FDS Lesson Plan, Elementary, George Fox

Date of lesson:	Quaker Time Machine – George Fox
Teachers	
Spiritual reflection:	"And to query and search out all such, as live not as becomes the truth of the gospel, and yet do profess it, so that they all may walk in it, as well as talk of it; for none hath the heavenly comfort of it, but who do walk in it. For all the talkers of Christ and His gospel, that do not walk in him, dishonor Him." — George Fox, The Journal of George Fox
Teacher notes:	This is the first in a series on historical Friends beginning with George Fox and early British Friends, progressing to 17th through 20th century American Friends and ending with notable Friends in our monthly meeting. For some lessons, volunteers from the Meeting will play a Friendly Visitor and will emerge from a 'time machine' to visit with the class. Other lessons will have readings about the Friend. Near the end of the series, young Friends will interview a living Friend or those in our Meeting who knew a notable Friend who is no longer with us. The last class will be a look into the future. The class is encouraged to generate interview questions, although some are suggested for each lesson. If so led, the class can choose to introduce the historical Friend upstairs at the rise of Meeting for Worship. Do not expect the class to believe that the time machine or the visitor are 'real'. Rather, that this is a fun way to learn about Quakers who have changed the world for the better.
Opening: Seated in a circle with an opening where the time machine is placed.	Welcome. Go around the circle, say your name and one good thing that happened this week.
Time Machine and question prep	*[NOTE: The Friendly Visitor should be hidden behind the box. If children open the box it should be empty until right before the Friend walks through]* **Teacher:** What do you think this big box is doing here? *[take a couple of responses]* **Teacher:** Here is a time machine. Over the next few months, Quakers from the past will come through the time machine. We'll have a chance to talk with them and ask them about their lives. Today, we'll visit with George Fox, the first Quaker. Think about what you would you like to ask him. *[If so led, give a few of the suggestions below to prompt brainstorming]* *Where did you live?* *When did you live?* *What was your homeland was like when you were alive?* *What was your childhood like?* *When did you become a Quaker and how did it happen?*

	What did you realize about Truth? *Did other people believe you when you told them what you realized?* *What were some of the hard things that happened to you and the other Quakers?* *What are you most proud of about your life?* *What would you like to ask us as kids living today?*
Visit with George Fox Reference: George Fox, the Man Who Wouldn't	*[George steps through time machine, greets the children and talks with the class.]* Would you like to say "farewell" to George Fox or to introduce him to the Meeting at the rise of worship?
Optional Activity:	Fold George Fox Quote 'snap dragon'. Pair up and play the snap dragon game. George Fox joins in if he is still with the class.
Closing/Preparation for MfW	Gather in a circle: One thing I learned today. If the class decides to introduce George Fox, choose who will do it.
Home note:	The class is now equipped with a Quaker time machine through which a Friendly visitor will come to talk with the class. Who is this visitor? Hint: the first Quaker! P.S. Watch for an email from _____ seeking adult Friends to join the fun in the coming weeks.

George Fox, biographical sketch

Quakers in the World

George Fox was born and grew up in Fenny Drayton in Leicestershire in the turbulent times leading up to the Civil War. At 12, he was apprenticed to a local tradesman, but he left home in 1643 to seek 'the truth', through listening to preachers and others, and developing his own ideas. He knew the Bible intimately, and it was central to his life, but he looked for other sources of inspiration too.

He came to believe that everyone, men and women alike, could encounter God themselves, through Jesus, so that priests were not needed. This experience need not be in a church: these 'steeple houses', and the tithes that supported them, were therefore unnecessary. Those who believed this became known as 'Friends of Truth'.

He began talking to everyone he met about his ideas. He was soon in trouble with the authorities, and was imprisoned for the first time in Nottingham in 1649. According to Fox, the term 'Quaker' originated from a sarcastic remark by the judge in Fox's second trial, in Derby, in 1650. in 1651, he was offered a commission in the army, but refused saying that 'he lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion for all wars'.

In 1652, he climbed Pendle Hill in Lancashire, where he had a vision of a "great people to be gathered" waiting for him. The beginning of the Society of Friends (Quakers) is usually dated from the day, soon afterwards, when Fox preached to large crowds on Firbank Fell, near Sedbergh, in Cumbria. Some days later, he was at Swarthmoor Hall, near Ulverston, home of Judge Fell, Margaret Fell and their family. His ideas were warmly received, and Swarthmoor became a vital hub for the Society of Friends, in Margaret's capable hands.

Soon he and other Friends, the 'Valiant Sixty' or 'Publishers of Truth', were travelling all over the country, reporting back to Margaret Fell. Fox went to Cornwall, Wales and Scotland. There was a constant threat of persecution, but Judge Fell, though never a Friend himself, did a lot to protect them until he died in 1658. It was easy to find a Quaker guilty if you wanted to, as they wouldn't swear oaths (explaining they always told the truth) they refused to pay tithes, and didn't show proper respect to their 'betters' by bowing and doffing their hats (people are all equal).

In 1660 Quakers and other dissidents were suspected of plotting against the new king. Fox responded with the first formulation of the Peace Testimony, stressing the commitment to nonviolence. Nevertheless, in 1664, Fox was imprisoned for over two years. He wrote a journal, covering his life so far, and kept it up until he died. He also made plans to organise the growing Society of Friends, devising a framework of local, monthly and yearly meetings that persists, more or less, to the present day.

In May 1669, Fox visited meetings in Ireland. On October 27th, he and Margaret Fell were married, after a round of "clearness" meetings to check whether they should. More than ninety Friends witnessed the marriage certificate. Their close partnership continued, but they could rarely spend much time together during their 20 years of marriage, due to Fox's continued travels, much persecution, and periods of imprisonment for them both.

By now, there were many Friends in the Caribbean and in the colonies along the Atlantic coast of North America. In August 1671, after attending the first Yearly Meeting, in London, Fox and 12 companions set sail for Barbados, arriving in October. The Barbadian economy was slave-based, and some Friends were slave-owners. Fox protested at the poor treatment of slaves, and said they should be released after thirty years service.

In January 1672, they sailed to North America, via Jamaica. After seven weeks, they landed at Patuxent, in Chesapeake Bay, south of what is now Baltimore. Here there was a large Meeting – the forerunner of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. George and some others then went to a large Meeting on Long Island, before sailing to Rhode Island, where the Governor was a Friend. In June some of the party went north to Boston, while Fox and others went south, first to New Jersey, and then back to Chesapeake Bay before going on to Virginia and Carolina. In January 1673 they were back in Patuxent, where Fox spent the next four months meeting the local "Indian" tribes, an experience he found very productive. They returned home, to Bristol, in May.

After the 1675 Yearly Meeting, unwell, and tired,he made a slow coach journey north to Swarthmoor Hall. He spent the next two years there, the longest time he was ever at home. He rested some of the time, but was also very busy with his journal and other writing. He never went north again, but Margaret came south when she could.

In 1677, Fox went with Robert Barclay, William Penn and others to Holland and Germany, where they saw the effects of the religious wars in other parts of Europe. In the 1680s he spent much time lobbying Parliament against persecution, and went again to Holland in 1684. He lived to see the fruit of his labours, when the 1687 Declaration of Indulgence, confirmed by the 1689 Act of Toleration, finally enabled dissenters to worship freely.

Several meetinghouses were built before he died, in London, in January 1691. He was buried at Bunhill Fields, a non-conformist burial ground on the edge of the City of London.

Further Reading and Credits

Cecil W Sharman, George Fox and the Quakers, London, UK, Quaker Home Service and Richmond USA, Friends United Press, 1991.