



# Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

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Issue 80



## An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting about happiness

Make sure you have a little time of worship for yourself and other volunteers before the session – even a couple of minutes are good.

The outline is based on a 45 minutes children's meeting.

**Materials:** *Big sheets of paper and large marker pens; white paper, A5 white card, coloured pencils, felt tips, drawing pencils, magazines to cut up, scissors, pva glue and brushes or spreaders; maybe a laptop to do designs on; copy of Additional Resources 80.A and 80.C. On Additional Resource 80.A there is some writing by Abbot Christopher about consumerism. Read this for yourself before the session.*

**Gather:** The idea of gathering today is to create a “happy space”, prior to the Meeting for Worship collect pictures of people who look happy, joyful, pleased, content, joyful, glad and delighted. Sit in a circle and explain that the topic is happiness. Either pass the pictures around the circle or hold them up one at a time to the group and ask the children (and adults!) to copy the expression so that they can imagine how the person is feeling. **5 minutes**

**Engage:** Say something like, happiness is a thing that people have wondered about for a long time. Some people's writing about happiness, from China, India and Greece, goes back a long, long time, over 2500 years. This is because happiness is one of the things that people say is most important in their lives.

We are going to talk about a person who can help us all think about some big questions, especially about happiness.

Talk about Abbot Christopher Jamison. Tell the children what the monks who live with Abbot Christopher have to do each year – make a list of everything they have and think if they need it anymore. Say that this is about what do we need to be happy. Put out paper, pencils and pens – ask children, and adults, to start writing or drawing a list of some of what they have at home. Young ones might need some help. After a few minutes start talking about the lists – is there anything children and adults think they can do without? This is an opportunity for thinking and reflection. Allow for the fact that children may have nothing they want to let go. Thank children for what they have done and shared. **10 minutes**

**Respond:** Ask children to think about all the times they hear the word happy such as - Happy Birthday, Happy Christmas, Happy New Year - can they think of any more? Happy.....Next give children a moment to think about all the things in their lives that make them happy – ask children to say what they have thought of - make a note of these on a big sheet of paper.

Making happiness cards. There are some pictures of examples of happiness cards on *Additional Resource 80.C*. Ask children what do you think of them? Do they like them? Have they got any of this type of card in their houses? What about the colours and the messages of the ones on the sheet - is there one that they really like? Ask children what their happiness design would be for a postcard? Ask if they want to design one as a group or as individuals or both? Make personal or group happiness cards. **25 minutes**

**Reflect:** The word happiness can mean many different things to different people at different times. Whilst it is an individual experience it is also something that is wonderful to share. Ask children to think about happy things in their lives that they might want to share with others. It may mean saying sorry or giving someone a smile or sharing a story about what happened to you. Ask everybody to close their eyes for a moment and imagine themselves in a quiet and comfortable place where they feel safe, secure and happy. **5 minutes**