



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

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A simple plan for an all-age Meeting for Worship

'We are Quakers...ask us why'

Preparation and Resources: You will need white A4 and A5 card, drawing pencils, coloured pencils, oil pastels, wax crayons – thin and chubby, coloured felt pens, white-tak, flipchart paper or roll of wallpaper lining paper (fix this to the wall ready for contributions). Have the art materials set out on other tables around the room.

A week or two before the meeting for all age worship ask members of the meeting to think about why they come to Quakers; was it someone they met? A book they have read? Was it to be with others who are concerned for peace or the environment? Maybe because their mum and dad brought them?

Ask them to bring along a picture or book or other object to represent their answer to the question. It might be a photograph of someone who really influenced them or even something they have grown in their own garden; whatever represents it best to them.

On the day:

Gather in silence and stillness, giving everyone time to centre. Arrange for the table in the middle of the room to be clear. One of the children or young people can introduce the theme; it can be difficult to talk about being a Quaker but it can help if we talk to each other about why we are. Why did we become Quakers? What do we most value about our meeting? Our worship? What Quakers do in the world?

Invite those who are there to bring their picture, book or object, place it on the table and speak briefly about it. They should come forward and speak as led – there is, of course, no requirement to speak.

When everyone has spoken and shared who wishes to, bring out a large piece of paper, about flipchart size. Along the top write

'We are (name of meeting) Quakers: this is why'

Using art materials put out around the room, ask people, when they are ready and if they want to, to draw or write something about what they have said or shared.

As people finish their contribution they can fix it to the sheet of paper. The paper becomes a poster full of stories and images that show what we most value about being Quakers; peace work, campaigning, radical action, friendship, kindness, fellowship, worship, a sense of value, a spiritual home, our history and heritage.

The poster or mural can be as large or small as feels appropriate. You might want to ask people to bring a picture of themselves, too, to put alongside their picture or object.

Conclude by reflecting on how important it is to share what being a Quaker means to us, and especially to learn what it means to each other. When someone asks us why we are Quakers, we don't have to explain everything about Quakerism; we just need to be able to say what it means to each of us, and to value what it means to each other. End with quiet and sharing of food and drink.