriet Tubman, Friends Hymnal #283

Parable of the Sower

Activity: Make a diorama with rocks, weeds, hard path, good soil, paper flowers and birds. Read parable and discuss each aspect. With sharpie, write words for each on birds, flowers and rock. For example, our group wrote “not hearing”, “forgetting” on birds; “anger” on rock, “prayer”, “reading”, “singing”, “worship”, “nature”, “being thankful” on flowers.

Have children retell story manipulating a farmer doll and sprinkling mustard seeds.

Parable of the Mustard Seed

Discuss mustard seed as God’s love: mustard a common weed, not something one would have cultivated in the garden. Not really a tree – compare cedars of Lebanon. Show images of mustard “trees”.

Activity: Make mustard seed book marks. Write verses or inspiring messages on them if desired. Cover with contact paper

The
kingdom
of God
is like a
mustard
seed.

I am the acorn, the packet, the seed.
God is within me, and God is the tree.
I am unfolding the way I should be,
Carved in the palm of God’s hand,
Carved in the palm of God’s hand.

Song: “I Am an Acorn,” Friends Hymnal #242

House on a Rock Parable

Activity: Build clay/playdoh houses on rocks and sand by stream and try to flood them

Worship Sharing: What would you build your house on?

Song: The Wise Man Built His House Upon the Rock (Incorporate ideas from worship sharing in extra verses)

Widow who gives two small coins

Song: Magic Penny, Friends Hymnal #221

Zacchaeus - Jesus recognizes “that of God” in Zacchaeus and Zacchaeus responds by turning from his “bad” behavior.

Activity: Climb a tree!

Noah – A good one to explore the idea of following a leading. Noah listened to God’s call and followed an unlikely leading.

Jonah – A good “that of God in each of us” story. Also, Jonah discovers there is “that of God” in the people of Nineveh who he thought were “bad,” but who repent when he shares God’s message with them.

Jacob’s Ladder

Activity: Make or play with a wooden Jacob’s Ladder toy

<https://sermons4kids.com/instructions-ladder-toy.htm>

Activity: Make a paper Jacob’s Ladder

<https://sermons4kids.com/instructions-ladder-chain.htm>

Activity: draw a stairway to heaven

Activity: Jacob’s Ladder string game <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Jacob%27s-Ladder-out-of-String>

Sing: Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream, Friends Hymnal #299
Gen 29

Then Jacob went on his journey

He came to a certain place and stayed there all night because the sun had set;
And he took stones from that place for his pillows and lay down to sleep.

And he dreamed and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

And God stood at the top of the ladder and said to Jacob, “ I am the God of Abraham, your father. The land where you are lying – I will give it to you and your children.

And your children will be as the dust of the earth and will spread to the west, and to the east, and to the north and to the south. And in you and your children all the earth will be blessed.

And behold, I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you again to this land; for I will not leave you.

And Jacob awoke and said, “Surely, God is in this place, and I didn’t even know it!”
This place is the house of God and this is the gate of heaven.

And Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stones that had been his pillows and set them up as a pillar and poured oil on it. And he said, “If God will be with me in this

way, the he shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that God shall give me I will surely give a tenth back to God."

Compare burning bush/sing "Holy Ground"

Sing: Jacob's Ladder, Friends Hymnal #192

HOLIDAYS

Mother's Day

Feminine images of God.

Read: the parable of the lost coin and the parable of the baker.

Read: "Big Mama Makes the World"

Sing: "Ancient Mother," Friends Hymnal #310.

Activity: Hide and then search for coins. Bake rolls (make dough in advance).

Christmas

Create or assemble a nativity set, read the Christmas story. Invite children to share favorite Christmas storybooks.

After Christmas

Discuss Epiphany, 12 Days of Christmas, Quakers' belief in no Christmas/Christmas every day.

How can we celebrate Christmas every day?

Song: "A Star Filled the Sky" Friends Hymnal #61. Put stars on their hands.

Activity: Make paper stars to share with adult Friends. Teacher can pre-make stars for each child. Write messages on stars if desired.

http://www.dltk-kids.com/world/japan/morigami_star.htm

Song: Drummer Boy. "What gift would you bring to baby Jesus?"

Read: Shoemaker Martin (Tolstoy)

QUAKERISM/QUAKER HISTORY

George Fox

Activity: Make hats. Cut large squares of newsprint. Color as desired. Place over bowl and wrap with a band of masking tape. Roll edges to make brim.

Role play: George refusing to take off his hat in deference to another.

Sing: George Fox, Friends Hymnal #272

George Fox (1624-1691) facts

A serious boy – depressed – ridiculed by friends for not carousing

Worked as a shepherd and a shoemaker

rejected clergy and church

read Bible

what canst thou say?

There is one, even Christ Jesus

Heart leapt for joy

Made his own leather suit and wore a white hat

Fox told the judge to tremble before God – hence named Quakers
8 times in prison
no swearing, fighting,
equality – no titles or hats off in court
Children of the Light
40 years of travel by horse, foot and boat to England, Scotland, Holland, America

Activity: “Be Patterns, Be Examples”

Cut out and assemble candlestick tangram (printable versions online). Color as desired. Use pattern of assembled tangram to talk about how patterns can “show the way” more clearly. Discussed how George Fox sought to be a pattern or example. (Candlestick also suggests “light of the world”)

Preparing for Worship/Worship Sharing

Read: “On Sitting Still,” Mary Test (How Quakers listen for God)

Activity: Make origami cranes. Write on the wings the verse “He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust.” Share with adult Friends at rise of meeting.

Read “Meeting Tips: 13 Introductions to Meeting for Worship with illustrations,” Smith (FGC Bookstore)

Activity: Try some of the author’s sitting positions (some pretty awful and silly) before settling into something comfortable

Other texts: God’s Quiet Things, Sweetland
An Egg is Quiet, Aston and Long

MISCELLANEOUS

St Francis/Blessing of the Animals

Tell story using these materials: small dolls, fabric in shades of river, dirt road, grass, blocks to show castle and father’s shop, wolf puppet, horse, tin foil for armor, stones, small birds, fish

Story of St. Francis

(based on St. Francis of Assisi, Nina Bawden)

800 years ago in Assisi, Italy

time of castles, knights and Robin Hood

His father was a merchant. He wanted to be a knight.

He left town in a coat of armor “I shall come home a great prince!”

Met a knight without armor on the road. Gave his armor and returned home.

Minding shop, ignored a beggar. Later left shop to find him and give him coins.

Father was angry that shop was unattended.

Sold a fine bolt of silk and gave money to rebuild church.

Father was angry and disowned him.
Francis donned a monk's robe.
Asked for stones to build church when people gave him bread.
Owned nothing. Sun and moon were his.
Always polite. Apologized when he kicked a stone.
Squabbling birds. He preached "Praise God." And they rose up singing.
Preached to fishes and they gathered to hear him.
Dangerous beasts trusted Francis.
Wolf terrorized village. He found wolf, calmed it, brought it to town to apologize.
From then on wolf lived in town and people fed it.
When it was time for Francis to die all the animals gathered to pay respects.

Who are Quakers?

What would you tell a friend about who Quakers are?
Some ideas to mention – equality, simplicity
Inward experience versus outward
Did you know that Quakers don't celebrate Christmas?
Everyday sacred – Everyday is Christmas (and Easter, etc.)

Interview a Friend

Here are links to videos created by young Friends about two members of Broadmead Friends.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vV45EJ6Wtr0> Rilma Buckman interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1bNYIiNZGY&t=108s> Claire Davis interview

WHO IS GOD?

Read: "God's Dream" by Desmond Tutu

Read first lines: "Dear Child of God, what do you dream about in your loveliest of dreams? . . . Do you know what God dreams about? If you close your eyes and look with your heart, I am sure, dear child, that you will find it. "

Pause for worship sharing to consider this question.

The book discusses God's dreams for people sharing, caring, etc.

Activity: Make a heart puzzle. "Each of us carries a piece of God's heart within us. And when we love one another, the pieces of God's heart are made whole." Write names of Friends (and others) on each puzzle piece. Save a few blanks for attendees we don't know about. At rise of meeting, write names on the blank puzzle pieces and invite adults to help assemble the puzzle.

Activity: “Will you help God’s dream come true? Let me tell you a secret. . .God smiles like a rainbow when you do.” Recreate rainbow image from book (rainbow of children’s hand prints). Do as sidewalk art or on paper with finger paint.

Seeing

What do you notice about people who you haven’t seen for awhile.

Ask someone to close their eyes. Ask group -What color are his eyes?

Two circles facing each other. Move in opposite directions. Freeze. Greet each other. Notice something new.

Apple slices. (Or oranges) Take one. Study it and put it back. Mix them and try to find yours. Eat meditatively.

Do the same with a peanut butter cookie (baked in a cupcake holder.)

Camera walk in pairs. (One closes eyes. Second leads them to something interesting, positions them to see it, instructs them to open and shut eyes like a camera and “take a picture”.

Sing: Open My Eyes, That I May See, Friends Hymnal #166

Multi-generational get-to-know activity **Linking Hands Game** One child announces an interest, something about himself that he thinks someone else might share. If someone shares his interest, then they link hands and the new person announces something about himself until all hands are linked.

Choosing Words/Labels/How we define ourselves and each other

Worship Sharing: In silence write a word for each person and gift them. Afterward, share your favorite word (given or received), tell why you gave a word, etc

Activity: Introductions

Find a partner – introduce yourself with name and occupation. Find a different partner and introduce yourself with “I’m _____. I am a radiant being”. Continue with other introductions, silly, their choice. . . “I’m _____. I am a phinglephoweser” . . .

Get with a family member and greet them formally as father/mother. Now greet them with your favorite term of endearment.

Activity: Choosing different words

Overwhelmed/maximized

Stupid/learning

Sad/sorting things out

Lost/searching

Doesn't need to be true for it to help you. Empowering
Resource for alternative word list: Awaken the Giant Within, Robbins

Activity: God words – Say the Lord's Prayer. Try opening the prayer with "Hey, Big Mama"

Read: Big Mama Makes the World

Sing: "Bring Many Names" from Friends Hymnal

FDS Peace Prizes (October project in honor of Nobel Peace Prizes)

Read: about Alfred Nobel, inventor of dynamite, who regretted being known as the "merchant of death" (when his brother died, Alfred's obit was mistakenly published with this epitaph). To revise his legacy, he established the Nobel Peace Prize.

Watch: video about Pakistani education advocate Malala, 2013 Nobel nominee.

"I started thinking about that, and I used to think that the Talib would come, and he would just kill me. But then I said, 'If he comes, what would you do Malala?' Then I would reply to myself, 'Malala, just take a shoe and hit him.' But then I said, 'If you hit a Talib with your shoe, then there would be no difference between you and the Talib. You must not treat others with cruelty and that much harshly, you must fight others but through peace and through dialogue and through education.' Then I said I will tell him how important education is and that 'I even want education for your children as well,' and I will tell him, 'that's what I want to tell you. Now do what you want'."

Read more at: http://www.firstpost.com/world/when-malalas-answer-to-a-question-left-jon-stewart-speechless-1164397.html?utm_source=ref_article

Activity: In the previous week, invite adult Friends to nominate members for consideration for a "Peace Prize". This is a great way to learn about the meeting's involvement in peace work. The following week, present each nominee with a certificate decorated with the children's artwork.

Gifts of the Spirit (from 2010 LEYM)

Activity: "Gift" each other with jokes, hugs, handmade notes, teaching a skill, a song. Children can think about what gifts they could share with the adults.

Worship sharing about gifts.

Read: from "Meeting Tips: 13 Introductions to Meeting for Worship with illustrations," "emptying our cups of love"

Once upon a time a man spoke in Meeting about an idea his Quaker grandmother gave him. She told him that we are like teacups, which get filled during Meeting. During the week, between Meetings for Worship, the cup must be emptied if it is going to be ready to be filled again at Meeting. . . Have you ever thought about the gifts you have? Or what gifts you give? . . . like listening very hard to a friend, smiling, singing, dancing,

drawing, praising someone, saying “thank you,” . . . Have you given a gift to someone this week? Have you received a special gift? Are you ready for Meeting?

Song from Unitarian Hymnal (3-part round)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSgaMg020u4>

Go now in peace. Go now in peace.
May the love of God surround you.
Everywhere, everywhere you may go.

Simple Living/Live Like the Sparrows

We met in an 1804 log cabin for this activity. A typical log cabin is 12’x16’. You could meet in a room of this size and imagine how it would be to live there.

Prep for reading: Homes now have 3x more space than 50 years ago. We have a \$22 billion dollar storage industry for our stuff.

Read/explore: Material World: A Global Family Portrait, Menzel

Idea: Live simply, recognizing that everyone’s needs could be met if we share what we have.

"Are not two **sparrows** sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. Matthew 10:29

"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Matthew 6:28

Jesus said: Don’t store up treasures on earth! Moths and rust can destroy them, and thieves can break in and steal them. Instead, store up your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy them, and thieves cannot break in and steal them. Your heart will always be where your treasure is.

— *Matthew 6:19–21*

Sing: Sparrow song

Sing: Simple Gifts, Friends Hymnal #272

Sing: Lone Wild Bird, Friends Hymnal #240

Worship Sharing: Can you visualize a world where everyone has enough of what they need and no one is hungry or alone. What might be possible in that world? What do the people feel who live there? How do they spend their time?

New Year’s Activity – Daruma Dolls

Japanese Daruma dolls are used for goal setting. When a goal is set, color left eye. When the goal is met, color right eye. Japanese children sometimes make snow Daruma (yukidaruma).

Printable Daruma doll <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Daruma-Goal-Doll-Printable-2949105>

This activity could lead to discussions about goals, different ways of seeing, meditation vs. Quaker worship vs. visualization.

<http://www2.oberlin.edu/amam/asia/daruma/documents/daruma-handout1.pdf>

Link describing legend of Bhodidharma who meditated until his limbs fell off. He cut off his eyelids so he could meditate without sleeping. A symbol of perseverance/dedication to a goal.

Bodhisattva Precepts by Rulu – five eyes and dharma eye

https://books.google.com/books?id=f6IAL_eEM1kC&pg=PA279&lpg=PA279&dq=the+spiritual+eye+that+not+only+penetrates+the+true+reality+of+all+things+but+also+discrimnates+all+things&source=bl&ots=e8seiQSZFe&sig=ACfU3U3cpckEcAb1sd6eHRT7sT_vAAZTJg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjjgsCm85PkAhVLKqwKHcV0BlkQ6AEwAHoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=the%20spiritual%20eye%20that%20not%20only%20penetrates%20the%20true%20reality%20of%20all%20things%20but%20also%20discrimnates%20all%20things&f=false

Five eyes- physical eye, God eye (omniscient), Wisdom eye (sees emptiness of Dharma), Dharma eye (that discriminates), Buddha eye (all ways of seeing coming together)

There are many Bible verses about seeing. Here are a few.

2 Corinthians 4:18

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Matthew 13:10-17 Though seeing, they do not see . . .

Psalms 119 Open my eyes that I may see. . .

Psalms 119: 149 My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on God's promises.

1 Samuel 12:16 Now then, stand still and see this great the Lord is about to do before your eyes!

Other materials we have used:

What is God?, Boritzer and Marantz

Old Turtle, Douglas Wood

Circle of Days, Reeve Lindbergh

In God's Hands, Lawrence Kushner

Activity: Bring bread dough to shape and bake

Sing: Take These Hands, Friends Hymnal #262

Convincement of Thomas Lurting

<http://gtitl.blogspot.com/2008/06/convincement-of-thomas-lurting.html>