



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

March 2011

Issue 49



A simple plan for an all-age Meeting for Worship

Why talk about death with children

By talking to our children about death, we may discover what they know and do not know - if they have misconceptions, fears, or worries. We can then help them by providing needed information, comfort, and understanding. Talk does not solve all problems, but without talk we are even more limited in our ability to help. <http://www.hospicenet.org/html/talking.html>

Room set up

Take time to set the Worship room up so that it appears welcoming to children, too. Once you have done so, get on your knees or sit on the floor and look around. You are seeing the room as a small child. Is it welcoming?

Make space between benches and chairs so people can move easily. In the centre of the room have two large, low tables and a blanket/rug with pillows. On one table and on the carpet put a couple of shallow see through flat bottom dishes containing water, a basket of wax crayons, a basket with simple paper floating flower shapes, see instructions below, and small towels.

Simple paper floating flowers

You will need plain white or coloured paper, scissors, wax crayons and a tray of water.

- Cut out squares of paper. These can be 4cm, 5cm or 6cm square. Think carefully about the size; make sure that there will be enough room in the tray for everyone's flower to open – if in doubt use the 4cm size. See the side bar for a picture of what they look like.
- The smallest fingers can do this or be helped. Fold the squares in half to make a rectangle; fold again to make a square.
- Open out the paper.
- Fold each corner into the middle – it will look like a square with four triangles on it.
- It is then ready to be opened out and waterproofed with wax crayon on the base.

On the other table, away from the blanket, place night light candles, a large lit candle, taper candle on plate for using to light other candles - test this candle and check it doesn't drip easily. The number of candles depends on the size of your Meeting. Ask someone to be nearby to assist or light the candles for children.

You may want to have small baskets of paper floating flower shapes and wax crayons around room on chairs and benches, too. Along with Advices and Queries, Faith & Practice, few copies of Dorking Meeting's Children's Advices and Queries – see www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/issue-44-additional-resources-sheets.pdf. Outside the Meeting room, you may want a table with a selection of grief related books – see page 2 of the current issue, no. 49, of *Journeys in the Spirit* Children's work edition for examples.

Meeting for Worship

Welcome all to this Meeting for Worship for everybody.

When the Meeting has gathered in to silence, read the poem in Quaker Faith and Practice 21.53.

Pause, and introduce the materials about the room, saying something like, "We all have our own thoughts, feelings and experiences of sadness, grief and death. Around the room you will see paper



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floating flower shapes and crayons. If you are moved, if you want to, you can colour a flower all over on the back, fold the points in and place it in the water." (Pause) "Some of you may wish to light a candle in memory of someone or something." *Name the person who is available to assist with this.*

We will close this Meeting with Advice and Queries number 30. (Name) will extinguish the candles - but not our thoughts and memories - and then we will all shake hands."

If it feels appropriate, read Quaker Faith and Practice 21.53 again. Sit, and return to the silence of the Meeting.

Near the end of Meeting, the named Friend rises and says something like, "As Meeting closes, I extinguish these candles, but not our feelings, thoughts or memories." Extinguish candles.

Read Advice and Query 30.

Close the Meeting with handshakes.

After Meeting, lay the now open flowers on a dry towel. Some Friends/Attenders may wish to take their flower(s) with them. You may want to collect remaining flowers and make a collage for display. If not, thinking kindly of how to dispose them.

