

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 43

September 2010

Children



Our Quaker Stories

“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 seventeenth and final issue in the series exploring our Quaker stories

Getting ready

This is the last issue in this series on ‘Our Quaker stories’. Here we look back over the sixteen issues and also offer some simple ways for children to think about and record their personal stories.

In this series each of the stories about known and less well known Quakers has attempted to look behind what they did in the world to give some idea of what their personal journey was like. Sometimes we have been able to look into the childhoods of some of the Friends whose lives are explored. Where this has been possible it has, we hope, served to emphasise the idea that each of us, whatever age we are, is on a personal religious and spiritual journey. Equally, when an issue has told the story of an aspect of Quaker work in the world – past or present – we attempted to concentrate on the lives and experience of all the people involved and what change has been achieved or is being worked for. This was never intended to be a series about Quaker heroines and heroes but has been about ordinary challenge, bravery and decisions with some exceptional moments that are not impossible for any of us of any age at some time.

Whichever issue or issues you have read, enjoyed or used we hope that its intention of encouraging and enhancing the personal and shared journeys of children and adults has been, at least, partially achieved. When Benjamin West was painting against his parent’s wishes it may not have felt to them like an expression of his particular ministry but it turned out to be so and his Meeting saw that and encouraged him. That sounds like a familiar challenge in children’s work – learning to listen to and appreciate the differences in what people bring.

Underpinning references

Psalm 139

Quaker Faith and Practice: Advices and Queries 7

Quaker Faith and Practice: Advices and Queries 11

‘In and out of the silence’ by Elizabeth Brimelow Pages 52-53, ‘Words to remember’; Look in your Meeting library or borrow from the Quaker Resources Centre.

Gather

Greet each child by name as they come in to the room. Have a circle of cushions or chairs set out. Come together with a short period of worship. After a few minutes ask each child in turn to share something of their 'story' since you were last together. Perhaps passing around a talking object. Children can pass if they would rather not share something.

Beforehand ask Friends in the meeting for photos of themselves when they were younger and ask parents of the children for photos of the children when they were babies. Aim to have around 10 photos. Hold these up in turn asking the children to guess who each one is. Make this fun and encourage laughter. Afterwards explain that each of our lives is a story, some longer than others, but all fascinating and precious.

Tell the children that this is the last of the series on 'Our Quaker Stories' that has explored 15 different Quaker stories. As it is the last one it offers an opportunity to look back at some of the Quaker stories that have been included. It also provides a chance for us to consider our own stories.

Engage

Memories: Ask the children what they remember about any of the Quaker stories they have explored in their children's meetings (see side bar). Accept and value all their contributions – no matter how obscure they might seem!

Pictures: On *sheet 43.A* you will find 15 pictures each depicting something of one of the 15 Quaker stories explored within this series of the children's edition of *Journeys in the Spirit*. If you are able to, enlarge and cut out each of these pictures, then spread the pictures around the room. If you are not able to enlarge them, then perhaps spread the smaller pictures out on a couple of tables. Put the group into twos and threes, putting younger children with older ones. Give each pair or three a pen and a sheet of paper and ask them to write the numbers 1 – 15 on their sheet. Working together in their pairs or threes the children should try to identify which Quaker story each picture depicts, writing this alongside the appropriate number on the sheet. You might choose to include only the pictures that relate to stories you have covered, alternatively you could put them all out and encourage the children to guess where they don't know. The answers are listed on *sheet 43.B*, go through these with the whole group once everyone has had a chance to look at all the pictures.

Word search: On *sheet 43.B* there is a word search including all the answers from the picture activity. Copy this sheet out and encourage children individually, or together with friends, to find as many words as they can. It helps if when they find a word they cross it out from the list of answers.

Quiz: Divide your group into 2 or 3 smaller groups. Undertake the quiz that is set out on *sheet 43.C* asking each group a question in turn. The questions all relate to the different stories explored in the *Our Quaker Stories* series. Don't worry if you haven't covered all the stories, the children may well know the answers anyway. The children might like to test out the Quaker knowledge of the adults by organising this quiz for the whole meeting.

The following stories have been featured within this series:

Benjamin West, an American Quaker who began painting as a child (*issue 27*)

Kindertransport, the story of how Quakers rescued thousands of children from Nazi Germany (*issue 28*)

Quaker work in Russia (*issue 29*)

The work of Quaker concern for animals (*issue 30*)

Quakers working for peace in Burundi (*issue 31*)

A Quaker family whose ancestors worked for the Friends Foreign Mission (*issue 32*)

Our inner selves exploring what is inside of us (*issue 33*)

Quaker work in Bolivia (*issue 34*)

Betsy Gurney who grew up to be Elizabeth Fry (*issue 35*)

John Woolman as a boy and a man (*issues 36 and 37*)

Luke Cock a fair butcher (*issue 38*)

The botanist's panel of the Quaker tapestry (*issue 39*)

Luke Howard who named the clouds (*issue 40*)

Quaker pilgrimage (*issue 41*)

Bayard Rustin a civil rights activist in the USA (*issue 42*)

References & other resources

See **Journeys in the Spirit children's edition issue 35** about Betsy Gurney who grew up to be Elizabeth Fry.



There is an example of what she wrote in her own journal – you could read this to Children's Meeting and ask what they think about it.

Two websites with more ideas about journals:

www.journalinglife.com/jl-type-kids.html

www.journalinglife.com/jl-types.html

See Resources and links on page 4 for two more.

A list of words from the book, 'In and out of the silence' by

Elizabeth Brimelow that perfectly describe the potential in children in which we trust and that we seek to encourage:

'Qualities of the self, inner resources and abilities: awareness, sensitivity, spontaneity, response, imagination, creativity, aesthetic response, wonder, worship, stillness, listening, self-discipline, integrity, choosing, moral autonomy, aspiration, quality, perfection.'

Look in your Meeting Library for a copy or borrow one from the Quaker Resources Centre

Respond

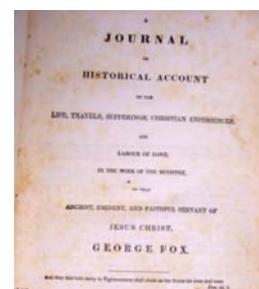
You and your story. This is about everybody thinking all about themselves and their story. Here you can find ways to begin talking about this and then go on to make and work in personal books or journals.

Beginning to tell your story.

Ask the children the following questions or a variation according to their age:

- I wonder, what do you like best about being you/your life
- I wonder, what is most important about being you or in your life
- I wonder, what you like best about our world
- I wonder if there is anything about the story of you or your life that you could leave out and still have all the story you need.

Ask the questions slowly and leave time for thought and answers – there doesn't have to be answers – thinking might be enough. This could be done so that children write or draw their responses to become pages in a journal – see below.



Telling your story – making a journal.

Many Quakers of different ages and at different times in the last 360 years have written journals to tell the story of their lives and personal journey. On this page there are some basic guidelines for you and some suggestions about ways to start this process with children. There is additional information on *Sheets 43. D, E & F* about how to make a journal, how to use it, where to keep it, what could go in one and what a page might look like.

Basic guidelines to help you:

- A journal can be a balance of the enjoyable, the serious, the reflective and the creative. Just because people often write their journals that does not mean that they can't be full of drawing, painting, photos and materials stuck in.
- Have good quality arts, craft and writing equipment - a mix to inspire.
- Have some simple notebooks available or resources for simple ones to be made.
- It's personal - keep it private. Children need to feel comfortable that whatever they create is private to them - it can be shared but it doesn't have to be.

Here are some introductory ideas about starting sessions on making and keeping a journal:

- **Week 1.** Say something like: *'We have been hearing stories about some Quakers and what some Quakers do. Today we are going to find a way to tell our own stories, stories about us. We are going to start to make a book to put things in all about ourselves.'* Begin by creating a book with each child. See *Sheet 43.D*.
- **Week 2.** Ask a question like, *'If you were to make a book, a journal, about you, what would you put in first?'* Listen to what has been said and then suggest children work in their journals using a page other than the first page to write or illustrate what they have just spoken about. After a time give out copies of the journal page on *Sheet 43.F*. Look at *Sheet 43.E* for ideas about headings for other journal pages. Read the guidance on *Sheet 43.E* about when to use and where to keep children's journals. Return to journals in the next session.

Reflect

Everybody comes back together and sits quietly for a little. Lay out all the photos used earlier. Ask children to take back their own if they have brought them. Then ask children to take photos loaned by older Friends and just hold them for a little while, say that, at the end of your Meeting you want the pictures given carefully back to the other Friends. Ask if anybody has anything that she or he would like to say about what has been done. When conversation, if any, ends just thank everyone and say that it is time to go back into Meeting. Sit a little while longer and then everybody gets up to go home or to Meeting.

Review

Explore with the children the following:

- What have you enjoyed most about the Quaker stories we have looked at?
- What have you learnt about Quakerism from the Quaker stories?
- How have the Quaker stories affected what you do?

Review this session 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?

Topical activity Hiroshima Day - Sadako's story

Purposes: to encourage the group to think about their response to war; to show that war and suffering have a human face. Decide which age groups this is suitable for.

Introduce the theme: 'Quakers have always tried to get terrible weapons called nuclear rockets and bombs banned. In a moment we are going to have a story about a girl who became ill when, in the Second World War World War, over 60 years ago, a nuclear bomb destroyed a Japanese city, called Hiroshima, near where she lived. The girl's name was Sadako.'

Resources: See side bar for links and resources on how to access this story and find resources; mount a reading copy on card.

Links to other organisations and resources

www.quaker.org.uk/ideas - links to a store of ideas and activities for working with children and young people

<https://bookshop.quaker-secure.org.uk/quaker-resources> - a wonderful selection of resources to borrow – especially for Quaker children's work

www.homeschooling-ideas.com/journaling-for-kids.html - more journal ideas.

www.homeschooling-ideas.com/journal-writing-prompts.html - journal stimulus.

This issue was written and edited by Howard Nurden and Chris Nickolay. The Topical activity was from Journeys in the Spirit Issue 8 and was written by David Gee.

Series 5 begins with Issue 44 on October 1st. The new series is all about Advices and Queries - issue 44 is about A&Q's 3 and 7; Issue 45 is about A&Q's 37 and 38 and is available on November 1st; Issue 46 is about A&Q 39 and is available on December 1st.

All age activity

Encourage the children to organise a time with the whole meeting to have fun together using the photo activity in Gather and the pictures, word search and quiz activities in Engage.

Topical activity: Sadako's story.

http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/sadako_sasaki.htm a page-by-page story to be printed out
Also, www.sadako.com/ for short films.

See Journeys in the Spirit Children's edition 8 for a paper crane template:

www.quaker.org.uk/files/Journeys-in-the-Spirit-Children-Oct-08-No-8-additional-sheets.pdf

and

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/hiroshima>

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