

**CCRC WORKSHOPS HELP  
RELIGIOUS GROUPS**

A series of CCRC workshops was conducted by Facilitators Priscilla Prutzman and Laura Wells at the invitation of the Parents and First Day School Committee of a small Quaker Meeting in a New York State rural area. The format and outcome of these workshops are presented here in the hope that they may be of value to other religious groups in implementing their curriculum. They might wish to conduct a similar workshop series with the help of an experienced facilitator. Almost all the activities and techniques in these workshops are in the CCRC manual, **Friendly Classroom for a Small Planet**. If not, they are described herein. Hints and comments that enabled the group to carry out exercises more effectively are also included.

Quaker Meetings function autonomously. Curriculum materials for First Day Schools (Sunday Schools) are available but individual Meetings usually implement them in their own way. In this case, the Meeting wanted to work experientially with the children, as CCRC does. Therefore, Priscilla Prutzman, who was living near the Quaker Meeting for the summer, was invited to conduct a series of workshops "to explore the purpose of our First Day School, and to work toward our own curriculum development." The workshops were to be directed toward people in the Meeting interested in working with children, and a commitment to attend all the workshops in the series was requested. Thirteen people took part in the series of six two-hour weekly workshops.

In preliminary meetings with members of the Parents and First Day School Committee and Priscilla, it became clear that many ideas for activities to implement a curriculum were needed, and this objective was also included in the workshop plan. At this point, Laura Wells joined the project as co-facilitator. As will be seen, the group reached its goal. Curriculum and activities were developed in detail, and a sense of warmth and unity achieved.

As in all CCRC series, the first workshops were structured to build trust and unity, and to establish a creative atmosphere for tackling the group's major goals. The first workshops in the series also furnished a demonstration of many activities that could be used with the children in the First Day School.

As will be evident from the comments following each workshop, the group gained insights in establishing a loving and affirming atmosphere where everyone's person and ideas are welcome. It is a goal of all CCRC facilitators to demonstrate in their own attitudes and outreach to the members of the workshop a model of an optimum atmosphere for caring and creativity.

These workshops may also be useful to religious groups who follow a formal curriculum. They help to develop learning and sharing experiences that make Sunday School an exciting place to attend. Often, Sunday School workers are church parents who are not always professional teachers. These workshops help to lift their spirits and skills.

**EXPLORATORY SUNDAY SCHOOL  
CCRC WORKSHOP SERIES**

Workshop I.

Goals:

- Sharing time
- Sharing CCRC themes - cooperation, communication, affirmation and creative conflict resolution
- Getting clear on goals
- Sharing expectations

Plan:

- Agenda
- Introduction of CCRC themes
- Gathering - Name Toss\*
- Machine Building
- Three Things Have Changed (a communication exercise done in pairs)
- Gift Giving\*\*
- Direction Following
- Interviewing
- Affirmation Notebook Pages
- Expectation Sharing
- Evaluation
- Closing: Rainstorm

Comments:

Evaluation is done by setting up three columns headed: Liked; Didn't Like; Would Like to See More Of.

The group included nothing under "Didn't Like" in this workshop. The group especially liked: doing things; fun; taking notes; combination of structure and allowing it to flow; nice balance; listening and doing, and alternating between the two; plan is good; well organized; agenda. They indicated they would like to see more of: development of ideas for First Day School activities; suggestions for other literature; be sure to relate to a First Day School with children of mixed ages.

The following responses were made during Expectation Sharing: solving conflicts; communication with family and friends; communication skills; creative ways of solving conflicts; order; affirmation; relationships; better parent and husband; any activities that span two and one half to eight years; focusing on positive things; know each other better.

**\*Name Toss**

This is an affirmation game that helps everyone in a group to get acquainted, and to build community. The group stands in a close circle. The facilitator explains that he will throw a wadded-up sweater, down jacket, or other bulky soft object to a person who is to catch it. As the person throws the sweater, he calls the name of the person to whom he throws it, and the entire group repeats the name together. Now that person throws the sweater to another, saying their name, until everyone has had at least one turn. It is important to keep a fast pace in this game. A nice way to end it is to pass the sweater around the circle and have everyone repeat all the names.

Another name game:

With the group sitting in a circle, everyone says their own name plus a positive adjective. Example: Johnny — Quick.

### \*\*Gift Giving

This is an affirmation activity in which the members of the group, sitting in a circle, talk informally in pairs about each other's interests, hobbies, etc. Secretly, they think of an imaginary gift they would like to give their partner to match their interests. Each of the members then tells the group what gift she is giving her partner, and, very briefly, why.

Workshop II.

Goals:

Cooperation and Communication

Plan:

Agenda

Gathering — Name and something you'd like to get from this workshop

Rhythm Name Game\*

One Word Storytelling

Cooperative Drawing (done in small groups)

Grab Bag Dramatics

Direction-Following

Listening Time

Evaluation

Closing: Telegraph

Comments:

The theme of the Cooperative Drawing was: our idea of an ideal community. Alternative themes for this exercise: our idea of an ideal Sunday School; of an ideal family. For very young children, a cooperative drawing can be done by tracing the children's hands.

In the evaluation, the group termed the workshop great. They liked the warm feelings; challenges; flexibility; room for interaction; good organization; applications to First Day School; thoughtfulness; caring; sharing; no competition. Things they would like to see more of included the consideration of all ages, especially the younger children in the First Day School; use of magic markers rather than crayons; more physical activity.

### \*Name Rhythm Game

Each person says his or her name and claps its rhythm. The whole group repeats it, after each person.

Workshop III.

Goals:

Affirmation

Plan:

Agenda

Gathering: Name and something new and good that happened to you

Affirmation Interviewing

Herman/Hermina

Affirmation Notebook Pages

Brainstorming of Affirmation Notebook Pages

Affirmation Song: **I Like You** (see below)

Evaluation

Closing: Song: **Dear Friend** (see below)

Comments:

The Affirmation Notebook Pages activity was an Affirmation T-Shirt stencilled on paper for individuals to fill in.

The group liked picking up on last session; notebook pages; the **I Like You** song; continued good feeling in the group; affirming the facilitators; relaxed freedom — we're coming out

more; Herman/Hermina. They asked for ideas for keeping the attention span; for the child who doesn't want to participate; how to handle putdowns.

### I Like You Song

The song is sung by partners. On the last line of each of the first two stanzas, the partners shake hands. At the last line of the third stanza, each partner hugs him or herself.

I like you, there's no doubt about it (repeat three times)

You are my good friend.

You like me, there's no doubt about it (repeat three times)

You are my good friend.

I like me, there's no doubt about it (repeat three times)

I am my good friend.

### Dear Friend Song

Dear friend, dear friend,

Let me tell you how I'm feeling,

You have given me such treasures,

I love you so.

(sing several times and then in rounds, if desired.)

Workshop IV.

Goals:

Introduce conflict resolution.

Introduce Light and Liveliess.

Discussion by facilitator: holding attention span; kids who don't want to participate; putdowns.

## Plan:

## Agenda

Gathering: Favorite time of day  
 Introduction to Conflict Resolution  
 Quick Decision-Making  
 Discussion: re requested topics  
 Touch Blue  
 Elephant and Palm Tree  
 Cooper Says  
 Skits - Conflict Resolution  
 Human Pretzel  
 Goal Wish Problem Solving  
 Evaluation  
 Closing: - **Alelu, Praise Be the Lord** (see below)

## Comments:

The group especially liked Goal Wish Problem Solving; skits; picking up on their requests for handling certain situations. Further help was requested by the group in curriculum planning; handling the age-level differences spanning from 3 to 9.

In the discussion of putdowns, it was advised that if the putdowns were not too serious it might be effective just to talk about putdowns in general. A suggested activity was to have the children brainstorm on putdowns that occur; then brainstorm on putups (when people affirm each other with nice words and actions). The conclusion is, it's much nicer to say positive things.

The facilitator addressed the problem of children not wanting to participate in the group. Participation in CCRC sessions is primarily voluntary. Therefore, one way of handling children who don't want to participate is simply to ask them what it is they would like to do during the session, and find a comfortable space for them to do whatever they wish. In some cases, it may be important to have another child spend some time with the one outside the circle, or an adult, if possible. Sometimes children who want to be outside the circle are in need of an extra share of attention. Frequently, what finally happens is that the child sees what is going on in the circle, gets interested, and chooses to join in the activities.

Problems do come up where there is a widely varying age span. The children can be divided into a younger and an older group. Activities can then be chosen appropriate to each age group. This helps to involve the children at their level of interest since the activities are specifically related to their development and needs.

The facilitator then discussed holding the child's attention. The main thing is to do activities that relate so much to the group's level that they are exciting for the children, and involve them. In an evaluation, children can be encouraged to say what type of activities they are interested in, and the teachers can plan accordingly.

The facilitator needs to be aware of certain signs that the children's attention is flagging. Look for these symptoms: feet shuffling back and forth; thumb twiddling; restlessness in chairs; bodies slumped over. That means it's time to introduce a Light and Lively activity to energize the group and change the pace. It is important to

acknowledge that people are losing attention before it becomes acute. To acknowledge this is to address it, and then the attention can be recaptured.

**Alelu Song**

Alelu, alelu, alelu, alelu, Praise be the Lord.  
 (repeat twice)  
 Praise be the Lord, Alleluia  
 (repeat twice)  
 Praise be the Lord!

In singing this song, the group stands in a circle, and is divided into an "Alelu" group, and a "Praise be the Lord" group. When each group sings, they advance into the center of the circle, then step back to the edge when done. This creates a whimsical effect. The song is really fun to do, and unifying to the group. One way of concluding the song is to have everybody join the inner circle on the last "Praise be the Lord."

## Workshop V.

**Goal**

To plan a curriculum for the First Day school.

**Plan**

## Agenda

Gathering: Name and your favorite piece of clothing  
 Song: **Magic Penny** (see below)  
 Brainstorming: Goals for First Day School  
 Brainstorming: Topics of curriculum units  
 Human Protractor  
 Resources: Circulation of pad for people to note their resources, skills, materials, etc.  
 Sample First Day School Sessions: Group broke into pairs, each pair to develop a session  
 Reminder: Bring in resource materials, noted on pad, for next session  
 Closing: Silence observed  
 Song: **Dear Friend**

**Comments**

In this session, the group was successful in reaching its major goals of exploring the purpose of their First Day School and to work toward their own curriculum development. They also called upon the many activities in which they had participated to help plan sample sessions for their First Day School. Here are the results of this workshop:

**Brainstorming of Goals for First Day School;**

A list was read of goals that the First Day School Committee had developed previously. The group then brainstormed goals for the school, as follows:

Bible study  
 Adults join children's worship  
 Doing for others  
 Improving the world  
 Sharing  
 Encouraging home study of Quaker values  
 Fun  
 Affirmation of members of the group

**Brainstorming on topics of curriculum units for First Day School:**

- This resulted in the following topics:
- Nature
- Bible study
- Quaker history
- Quaker songs
- Music

The group then reached agreement that the basic purpose of their First Day School was to share Quaker values with their children. They set up a basic format for the school's First Day sessions, as follows:

Children and parents meet outside the church at 10:15 for singing, led by a member skilled in music

Children are driven to a private home for the following program:

- a. Gathering for all children
  - b. Light and Lively Activity
  - c. Quaker values, e.g., history, themes
  - Divide children into older and younger groups who pursue the same theme but on an appropriate level
  - d. All children come together for a cooperative/group building activity
  - e. Closing and/or one minute of silence
- Children are then driven back to the adult meeting place

Circulation of resources pad developed the following inventory of resources among members of the group:

- Quaker books and other religious books
- Good Bible stories
- Craft books
- Puppets
- Puppet stage
- Fiddle tunes

- Yoga books
- Good at reading stories to children
- Craft materials
- Light boxes
- Bottle caps
- Blocks
- Erector set
- Tinker toys
- Books
- Gardening skills
- Game resources
- Cooking
- Movement and songs
- Science projects for older kids

**Sample First Day School Sessions:**

The group broke into pairs, each pair to plan a sample school session, with the following results:

**FIRST PAIR**

Session for a winter day

- Gathering: \*Pantomime something you like to do in the snow.
- Light and Lively: "I love ya, honey, but I just can't smile." (Try to make your partner smile)
- Quaker values: Indian story about feather placed over Quaker Meeting House by Indians to denote Quakers are peaceful, mean no harm to Indians.
- Children, both younger and older, make drawings based on story.
- Cooperation activity: Share drawings.
- Closing: Observe silence together.

**SECOND PAIR**

Sessions for September

Session 1.

- Gathering: Give your name and say something about it. Do you like it? Why? What does it mean? etc.
- Light and Lively: Vegetable Cart.
- Quaker Values: Quaker stories.
- Younger children make drawings, work in clay, based on stories.
- Older children develop their own ideas from lesson materials.
- Cooperation Activity: Make composite picture with everyone's name on it.

Session 2

- Gathering: Tell about a fun thing you did over the summer.
- Light and Lively: Human Protractor
- Quaker Values: Same as first session above
- Cooperative Activity: Each child makes a paper chain to give to another child
- Older kids develop a puppet show to share with younger ones

**THIRD PAIR**

Theme of session: Gift giving

Song: **Magic Penny\***

- Gathering: Each tell about a special gift. Cake is placed in center as each one talks in turn. Cake is then shared.
- Light and Lively: Herman/Hermia
- Quaker Values: Skit or story on giving. Make food or other item to give to the Meeting, or for a person who might need something. Talk about giving a gift or doing a chore as a gift for your family. Talk about giving of yourself.
- Closing: Observe silence together

#### FOURTH PAIR

Theme of session: Lucretia Mott, Quaker woman (1793-1880) who was an abolitionist and women's rights advocate

Song: **Lucretia Mott\***

Gathering: Name and favorite food

Light and Lively: Touch Blue (end by touching your own hands for a calming-down effect)

Quaker Values: Older group:

1. read story about Lucretia Mott; discuss work on skit based on story  
present skit

Younger group: 1. Do flannel board story about Lucretia Mott

2. Leave out parts of the story; see if children can fill in

Have children do the story for the older group

Closing: Sing Lucretia Mott song (see below)  
Observe silence

(Children may take home stories to read between sessions)

#### FIFTH PAIR

Gathering: Tell something important or interesting that happened over the summer

Light and Lively: Sing song: **I Like You**

Quaker Values: To be developed

Cooperative Activity: Craft projects;

- Door stop made from bottle filled with pebbles; then dressed as doll, to give as gift

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Make doll bed from mushroom box, or other

Make instant pudding

Make paper flowers

Closing: Observe silence

#### SIXTH PAIR

Theme of session: The Human Body

Gathering: Name; and tell one part of your body, and show and tell what it does

Light and Lively: Belly chuckling. Everyone lies down with their head on the next person's belly and listens to the sounds

Quaker Values: Older group: Relaxation; control of the body. (Based on book, **Yoga for Children**)

Younger group: Trace silhouettes of each other, lying on floor

Cooperative Activity: Put all bodies together in a human pyramid. Take Polaroid photo.

Closing: Observe silence

**Note:** A second session might be concerned with what it would be like to have an incomplete or handicapped body. There are empathy exercises that might be used in this session.

The group concluded that they might want to include the making of Affirmation Notebook pages in each session. The exercise, Magic Box, could be used if needed to fill in.

\***Magic Penny Song:** This song is copyrighted and we cannot give the words; it is available in sheet music.

\***Lucretia Mott song:** This is a Quaker song with many verses. One source for it is **Songs of the Spirit**, published by Friends General Conference, 1520 Race St., Philadelphia, PA 19102.

#### Workshop VI.4

##### Goals

Finish going over the plans; review inventory of resources; closing affirmations; evaluation of entire session.

##### Plan

Agenda

Gathering: One favorite activity that you would like to use in First Day School

Fishbowl: A discussion of planning

Resources: A discussion

Affirmation Notebook Cover

Evaluation

Closing

##### Comments

People talked specifically about what supplies they would bring in the next time they did a First Day School session. The people who were going to be the First Day teachers for the next session were the ones who did the Fishbowl exercise. They went into the middle of the circle, did their planning, all under observation by the rest of the group. The group then talked about planning in relation to what they had just seen.

It should be mentioned that teachers in this school worked in rotating teams of at least two people each.

The Affirmation Notebook Cover was an excellent way to conclude the workshop series.