



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition April 2014 Issue 86



Quakers, work and business:

Mary Elizabeth Phillips -farmer to shop owner

Getting ready

Many early Quakers were small scale farmers owning the land they worked, or husbandmen renting small farms. Tithes, confiscation of animals or goods, and imprisonment for non-payment made it more difficult to continue with farming with its longer term investment. This was why many early Quakers moved off the farms to develop their businesses and then flourished. It was easier to carry on shop trade even if some of your stock was taken. The practice of travelling to other meetings also made it difficult to look after the land. Thus farming was replaced by small crafts and trades.

Among early Quakers, education was valued as a true preparation for life in all its aspects. Where the children in these families would have traditionally gone to university and entered "the professions" (law, medicine, etc), these options were barred to Friends because they would not swear an oath. In addition, Friends imposed their own restrictions, disallowing businesses that involved gambling, war/violence or 'petty' fashions. So they chose instead, businesses where they could apply their mind. Insistence upon simple living, frugality and integrity meant that they were willing to work long hours and endure considerable periods of experiment with little reward. Their strong intellect meant they could be innovative.

Because of their consistently honest dealings, people knew that when doing business with a Quaker they would get a good quality product at a fair price and not be cheated. Quaker businesses therefore tended to flourish.

Gather

Greet and welcome each child at the door, ensuring they are calm and ready for worship. Another adult sits on a rug large enough for all to gather and speaks quietly, again greeting each child by name as they sit and engaging in conversation about their families, how their week was, whether anything happened to make them happy, sad, or anything else? Encourage everyone to listen, and to pause after a person has spoken.

When all are gathered, light a large candle to remind everyone "that God is present" (using language with which you are comfortable). Light a small candle for each child, say their name and welcome them. Light a final candle for absent friends. Sit quietly for a moment in worship, with lit candles and pine cones, rocks, shells laid out reverently on a small table to your side, or on a tray on the rug. Some children may need assistance to gather into worshipful silence.

In the gathered silence, introduce *Advices & queries* 3 in words that the children may understand, e.g. share with children that Quakers think it is important "to set aside times of quiet even within the busyness of the day so that we may know a calmness within ourselves". Some Quakers say this is a way to get closer to God and this quiet can help us be calm and find ways to deal with difficult feelings and thoughts. Pause in the gathered silence.

Journeys in the Spirit offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children and young people.

This children's work edition comes out monthly. It offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with 5–12 year olds in a Quaker setting.

It provides opportunities for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of worship in partnership on our shared journey in the spirit.

Why no Quaker baker?

This issue was to be about the creator of Tottenham Cake. Why isn't it?

The Quaker connection is based on the work of one amateur historian, who has let Tottenham Quakers know he was mistaken. Even so, it made a great story on BBC! So, instead, we offer you the story of a real life Tottenham Quaker business

Engage

A story about Mary Elizabeth Phillips

Quietly, say you are going to tell a story about a young Quaker girl who cares so much about the people around her she wanted to make their lives better. See *Additional Resource 86.A* for the story.

You may wish to get familiar with the story before Children's Meeting for Worship and tell it in your own words, or adapt it to the age of the children in your Meeting. The words do not need to be exact. The highlights are Mary Elizabeth Phillips (1840 to 1922) had a passion to abolish slavery (which still was allowed in the States, although in the British Empire was illegal by law) and to abolish public houses (pubs). She lived in Tottenham where Friends continue worship.

You may wish to employ a creative story telling technique (see *Journeys in the Spirit* issue 37 *Additional Resource 37.C* at www.quaker.org.uk/journeys/archive-children). You could lay down some of the pictures on *Additional Resource 86.B* as you speak.

Tell the story.

Allow some silence following the story. Then ask the children "I wonder..." questions. Just listen to and accept whatever answers or silence greets your wondering:

I wonder, what part of this story you like the best.

I wonder, what part of the story you think is the most important.

I wonder, if there is any part of this story you feel is like you.

I wonder, if there is any part of this story that you would like to leave out and still have all the story you need.

I wonder what special interests you have / what you feel passionate about.

I wonder if there is something you want to improve in your family, your school, where you live or this Meeting?

Old and more recent pictures of Tottenham – bigger versions on *Additional Resource 86.B*



The older photos here are from 'Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Culture, Libraries & Learning)



References & other resources

Social reform refers to any attempt that seeks to correct any injustices in a society. People who are involved in social reforms do so with the aim of improving the quality of life.

<http://tottenhamquakers.org.uk/history/>

Complete text of an exhibition held at Bruce Castle Museum, London N17 to mark the 300th anniversary of Quakers in Tottenham (Oct/Nov1999)

Advices & queries 27:

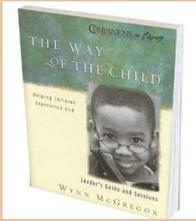
Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? ...

Additional Resources 86.A and *86.B* can be found at:

www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

References & other resources

Way of the Child



<http://companions.upperroom.org/children> A link to a page with information about the *Way of the Child* approach.

www.quaker.org.uk/working-children-0-12-years-0 For links to other *Way of the Child* information go to this page, scroll down to *Way of the Child* and click on the Quaker link.

Advice & queries
19: 'Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting and recognise the gifts they bring.'

Advice & queries
36: 'Do you uphold those who are acting under concern, even if their way is not yours?'

Additional Resource 86.C, 86.D & Topical Activity 2 are at: www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

Respond

An approach to personal ministry using the "*Way of the Child*" approach.

Children's meeting for worship can easily become caught up in "producing" something to "show and tell" to the rest of the meeting. The *Way of the Child* approach focusses on process, not an outcome. It offers a range of opportunities for reflection about a story and the children's own lives - there is a link to information online in the side bar. Time is given for children to listen to that of God in themselves and each other. For some children this may be the only opportunity in their week to be in quiet and contemplation.

Here are a number of possible ways of responding to the theme of this issue:

Personal passions & improving our communities

Resources: A1, A2, A3 paper, Baskets with markers, with coloured pencils.

Depending on the ages and maturity of the children present, there will be different ways to help them consider their passions and thoughts they have of how or what they might want to do "make a better world". Some examples from the Tottenham area are on *Additional Resource 86.C*.

With younger children, be very practical. Encourage a calm discussion (with lots of listening) about "one thing you might do here at Meeting (or at home/nursery/school) to help people be happier/friendlier". Older children are likely to have their own ideas, but if not you might want to work together on a mind map using big paper on the floor and marker pens of different colours. Ask children to consider in the silence: "what makes a better world" and then write or draw their thoughts. Then, either using one idea/thought for the group, or having each child use their own: support them in developing the idea. Some ideas may seem impossible to us, but children may have innovative routes. Ideas may be a life time journey - support of Meeting may give encouragement needed. An idea might become a concern for local, area meeting or BYM.

Ideas on sharing a passion

Before doing any of the activities here talk with children about their ideas for making a better world and how that might be done.

Create a poster or comic. *Resources for comic making: black pens, coloured pencils and felts, white drawing paper.* See *Topical Activity 2* - link in sidebar - for a poster activity linked to the work of Quaker Peace and Social Witness. You could also talk with children about creating a comic strip that tells others about their idea. Help children, as appropriate, to make a poster or comic strip.

Leaves on a tree. *Resources: cut out leaves from Additional Resource 86.D, pens, pencils, yarn, hole punch, big branch in a pot or vase, soil or sand for the pot or vase.* Begin with a little worshipful silence. Give out hole punched copies of the leaf template on. Ask children to write or draw their wishes for a better world on one or more leaves and hang them on the branch.

Making the machine. Say to children that together they are going to make or be a machine that makes their idea into reality. Invite children to imagine this machine for a moment. Have them consider what part of the 'machine' they would like to be. Remind them machines have repetitive movements. What movement would they be? What sound would they be? Ask one child to show their movement, and then ask each child to join the machine. When the 'machine' is fully active ask children to join in with their sound. After it's been active for a while, let them know the machine is about to be shut down. Tell them the shut off signal - a countdown - 3, 2, 1 'off'. When the machine is still, ask them to shake or rub their arms and legs before sitting down.

Ideas on taking a passion forward

Resources: white or pale coloured card, pens or pencils for writing and colouring. Ask children to think about and maybe plan out next steps on what they will do to "make a better world". Invite each child to draw their hand. On the palm, write or draw their idea - on each finger, write or draw what needs to be done to help make their idea reality.

Reflect

Remind children: "You sat quietly at the beginning of the meeting. Silence helps us to think and to listen to ourselves as well as to each other and to God. Let us practice this listening again." After a time, looking at the candles, say "Our candles remind us we are not alone. We lit one large candle to remind us that God is present with us and within us. As this Meeting for Worship draws to a close, we extinguish the candles for those present." You may choose to say each child's name as you extinguish each candle. When done, say "for absent friends" and extinguish that candle. Finally, extinguish the large candle, reminding "God is with us always, even when we can't see his light." (or words that you are comfortable with). Then take from a basket a small prepared stone and give to each child, saying, "Take this with you as a reminder that God is with you." Shake hands to close Meeting. After notices, invite children to help tidy up. When it is time to leave, stand at the door and says goodbye to each child as they leave.

Review

First, remember: you may not know what each child gained from the meeting. Reviewing can happen at the time or later and may help the planning of future children's meetings for worship. Do you keep simple records of the meeting, e.g. a notebook including who attended, their ages and the focus of worship and some helpful points from your review, perhaps responses to some of the following questions.

- Do you feel the meeting was worshipful?
- Did it respect the Quaker testimonies – equality, peace, simplicity, truth?
- Was it age appropriate and inclusive: were children able to participate in their own way, helping and respecting each other?
- Has each child been able to reflect, even a little, on something about her or his thoughts and feelings?
- Did you and children have fun?
- What went really well; what is there for you to learn from this session and what might you do differently another time?
- Were there any difficulties that you might need to talk with a colleague or an Overseer about?

This issue was written by Augene Nanning and edited by Chris Nickolay and Howard Nurden. Chris Nickolay and Alistair Fuller wrote the Topical activities.

Issue 87 is the first in a new series linked to the Yearly Meeting Gathering theme. It has the title, '*Being a Quaker and a child*'. Available from 1 May 2014.

Issue 88 is the second in the series linked to the Yearly Meeting Gathering theme. It has the title, '*Quakers in the world*'. Available from 2 June 2014.

Issue 89 is the third in the series linked to the Yearly Meeting Gathering theme. . It has the title, '*I matter – I change the world*'. Available from 2 July 2014.

Materials available online are:

Current issue *Additional Resource* sheets

An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting

Links to other resources and information

A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship

Two *Topical activities* – an Easter story and a QPSW poster activity

Also a 'How to use *Journeys in the Spirit*' guide; a link to special issues; an archive of previous issues; a discussion forum and a link to the *Journeys in the Spirit* Youth edition.

All these are available at:

www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren

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

Phone: 020 7663 1013

Email:
cypadmin@quaker.org.uk

Website:
www.quaker.org.uk/cyp