

# Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 2 April 2007

Children



## Introduction

There are four directions to our spiritual journey. **Inwards** to ourselves; **outwards** to others; **upwards** towards God, the deeper mystery; **downwards** to the world we live in. "Journeys in the Spirit" offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children and young people.

This children's work edition for 5 –12 year olds comes out monthly. It is offered with the intention of providing an opportunity for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of partnership on our shared journey in the spirit. Included are sections on: **getting ready**, for those co-ordinating the programme; **gather**, meeting, centering, focusing: **engage**, beginning to think about the theme; **respond**, activities linked to the theme; **reflect**, ending appropriately; and **review**, evaluating what has happened. Some of the activities are included on additional sheets. Timings or ages are not stated, as this will depend on the group and how the guidance and activities are used.



The third of four issues on exploring our spiritual journeys together in a Quaker context. This issue offers ways to look upwards - to God, the mystery.

## Exploring our spirituality together - the upwards

### Getting ready

#### Preparing Hearts & Minds

This month focuses on our journey upwards, "What is the deeper mystery?" "What do I mean by the word God?" "What is life about?" "What am I here for?". Some answers to these questions are:

- "The need of the journey upwards is the need to discover something of our deepest, truest self (soul)." *John Lee.*
- In *The Friend* recently a writer said one meaning for worship is to "love with wonder" (1919 Swarthmore lecture *L. Violet Hodgkin.*) This helped him see "something other in everyone present, a deeper, inner and mysterious reality... that made us one of each other. That, truly, was something to wonder at."
- "The awareness that there is something more to life than meets the eye, something more than the material, something more than the obvious, something to wonder at, something to respond to" *Terence Copley, Exeter University.*

Some questions for getting ready include: Is the room prepared? Do my colleagues and I feel supported and comfortable with our plans and ourselves? Have we been able to find a moment of quiet to hold the coming session in the light? Are there particular needs and situations I may need to be aware of in this session? Am I confident of the health and safety arrangements? Have I reflected on the theme?

#### Equipment Needed:

Check for equipment listed on additional sheets and in Engage section, Respond zones and Reflect section as well. Selected books and copies of activity sheets as needed for the number of children.

### Underpinning references

Quaker Faith & Practice  
1.01 first paragraph

Quaker Faith & Practice  
1.02 1.

"When I came into the silent assemblies of God's People, I felt a secret power among them, which touched my heart." *Robert Barclay.*

Quaker Faith & Practice  
1.02 7 first line

Quaker Faith & Practice  
1.02 17

# Gather

- Remember to ask for 1 or 2 children to be elders of children's meeting – explain the task. This can help children learn about and accept responsibility in meeting for worship. (See *Sheet 0.A of the sample 'Journeys in the spirit; to obtain this see sidebar*).
- Prepare the children's room beforehand with all you need. Arrange the chairs and cushions in a welcoming circle. It is better to add chairs if more children arrive than to have too many. Have a focal point of a candle or some flowers, shells, a smooth stone as a talking token, a teddy. Once everyone is settled have a simple 'go-round'; for example, "My name is Susan and I'm feeling ..... today". Ask a further question if someone is bursting with news. Thank for contributions - make it clear that it is OK to pass.
- You could start with a co-operative game followed by the period of stillness, to draw the group together and allow for latecomers to join in. *Sheet 2.A. Resources: Flowers, a talking token, shells, a candle, a stone.*

# Engage

We offer three possible ways into the theme for different or multi – ages.

## 1. Gods Name way upwards.

Exploring the different names of God.

- Play a gentle piece of music (*see sidebar for suggestions*). Place a shallow tray of water in the middle of the circle – float some real flowers. Ask everybody to name someone they admire or love - just as we may see our own faults in people we dislike, we may fail to see in ourselves the qualities we see in people we admire.
- Introduce the story "In God's Name" by saying that there are many names for God. Read the story. Pause at the end and then ask these questions allowing everyone who wishes to speak to do so: I wonder which name you liked best? I wonder if you know another name for God? You could also choose a page of the book and ask; I wonder what the person was thinking? (For example the soldier when he called God 'Maker of Peace'). *Resources: The book 'In God's name', a tray, water, food colour, flowers, music, CD or tape player.*

## 2. Fierce Feathers way upwards.

The 'Fierce Feathers' story has lots of meanings. Here we focus on the transforming nature of the Meeting for Worship, in which God, the mystery, Spirit can be found for, within and around us all. (*See sidebar for story versions different from Sheet 2.B*).

- Ask the children to settle, close their eyes and imagine sitting with their family a long time ago in a simple wooden Meeting House. Ask them to imagine hard wooden benches, sounds of rustling trees, birds singing, warm sun, the smell of fresh air. Tell the story. *Resources: Sheet 2.B*

## 3. God's Quiet way upwards.

Exploring quiet as a way to know something about the Quaker idea of the presence and reality of God.

- Play a little quiet or reflective music (*see sidebar for suggestions*). Slowly read through the guided thinking on *Sheet 2.B*. You could have some pictures of the quiet things to lay out. *Resources: Sheet 2.B. and pictures of quiet things. Music.CD, cassette or MP3 player with speakers.*

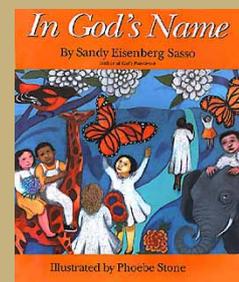
## References & other resources

To obtain Journeys sample Sheet 0.A go to [www.quaker.org.uk/cyp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/cyp) and follow the link in the sidebar to Resources

"True silence ...is to the spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment."

William Penn, 1699.

Quaker Faith & Practice 2.35



Available from the Quaker Bookshop 020 7663 1030 ISBN 1 879045 265

## Suggestions for music:

'Panis Angelicus', a piece by Michael Rutter or Bach, part of 'Lark Ascending' by Vaughan Williams, relaxation or meditation music - *some music can be downloaded from [www.bignoisemusic.com](http://www.bignoisemusic.com)*



'Fierce Feathers' - in 'Lighting Candles in the Dark, Stories of Love in Action' Quaker Bookshop. Story available for free at:

[www.tudo.co.uk/quakers\\_craw/s\\_hell/contents/quakers/fierce\\_feathers.html](http://www.tudo.co.uk/quakers_craw/s_hell/contents/quakers/fierce_feathers.html)

## References & other resources



A lovely book, 'Gods Quiet Things'. Available from the Quaker Bookshop  
ISBN 0 7459 4889 8



A simple headdress

'In worship, the spirit is present in the quietness and it renews and recreates love and friendship for all.' Fred Roberts

Remember that the pamphlet, 'Spiritual Development', by John Lee et al, is available from the Quaker Life Resources Room or the Quaker Bookshop in Friends House. This provides an excellent basis for thinking about the themes of this series of 'Journeys in the Spirit' – inward, outward, upward and downward.

# Respond

Do one of the first three zones - zone 4 can also be done

## 1. God's Name zone

In the book people speak their name for God but God doesn't listen until, in gathering around a pool and saying their name for God, the people discover that their name is part of the whole of God.

- Give each child at least one small square piece of paper for making simple representations of flowers; show how to fold the paper – see *Sheet 2.B for instructions*. The base of each flower should now be coloured all over with wax crayon. This makes it waterproof. On the other side a name for God is to be drawn or written. Then the 4 petals are folded over the drawing or word. Gather together around a tray of water on the floor or a low table and place the flowers, one at a time, waxed side down, on the water; people can choose to say what has been drawn or written. Sit and watch the flowers unfold. A flower could also be made for the children's 'who am I' box; see side bar beside 'Gather' about the sample issue of 'Journeys' and *Sheet 0.E* about 'who am I? boxes. *Resources: Plain paper, scissors, wax crayons, pencils or fine felt tips pens, a tray and water.*

## 2. Fierce Feathers zone.

- Have a conversation about the story. You could ask: I wonder what was your favourite part? I wonder what it would feel like if you had been there? I wonder what the leader meant by the Great Spirit? Allow time for children to think and answer if they want to. Show children a simple headdress made with corrugated cardboard and white card. They can also make one. They could creep very quietly, perhaps on all fours into meeting, before sitting very quietly. A child could place a white feather on the table; perhaps saying, 'This is for our meeting to show that it is a place of peace and safety.' The feather could be big and made from card and curled white paper strips – each child writes their first name on a strip, adults later do the same and add their strips. *Resources. Corrugated card, white card, PVA glue, scissors, pencils, and books on Native American art.*

## 3. God's Quiet zone.

- **Butterflies.** Decorate a butterfly (*Sheet 2.B for template*) with crayons, pencils or felt tips or put blobs of thick paint on one side of the butterfly and fold it over – always a surprise pattern. Draw, write or decorate the other side with favourite quiet things or a place where children think of God. Children may like to write prayers on this side. Return to a circle, place a large piece of green or blue material in the centre, butterflies are placed on the material, if wished, without comment. Relisten to a piece of music? *Resources. Sheet 2.B. Butterfly shape on card or children could draw their own, paints, brushes, oil pastels, crayons, pencils, sequins, glue sticks.*

## 4. God's Scavenger zone.

- **God's scavenger hunt.** This is a more active, outside activity. It is an opportunity to think about, recognise, collect or illustrate, where possible and safe, objects from the natural and human world that each child could recognise as coming from or being an aspect of God. *Resources. See Sheet 2.C for details.*
- **If God was...** A reflective exercise for thinking about God, the spirit as colour, sound, animal, feeling, texture, object. *Resources. See Sheet 2.D. Pens, pencils and crayons and enough copies of the sheet.*

## Reflect

Introduce this time by saying something like: 'we have been finding out together about what we think and feel about God. We have been thinking about the different names we each have for this.' Some of the activities in this issue lead naturally into a gathering: putting butterflies on a cloth, placing flowers in a 'pool' of water and watching them open, taking a white feather into meeting. This could be done whilst relistening to a piece of music with children and adults placing their creations in the centre on the piece of material without comment as in ministry. This could also be done in the adult meeting for worship. This then leads into brief stillness, ending with shaking hands and a stretch up high.

## Ongoing activity - abolition journeys Quilts, slavery and being brave

This is the second of the series of activities linked to the abolition of the slave trade.

To begin. Hello and welcome. Go round the circle and ask each person to say 'Hello, my name is ....'. A long time ago, some people were not allowed to have the names given to them by their parents – they had to have names given to them by someone else, the people who owned them. They would first have had a name like Mary or Albert and then the name of their owner or his house and big farm, like Ransome or Codrington. Now begin a conversation using these questions: What is slavery? What do you own? What belongs to you? – e.g. books, toys, a pet? Does anyone own you? Do you own anyone? Encourage conversation and then lead into the text on *Sheet 2 .E* then go on to do the activities on *Sheet 2.F*.

## Review

The review can happen at the time or later – it maybe by yourself or with others. Some useful questions for the use of volunteers to look back over and learn from the session include:

Have children been able to participate in their own way? What went well and why? Has each child been able to reflect, even a little, on something about her or his thoughts and feelings about God, the Divine, the big questions? What is there for you to learn from this session? What might you do differently another time?

## Links to other organisations and resources

[www.quaker.org.uk/cyp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/cyp) and click on Database of Ideas.

[www.quaker.org.uk/1807](http://www.quaker.org.uk/1807) - lots about the abolition of the slave trade and the role of Quakers working with others.

[www.quaker.org.uk/cyp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/cyp) - the Quaker Life Resources Room can be found via this link - phone and email for resources on the contact details below.

This issue was written by Jane Nicholls and edited by Chris Nickolay with contributions from Ann Lewis, Madeleine Harding. With thanks to Mary Stone.

## References & other resources

Ongoing activity - stories and resources:

'Follow the Drinking Gourd' - Janette Winter - the Drinking Gourd (American name for the constellation we call The Plough – points to the North Star.) Song and music at the end of the book. ISBN 0-679-81997-5 £5.50 from the Letterbox Library Tel 020 7503 4801

[www.letterboxlibrary.com](http://www.letterboxlibrary.com).

'Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt' –

Deborah Hopkinson.  
ISBN 0-679-87472-0,  
available from Letterbox  
Library £5.50.

'The Secret of Freedom' - Marcia Vaughan (7+) good on the quilt messages.

ISBN 1-584300-251-8  
available online through  
Quaker Bookshop or Amazon.  
'Going West' – M.Waddell & P.Dupasquier; available on Amazon.

For other information on the Ongoing Activity please see the *Journeys in the Spirit Sample Issue*; for copies of *Abolition Journeys* (multi - age working on the abolition) contact: Carmel Keogh on 020 7663 1017  
[carmelk@quaker.org.uk](mailto:carmelk@quaker.org.uk)).

**Linking with the wider meeting** - think about using the activities in an all age meeting for worship, a shared activity or meeting for learning.

**The next children's work issue of 'Journeys in the spirit' will focus on 'Exploring our spiritual journeys, the downward–our relationships with the world' and will be available from May 1<sup>st</sup> 2007**

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