

# Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 33

November 2009



Children

## Inner stories – ourselves and each other

Journeys in the Spirit offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children and young people. This children's work edition of "Journeys in the Spirit" comes out monthly. It offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children aged 4 –12 years in a Quaker setting. It is offered with the intention of providing an opportunity for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of worship, in 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. To offer a balanced session you should aim to do something from each section. 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.

Underpinning each issue is the idea that there are four directions to our spiritual journey. **Inwards** to ourselves; **outwards** to others; **upwards** (or even further inwards?) towards the deeper mystery; downwards to the world we live in.



The seventh in the 'Our Quaker stories' series.

May 2009 –  
August 2010

## Getting ready

How do we explore the Quaker idea that there is 'that of God within'?

That of God ... inside me?

...inside you?

...inside them?



Is it inside our own self, in our body?

Can we live it physically, in reality, in our lives?

What does 'inner light' really mean?

Is it really that the answers can literally be found inside our own self?

*Now go to Sheet 33.A for more Getting Ready thoughts.....*

### Information about this issue

This issue is written differently. Some of the layout and graphics are intended to give space to think and feel about the different words and ideas – almost to give an idea of what activities might feel or look like – in a way they are an expression of worship themselves.

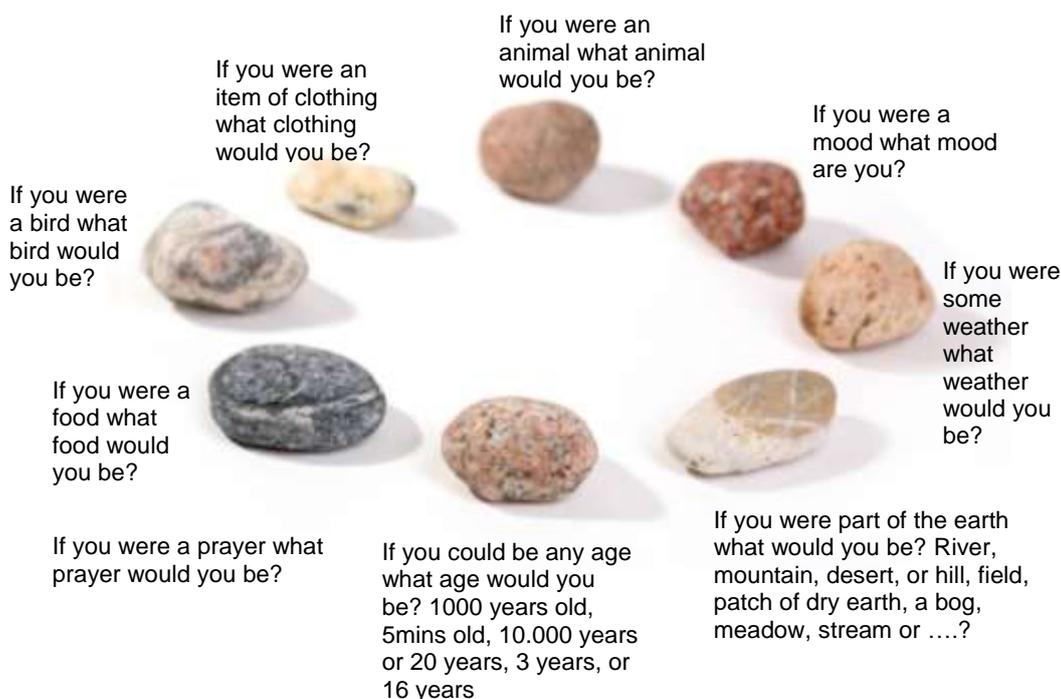
# Gather

## Who Are We?

There are two ways to do this gathering activity. But, first everybody sits in a circle, with paper & pencils, and settles into quiet for a moment. If children are too young to write someone else can write or draw for them.

You can either, say each of the open questions in the illustration below clearly...pause...give time for each person to write (not so long that they think too much) then move on...or you can set out a circle or spiral of stones as laid out below ...on the base of each stone is a sticker or post it (or written with a gold or silver pen) one of the 'if you were...' questions below. Each person in the group takes it in turn to pick up a stone, read out the question to everybody and replace the stone. Then people can speak or write their thought – writing is more private and less threatening. Suggest they write whatever comes into their mind first; there are no wrong answers. This exercise is good to give children courage in their own immediate response to life and to enjoy playing with ideas, difference and inner change.

See sidebar for more ideas.



## References, other resources and ideas

### Another option:

Just choose 3 of the questions, maybe these below, or something else that you know will intrigue your group.

If you were the earth what bit would you be?

If you were a mood what mood are you?

(Look at *Journeys in the Spirit Issue 32 and Sheet 32.C* for some faces and expressions you could use)

If you were a prayer what prayer would you be?

(Look at *Journeys in the Spirit Issue 16 on Prayer* for lots of ideas on prayer that may help you)

“Oh the fabulous wings unused folded in the heart”.

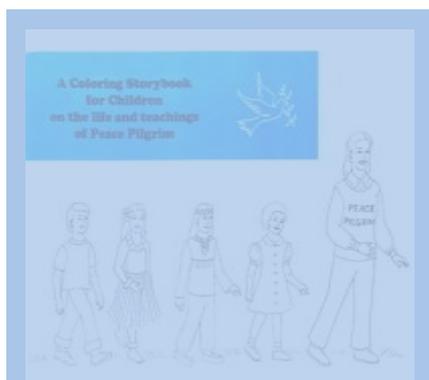
‘A Sleep of Prisoners’  
**Christopher Fry**



‘Our inner self is full of wonder.... Wonder, who, when, why, where, whom ...wonder-full!’

**Maggie Squires**

# Engage



The Gather activity above gives one way into the theme of inner stories – of ourselves and each other. You could now move straight to Respond ‘Making little people’, *Sheets 33.C and 33.D*. An alternative is to begin to tell the story of the Quaker connected ‘Peace Pilgrim’ – a person who brought the peace inside herself to other people. On *Sheet 33.B* there is outline information for you, a sample of a page of the children’s book and a web link to the whole book. If you don’t have internet access just ask a Friend in Meeting. The people making could then be done after the story.

# Respond



## Our inner stories - making people – making ourselves.

*Have a first look at Sheets 33.C and 33.D so that you begin to get a sense of what this activity is like.*



## Some things you will need for making the people - to be collected before the session.

- Newspaper or pieces of colourful fabrics (recycled works well) for making people shapes.
- Some wool or thin strips of fabric ...can be torn up in advance ...or at the session some children love tearing strips. Small pieces of colourful tissue paper. These are for dressing the figure when complete with 'inner bundle'. See Sheet 33.C for some pictorial instructions on making the people.



**Things to collect for making small bundles of inner self - See Sheet 33.D for pictures of what you can collect and some pictorial guidance on the process of exploring and making the small bundles of inner self.**



- Small stars and sequins for dreams or being part of the vast universe
- Wool and coloured threads:
  - yellow for inner light, sunny nature sunlight feeling happy.
  - blue for the sky, the feeling of being like the sky, wind ,air or water, oceans, deep feelings, streams of ideas.
  - green for grass, for 'Go'... feeling like doing things, love of environment.
  - red for strength, boldness or love for life.
  - black for dark, warmth, feeling safe or beautiful night time dreams.....
  - or pink or purple or white or whatever colours are available, explore lots of ideas for symbolic representations to give lots of possibilities and the opportunity for children to feel able to find their own meaning to what is important to them
- Seeds to represent inner growth or potential or a garden or food or seeds of ideas.
- Earth (dry is easier) to represent that we are all people of earth and the earth feeds us food grows in earth, we walk on the earth and we are part of the planet Earth.
- Grains of rice or beans /lentils/some oats – our good fortune that we can eat.
- Glitter can be energy or excitement or party or celebration or feeling special.
- Small bits can be taken from a feather to be the feeling of wanting to fly to other places, dreams, feeling floaty or whatever.
- Sweet papers for sweet thoughts, loving others, being sweet natured.
- Some lavender for peace or calmness or that we smell nice.
- Rose petals for love, flowers, flowering of ourselves, of ideas.
- Gold thread for precious feelings or what we think is important 'our thread of gold' or gold hearted.
- Dry grass or very tiny leaves can be for the wildness inside us the desire to be outside, feelings of being part of nature.



*You may think of many other ideas - only very small amounts will be used so don't worry a little will go a long way.*

**Have a go beforehand so you know how to do it and to have an example and because it's fun!**

## Reflect



When little people have been made these could be held by their maker whilst everyone sits quiet in a circle or just where they are in the room. Alternatively, when everyone is back in a circle, the people could be laid down in a matching circle in the middle. Anybody who wanted to could say what was in their inner self bundle but nobody has to – it's private. If people haven't been made and the Peace Pilgrim story has been told just lay out pictures of her and a range of pictures of colour, lovely places in nature and people – simply for gazing at. Close by saying thank you to everybody there.

## Review

The review can happen at the time or later – it may be by yourself or else 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 themselves and how they might represent that without, necessarily, using words? What is there for you to learn from this session? What might you do differently another time?

## Topical activity

## You and me and CO2



Scientists have shown that the increasing temperatures and changes in climate that we are already experiencing are because of the actions of people producing more carbon dioxide and other gases that trap heat radiated from the Earth. Because these gases trap warmth like a greenhouse does, they are called greenhouse gases. These mainly come from fuels like coal and oil. We use these in so many of our activities, when we take a bus or car to school, or when we use plastic containers, which are made from other things made from oil. Almost everything we use or eat will have used some fossil fuels. In richer

countries like ours we make much more carbon dioxide than poorer countries, but poorer countries will be hardest hit by climate change. We have a big responsibility for taking action, and encouraging others to do so. As Quakers we have a lot to offer. There are more thoughts and activities on *Sheets 33.E and 33.F* - probably best done with children older than 6 or 7 but there is one activity that can be done with under 6's.

## Links to other organisations and resources

<http://www.operationnoah.org/> - an ecumenical campaign on climate change.

[http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Climate\\_Change\\_and\\_Children.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Climate_Change_and_Children.pdf)

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/copenhagen> - Quaker Resources on climate change.

[www.quaker.org.uk/cyp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/cyp) and click on Ideas Store for children's work resources

This issue was written by Maggi Squire, the Topical Activity was by Wendy Edwards and the editing by Chris Nickolay

The next children's issue of *Journeys in the Spirit, Issue 34*, available from Dec.2<sup>nd</sup> is about *Quakers in Bolivia*; *Issue 35*, available from Jan.4<sup>th</sup> 2010 is about *Elizabeth Fry*; *Issue 36*, available from Feb.1<sup>st</sup> 2010 is about *John Woolman*.

## Ideas and resources

### What could your Meeting do as all ages together?



The people making could be done by the whole meeting together. The Peace Pilgrim story could be wholly or partly told as an introduction. The Gather activity could be done as a whole meeting and could be followed by the drawing and painting of the answer each person had for, 'If I were.....'

### Climate change:

<http://www.archbishopofcantorbury.org/2563> for text of speech by Archbishop of Canterbury at Southwark Cathedral 13/10/09.

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