



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition August 2014 Issue 90



Living in the Light: a transformed and transforming life

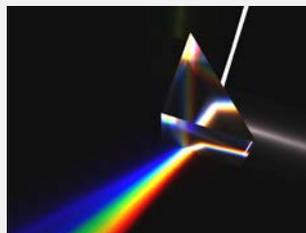
Getting ready

At the heart of being a Quaker is that we live a life that is transformed and transforming, changed and changing. Through our meeting for worship, through being part of a Quaker community, through living out our faith in daily life and active witness, we are always in the process of being transformed, becoming fully ourselves; we are also in the process of transforming the world and the lives of those around us.

In this edition of Journeys, there are ways to work with children to look at what it means to live a transformed and transforming life, thinking about how the Light within can change us and at how carrying the Light with us can also change the world. There are ways to help children think about how being a Quaker can bring light into their lives through worship and through relationships with others in meeting and the wider Quaker community. Ideas are also offered about the lives of Quakers who have been transformed by being part of a Quaker community and who have then gone on to change and transform the world around them.

As well as being an opportunity to reflect on how being a Quaker transforms us, this offers ways to encourage the children to see how they might become agents for change in their everyday lives and in the wider world.

These are big philosophical questions. Take time to think about them before a session. Think about the language that you might use in relation to the age of children.



Gather

Gathering in the Light

Gather in a circle and place a lit candle in the centre of the circle. Remind the children that when we gather for worship we think about the Light within ourselves, how it shines deep within us; we think too about the Light in those around us.

Invite everyone to look at the lighted candle and to think about what they have been doing over the past week. Invite them to share anything that has been important; have there been things that have made them happy? Are there things that have worried them or made them sad? Have there been times when they have helped someone who was feeling sad or worried? Has there been a time when someone or something has helped them? Say something like, 'we might think of this as bringing Light to someone'. Just as a lighted candle can illuminate a dark room, so we can bring light to other people.

Perhaps we might want to think about and share some of the things or people that bring light to us. Ask the children, if they want to, to quietly or in their imaginations to say 'thankyou' for those things and people.

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.

Underpinning references



Quaker faith and practice 1:02

Quaker faith and practice 2:12

Engage

What does transformation mean?

Resources: Have the word 'transformed' written on a big piece of paper or card and some postcard sized versions for the children; pictures of, or actual, leaves and branches, blossom or flowers; a candle. A copy of the stone lion picture on Additional Resource 90.A.

Read or adapt the text on this page – for younger children some of it may be shortened; your candle used in Gather.

“We are going to think and talk about a big and complicated word – transformed”.
(Lay down or pin up the word. Ask children what they think it means – you will probably get references to Transformers film or toys). It is a word that Quakers often use and we are going to think about it. The word ‘transformed’ means to be changed. It can mean changing your shape on the outside, but when Quakers use it, they usually mean being changed on the inside.”

“We see this kind of change in the world of nature. Think of trees in the winter, bare and without signs of life; then, in the spring, buds and blossoms begin to show; when summer comes, the leaves open up and there is green everywhere; as autumn comes, so the leaves turn brown and russet and gold, then begin to wither and fall.”
(Lay down or display pictures of leaves, branches and flowers.) All of this change begins deep within the tree itself. At first, we don't see it happening and the buds and blossoms and changing leaves are the signs of a change that is already happening. The tree is being fed and nourished deep in its roots and from the light that is shining on it and the light and the nourishing is what causes it to change. This is what we mean by transformation.”

“Being transformed as people does not mean being changed into something else. It isn't like putting on make-up or a disguise; it is like we are wearing lots and lots of clothes; deep underneath is the real us, but it's hidden and we sometimes need to take the outer layers off to find out what is inside. There is a story about a man whose job was carving stone lions. (Lay down the picture of the lion on Additional Resource 90.A.) When he was asked to say what he did he said:

‘I take a big piece of stone and, with a hammer and chisel; I chip away all the bits of it that aren't lion’.

He didn't see it as turning the piece of stone into something else; he saw it as finding the lion that was really already in the middle of it.”

“What else can transformation be like – it can be like shining a light into a dark corner. When we wake up in a very dark room, it can be full of all sorts of scary dark shapes and shadows; yet, when we turn the light on, it is still the same room but we see it differently, we see it as it really is. Shapes have changed.”

“Sometimes it can mean finding out about ourselves and trying to be the best we can be; maybe bringing kindness, friendship and help to those around us and the world.”

“How does being a Quaker help transform or change us? It can do it when we are in our meeting for worship – when we sit still and wait in the Light – even for a little while; through being part of our meeting - being supported, looked after, learning and sharing (being inspired) by and with others.”

Bring the candle from your Gather time carefully back into the circle – light it. Ask children to sit relaxed and still and gaze at the light for a few moments. Now ask them to close their eyes and, if they can, imagine a light like the candle gently glowing inside them (safely). Next ask them to close their eyes and imagine the light inside them spreading slowly out – ask them to think of people they know, animals they like or worry about, people in meeting, friends, people they might not like – and let the light shine on or cover them. Pause for a little while. Ask everyone to open their eyes and look at each other. Ask, “What was that like?” Blow the candle out.

In the sidebar there are links to *Journeys in the Spirit* issues about Quakers who have tried to spread some light in the world. You could tell a story about one of them.

References & other resources

Elizabeth Fry as a child, Betsy Gurney:



www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/Journeys-issue-35-main-final.pdf

John Woolman:



www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/Journeys-issue-36-main.pdf

Luke Cock, a Quaker butcher:
www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/Journeys-issue-38-main-final.pdf

These are from the *Our Quaker Stories* series of *Journeys in the Spirit* at:
www.quaker.org.uk/childrens-work-edition-series-4

Additional Resource 90.A can be found at:
www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

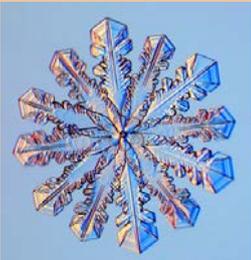
References & other resources

Also see the *More Quaker stories* series of *Journeys in the Spirit* at:

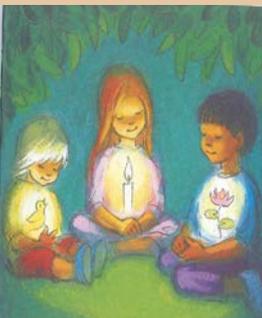
www.quaker.org.uk/childrens-work-edition-series-6

This includes an issue 58 about *Three Quaker scientists*

www.quaker.org.uk/journeys-spirit-childrens-work-58



Here is one of the pictures from *Quaker Meeting and me* – a free booklet available from the Quaker Bookshop 020 7663 1030



Additional Resource 90.B can be found at:
www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

Respond

What does transformation mean? Some ways to explore the word. Do one or more of these activities. Introduce them by saying, 'Let's find out some more about change and transformation.'

Using clay. *Resources: soft clay or modelling material; wooden boards or a plastic table cloth.*

Give each child a lump or piece of modelling material. Ask them to think about a shape that they would like to make and start to try to make it. It may be an actual person or animal for example or it could just be a shape. You do it too. Chat about what it is like whilst you are all doing it. Can they find a lion in the clay?

Making a lantern. *Resources: Copies of the template on Additional Resource 90.B; scissors; glue sticks; coloured felt pens; electric tea lights; ribbon or wool.*

Use the template provided, so that children can make a lantern. Ask them to decorate each side with pictures such as a picture of themselves, a picture of someone they love; a picture of someone or something that inspires them (explain what that means); a picture of their meeting. Place the nightlight inside them and attach the string. These can be taken into meeting to show to others who are there and to talk about being filled with light and bringing light into the world.

There might be an opportunity to ask adults/others how does being a Quaker/part of a Quaker meeting inspire and transform them?

Using one or more of the stories in *Journeys in the Spirit* suggested in the sidebars on pages 2 and 3, older children might want to think about Quakers whose Quaker faith has transformed and inspired them. They might want to ask adults in meeting which Quakers have inspired them?

Lemon writing. *Resources: Lemon juice; water; a jug; wooden chopsticks; plain white paper.*

Talk about the way that light can change or transform the things it touches and can show us things that are hidden – in things, in ourselves. Make a mixture of lemon juice and water and, with sticks/chopsticks ask the children to write a message of hope or peace or thanks or to draw a picture of someone they love or who inspires them. They won't be able to see the picture or writing until it is held up to the light. This could be done with a strong lamp or they could be baked in an oven. The pictures are transformed and we can now see what was hidden.

A bag of hidden things *Resources: a cloth bag – a cotton shopping bag or a shoe bag for example; a selection of small objects from around your house and garden – (nothing sharp or sticky!) a small torch.*

Place a collection of random articles, things that are unusual or oddly shaped, into a deep cloth bag. Ask the children to feel around inside and describe what is in there. Then take a torch and shine it into the bag, lighting up the objects and all the dark corners. Finding our way around in the dark can be difficult; when we shine a light, we can things clearly and recognise them for what they are.

Hidden pictures. *Resources: plain white paper; wax crayons; cocktail sticks or paint brushes.*

Ask the children to cover a piece of plain paper with crayon of all different colours, in bright rainbow stripes. When the paper is completely covered, ask them to colour over that with a black or very dark blue crayon until the colours are covered over. Then take something with a pointed tip (a cocktail stick or the pointed end of a paintbrush will do) ask the children to draw a picture of something beautiful, perhaps a bird, a flower, a face.

Reflect

Transformed and transforming lives

Gather in a circle and ask the children to think about what has been shared.

Re-light your candle. Say something like - we have been thinking about how being a Quaker can transform, change us and can lead us to transform the world around us.

Think about our families, our friends and those we meet at school or in our community. How might we bring some Light into the lives of those around us? This week, is there something loving or kind you might do to make a difference in the life of someone we know.

Think about those parts of the world where there might be struggle or sadness. How might we, as a children's meeting, work together to bring some Light and hope to these places?



Review

The review can happen at the time or later – 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 being a Quaker and how it might change (transform) us in our everyday lives?
- Was there an opportunity to listen to what being a Quaker means to others in the meeting?

This issue was written by Alistair Fuller and edited by Chris Nickolay and Howard Nurden. Alisa gave us the Topical activity.

Issue 91 is the second in the series about *Living as a Quaker*. It has the title '*How differently Quakers live.*' Available from 1 September 2014.

Issue 92 is the third in the series about *Living as a Quaker*. It has the title '*Looking after each other and making links*' Available from 3 November 2014.

Issue 93 is the fourth in the series about *Living as a Quaker*. It has the title '*Equipping children for ministry*'. Available from 2 October 2014.

Materials available online are:

Current issue Additional Resources Sheets

An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting

A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship

A topical activity about Gaza and what children might do to help a little.

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.

Go to:

www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren and choose from the range of links in the sidebar.

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