

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 39

May 2010

Children



The Quaker Tapestry

The botanist's panel

"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.

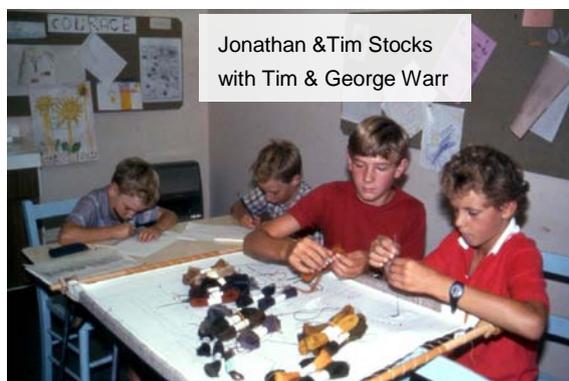


The thirteenth in the series exploring our Quaker stories May 2009 - September 2010

Getting ready

The Quaker Tapestry is a visual chronicle of Quaker life through the centuries, contained within 77 large embroidered panels. Illustrated by 4000 children, women and men, from 15 countries between 1981 and 1996, it is now housed at the Friends Meeting House in Kendal. But how did it begin?

In 1981 an eleven-year old boy, Jonathan and other children in their Meeting, with his Children's Meeting worker, Anne Wynn-Wilson of Taunton, England were working on a series of drawings illustrating the roots of Quakerism. They wanted to brighten up their drab children's meeting room. Jonathan knew his teacher was a skilled embroiderer and asked, "Can't we do this in embroidery?", and thus the project was born. After the first panel was completed, Anne realised they could not possibly do the rest alone, but it might be accomplished with the help of others. Support was gained from the Yearly Meeting and a committee was formed to share the responsibility for choosing the subjects of future panels and to give stylistic approval for the submitted designs. The Quaker Tapestry continues to develop through the creation of DVDs, CDROMs, publications and subsidiary displays that deepen the ways in which the individual panels are experienced.



Quaker Tapestry Resources

Pictorial Guide book



George Fox DVD



Netherlands CDROM: 'These houses hold secrets'



Gather

Here are two games that begin thinking about colour as a way into the Tapestry theme. If you use either of these games follow it with a period of stillness and calming down. The second is better for very small numbers.

- *You will need a soft, coloured ball for throwing.* Everybody stands or sits in a circle. Ask everybody to think of a colour that they like – maybe it is their favourite. Then say that you will start the game by saying, 'I am.... and I like..(say the colour).' and that you will then carefully throw the ball to someone in the circle who will have to say, 'I am.... and I like...'. *This will need to be said as quickly as possible. Go on until everyone has had a turn.*
- Everybody stands or sits in a circle. The first person, turning to the person next to them, says: 'Hello. I am... and I like... (say the colour).who are you?' This person turns to the next person and says, 'Hello. I am...and I like.... say the colour).This is... and she/he likes..... (name your first neighbour's colour). The second person then turns to their neighbour and does the same, naming his or herself, their colour and their neighbour's colour and so on until everyone has had a turn.

Kendal Meeting House – home of the Quaker Tapestry.



Engage

Have copies of the picture of the Tapestry Panel on Sheet 39.A available for everyone. Children can take this home if they want to.

Begin the session by introducing the story of the Quaker Tapestry, what it is and how it began – see Getting Ready. Give out the pictures. Say that in your Children's Meeting today, and maybe in later children's meetings as well, you are going to find out about some Quakers who were botanists. Ask if anyone knows what a botanist is or may be.

Now ask everybody to look some more at the picture. Start a conversation that includes the following observation, from a distance you might think you were looking into somebody's garden, flowers arranged in two rows poke through what appears to be a trellis. But a closer inspection reveals that the 'trellis' is actually made up of the names of the flowers. Many of these plants are fragrant – if you close your eyes you can almost smell their perfumes. Say that, "above and below the flowers are arranged the names of various Quaker plant hunters, collectors and artists."

Ask what children find interesting or like about the Panel picture. After a little time for any thoughts or conversation about this say something like, "Now we are going to find out something more about some of these Botanists". The children can find the names of the respective botanists on the panel image. Move on to one or more of the stories in Respond. Conversation about each story can be followed by activities. The four stories in the Respond section highlight:

- 1 The beneficial qualities of nature
- 2 The need for close observation in order to learn more or to draw more accurately
- 3 The spiritual quality of nature

References & other resources

"Friends considered gardening and botany as innocent relaxations, likely to lead to habits of contemplation. They also gave attention to the remedial properties of plants and herbs." *The Pictorial Guide to the Quaker Tapestry*



Golden Age of Quaker Botanists – available from the Quaker Tapestry

Quaker Faith and Practice, 25.01:

"The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age."

John Woolman, 1772

George Fox said:

"That a school should be founded to teach not only languages, but the nature of herbs, roots, plants and trees."

References & other resources

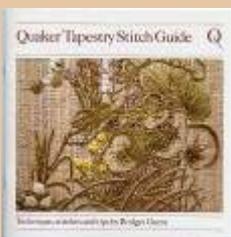
More than just a colouring book – Costumes



More than just a colouring book – Transport



The Quaker Tapestry Stitch Guide



Universal Chorus CD



Introductory Guide to the Quaker Tapestry



Obtain all these resources from www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk

Respond

Use one or more of these stories in your Children's Meeting. Maybe different stories for different ages?

1. John Fothergill. Tell the story on *Sheet 39.B*. *You will need: large sheets or rolls of paper, pencils, packets of herb and flower seeds with pictures on, gardening tools of different sizes, seed compost, pictures of gardens - include some of gardens laid out in patterns. Before beginning this activity check with Meeting via an Overseer or link person that it is alright to make small gardens in the grounds of the Meeting House in the garden or in containers. Is there money available to help with this?*

Ask if any child knows a plant that can help us to feel better? Some people might mention rubbing dock leaves on nettle stings (or this could be introduced). You could mention that a large part of aspirin comes from the bark of a tree. Ask if anyone knows what aspirin is for. Ask about the gardens which the children might have – are there any flowers or trees in their gardens which they especially like? Do they like the countryside – how is this different from their gardens?

Say that everybody is going to help make little gardens in the grounds of the Meeting House or in containers. Lay out the packets of seeds that are going to be available. Lay out the pictures of gardens. Give out paper that has the shape of your possible garden plot or plots drawn on them. As a whole group or in smaller groups everybody begins to design a mini herb or wild flower garden. Together they could come up with a shape in which to plant seeds. Make sure that each child has the opportunity to contribute.

When a design or designs have been decided upon by the children they could be shown and talked about. There could then be a little time to go outside and begin to prepare the ground. There may not be enough time to plant the seeds – say that you will all do this next time. Of course some seeds may need to be planted in pots to begin with. Like the early botanists a record could be kept of how the plants are growing. These could be shared with the wider Meeting. If you are growing herbs, children should be given the opportunity to rub the leaves and smell the scent on their fingers (having checked first to make sure no child is allergic).

2. Sydney Parkinson. Tell the story on *Sheet 39.C*. *You will need: clipboards, paper and pencils, colouring materials.*

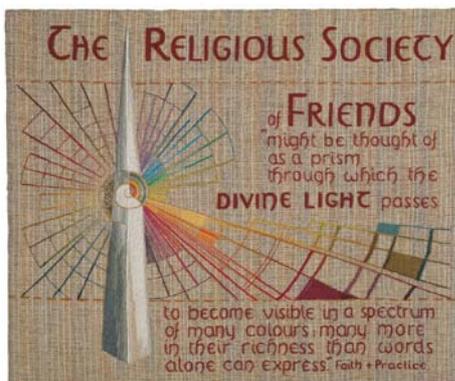
Talk about how good it can be to look really closely at something so as to know what it is like. Show a picture of a flower or a real one - ask children to try and find as many words to describe it as possible. If someone says something is green, ask what sort of green? Then all go outside with clipboards, paper and pencils to find a flower, a shrub or a tree to draw – everyone tries to remember or write down the colours needed to complete their pictures. On *Sheet 39.F* there are some pictures to use – children have to look carefully at the Tapestry Panel picture to get the colours right.

3. Sarah Martha Baker. Read and show the pictures from *Sheet 39.D*. *You will need: arts and sewing materials and possibly a CD player. Order tapestry kits and, if you don't have one, a 'Stitch Guide' from the Quaker Tapestry in advance of your session.* Ask children if there are things in nature that 'sing' to them or make them feel lovely. If possible, play the song 'Universal Chorus' on the CD of the same name – see sidebar. Ask what was liked about the song – is there anything in nature that makes them feel like that? Have art and sewing materials for children to illustrate their thoughts about the 'universe singing'.

4. John Bartram and Peter Collinson. Read and show the pictures from *Sheet 39.E*. You may need to explain to some of the children what some of the words in the quotation mean – although they should get the sense. After talking about the adventures of Peter Collinson some questions that you might ask include: How would you feel about going on a long journey on your own? How would you feel about going on a long journey through strange forests and woods and up mountains to find plants?

Reflect

Everybody gathers together again for a few moments. Any work that has been done is laid on the floor or table, wherever people are sitting, around an array of flowers or of Tapestry pictures as a focus. Quietly end ready for drinks or to go into the other Meeting.



Review

The review can happen at the time or later – it may be done 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 learn about and reflect, even a little, on something about The Quaker Tapestry and about the beauty of the plant world? What is there for you to learn from this session? What might you do differently another time?

Topical activity

Issue 34 of *Journeys in the Spirit*, Children's edition, was all about Quakers and Bolivia – it talked about the impact of climate change. Now, Evo Morales, President of Bolivia, has invited people all over the world who want to work to save our planet to support a People's World Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth's Rights in Cochabamba from 20th to 22nd April 2010. He has asked for the richer countries to work really, really hard to cut emissions and to make big cuts in expenditure on arms and warfare. Find out more at <http://pwccc.wordpress.com>. Talk about how children might encourage Meeting to help – children could send greetings and encouragement to the conference.



Links to other organisations and resources

www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk to view the site where you can see further Tapestry panels or purchase books, cards, gifts and resources.

This issue was written by Julian Abraham & other Quaker Tapestry staff; the Topical Activity idea was from Pattie Richmond of Quaker Bolivia Link. The editor was Chris Nickolay with the support of Howard Nurden.

The next children's issue of *Journeys in the Spirit*, issue 40, is about Luke Howard – he named the clouds (available from June 1st); issue 41 is about Pilgrimage (available from July 1st); issue 42 is about Bayard Rustin, American Quaker and campaigner for racial and social justice (available from August 1st – in time for Black History month in the autumn).

Advices and Queries

1.02: "We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures, and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendor of God's continuing creation."

An all age activity: At the start of a Meeting for Worship have someone tell one of the botanist's stories. After a little time of stillness ask people, when they are ready, to draw or colour a flower that they really like or to draw or colour a plant that has not been found yet but that could do all sorts of good things for our world. What would it look like? When pictures are done they are laid out and people look at them before everyone settles for a little more stillness and worship.

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Contact:
Bevelie Shember,
CYP Staff Team,
Friends House,
173 Euston Road,
London NW1 2BJ

Phone:
020 7663 1013

Email:
bevelies@quaker.org.uk

Website:
www.quaker.org.uk/cyp