

# Journeys in the Spirit

## Young People



### Sheet 5.A

### Gather

#### Extracts from *Whispers of Faith – Young Friends share their experiences of Quakerism*

A project of QUIP published jointly by Quaker Press of FGC USA and Quaker Books of BYM UK, 2005.  
Available in the Friends House bookshop for £6.

## What Quakers mean to me

I haven't any idea what I believe religiously. I only know that I am still exploring. I also know that without Quakerism I would be a different person. I don't have any regrets but I know that Quakerism has altered the way I look on life for the better.

My previous friends think I'm in some sort of cult but I'll let them think what they like.

I think that open-mindedness is the only way to survive within a community of people with different backgrounds and beliefs and being an attender at meeting and listening to inspirational ministry has really helped me to reinforce all that I believe.

*Catherine Playfair, 15  
Britain Yearly Meeting*

## Under the shell

There's this girl in my year, who was always alone; I wondered what was on her mind. I knew she was a hard worker and got stressed, but surely that was no excuse to be alone. We tried to be friendly but that never worked, so we got to the point of defeat. Then I noticed this other person emerging who only came out in our free time. I once followed to see where she went, and ended up down the yard. Once through the gate this "new" person appeared as if by chance or fate. I soon came to learn that horses were the answer to getting past the shyness. The next day I asked her, "Do you like horses?" and for the first time a long conversation unfolded. From that day to the present we have been friends and have taken up horses together. I'm glad I cracked the shell after trying for so long, as underneath was this kind, loving and gifted person.

*Jennie Evans,  
Britain Yearly Meeting*

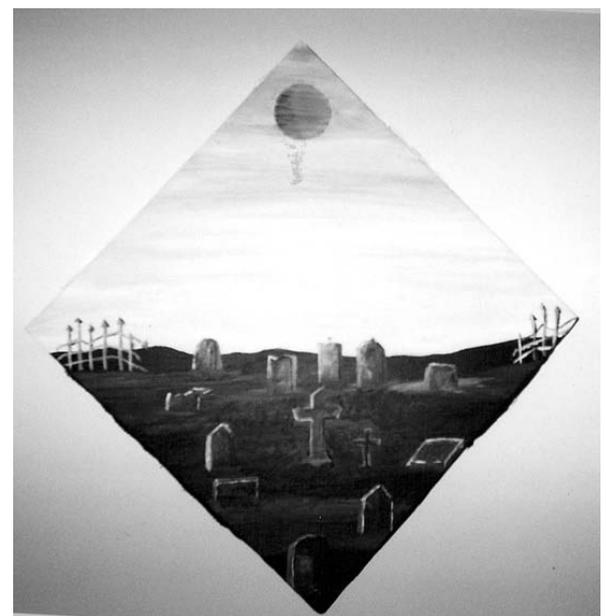
## Silence

Stillness...

The cricket chirps – the owl flies  
Listen to the quiet noises, of the world  
All is silent, open, unrestrained.  
I never heard them – talk, out loud  
For they only spoke through silence  
I listened close, and then I heard  
Those silent, whispering voices.  
Listen to those murmurs soft  
That never come your way  
Quiet now and listen to  
That silence, whispering –

*Brianna Richardson, 17  
North Pacific Yearly Meeting, USA*

## Graveyard *Sonia Kincaid*



**I wonder** what you like about this picture

**I wonder** how you feel about this picture

**I wonder** what you think this picture is missing

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### Sheet 5.B

### Gather

### Suggested topics and questions to consider

#### **What it means to be a Friend in the wider world today: Culture, technology, faith in practice**

- How does your faith inspire you to act within your own community and/or cultural context? With what concerns (environmental, political issues, war, poverty, etc.) does your faith compel you to engage? When confronted with violence and injustice, how does your faith compel you to act?
- How do you live faithfully in a society that may not share your values? How far will you go for what you believe? How are you working for change in your own community?
- Are there ways in which you are using modern technology to express your faith or develop your faith community? Are there ways in which modern technology impedes your spiritual development, faithfulness or practice? If so, how?
- How have you trespassed, and how have others trespassed against you? (See The Bible, Mathew 6.12: "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors")

#### **Individual experience: mysticism, faith, conversion, prayer**

- How do you pray? How important is prayer in your life?
- What role does worship play in your life and what does it look, sound and feel like when you worship with Friends? How do you choose who you worship with? How does worship bring you closer to the people you worship with?
- What are some of your experiences of the Divine? How do you integrate visionary experiences with modern life?
- How does God find and touch you? How have your experiences with the Divine/God/Jesus/Inner Light changed/saved/transformed you? How is God still working on you?
- Describe how you became a Friend. If you grew up a Friend, how have you come to identify as a Friend? Have you made a choice to do so?
- What is your experience with discerning spiritual gifts, callings or vocations? How have you responded to your calling?
- What role has faith played in the big decisions and changes (work, education, relocation, family) in your life? How does Quakerism relate to marriage in your society? How does your faith relate to your sexuality? How does your faith manifest in your daily life?
- How do you listen for the Inner Voice? What does it sound like?

#### **Where we are going as Friends?**

- What do you value about history of the Religious Society of Friends and how does that affect your faith today? How are you and your Friends' community similar to and different from historical Friends?
- What are your (positive, negative, or neutral) experiences with the diversity of Friends today? What have been your experiences with conflict, reconciliation, cooperation, and healing within your Friends' communities and within the wider world of Friends?
- What has been your experience of being a young person within the Religious Society of Friends? What are your hopes for the future role of young people within the Religious Society of Friends?
- How do you relate to, or partner with other local and global religious traditions?
- How have friendships with both older and younger Friends affected your spiritual development? Do you make use of the organizational structures and individual Friends in your community (clearness committees, elders, overseers, trustees) in supporting you in times of change?
- What are your hopes for the future of the Religious Society of Friends?

# Journeys in the Spirit

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### Sheet 5.C

### Engage

## Exploring and reflecting on our spiritual experiences through art

### Suggested Guidelines

Depending on the group these guidelines may be helpful in creating a safe space. It might be useful to have the group come up with their own guidelines before beginning their art work.

- Working silently or with minimal talking helps many people focus more on their art in a worshipful way
- Only positive feedback (no mean comments about people's art work) – this is particularly useful if you have a time to process and share the art
- Set a time limit, and make sure everyone understands that limit

### Suggested Prompts

Sometimes it is worthwhile to pick one query or topic for the whole group to consider and work with. Other times it is effective to give participants many queries or prompt options and let them pick. It's up to the facilitator and the group. Here is a sample list of queries and prompts that can be used:

- What are some positives and negatives in your life? (Something like a fear that holds you back and something that helps you break through that).
- What is one of your concerns today, this week, this year?
- What does the Inner Light, God, Spirit look like? Feel like?
- Any of the queries and prompts on the Call for Submissions of the Quaker Youth Book Project (see additional sheet 5.B).
- Have a collection of quotes and/or poetry on index cards that people might find provocative or challenging, and use them as prompts. Some suggested quotes are included on additional sheet 5.D.

### Sharing

Once everyone has finished with their art or the time limit is up, depending on the size of the group either break into small groups or stay in the whole group to share. Have everyone go around in a circle and show their art work to the community. If they feel comfortable let them talk about what the art means to them, the process they went through, or questions the art brought up for them. If the individual sharing feels comfortable, open the space for others to respond to the art work.

Leave a time of silence in between times of sharing and finish with a period of quiet.

# Journeys in the Spirit

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### Sheet 5.D

### Engage

#### Sample Quotes to enable exploring and reflecting on spiritual experiences through art

“Give over thine own willing, give over thy running, give over thine own desiring to know or be anything and sink down to the seed which God sows in the heart, and let that grow in thee and be in thee and breathe in thee and act in thee; and thou shalt find by sweet experience that the Lord knows that and loves and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of Life, which is its portion.”  
*(Isaac Pennington)*

“Perhaps more wonderful still is the way in which beauty breaks through. It breaks through not only at a few highly organized points, it breaks through almost everywhere. Even the minutest things reveal it as well as do the sublimest things, like stars... It must imply behind things a Spirit that enjoys beauty for its own sake and that floods the world everywhere with it. Wherever it can break through, it does break through, and our joy in it shows that we are in some sense kindred to the giver and revealer of it.” *(Rufus Jones)*

“And this is the word of the Lord God to you all, and a charge to you all in the presence of the living God; be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come from, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.” *(George Fox)*

“I saw that there was an infinite ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. And in that also I saw the infinite love of God.”  
*(George Fox)*

“Try to love the questions themselves –  
Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now,  
because you would not be able to live them,  
and the point is to live everything  
Live the questions now.” *(Rainer Maria Rilke)*

“Hatch out the total helplessness inside.” *(Rumi)*

“O Lord, my heart is not lifted up,  
my eyes are not raised too high;  
I do not occupy myself with things  
too great and too marvelous for me.  
But I have calmed and quieted my soul,  
like a weaned child with its mother;  
My soul is like the weaned child that is with me.” *(Psalm 131)*

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### Sheet 5.E

### Respond

### Writing exercises

#### Webbing:

Webbing is a non-linear way to enter a subject. Use paper, at least A4, or larger if it is available. Write your subject in the middle of the paper and draw a circle around it. This subject may be prompted by the list of questions in additional sheet 5.B. As you think of ideas, events, people or places related to your subject, write them on the paper around your centre subject. Draw circles around each item and connect them with a line to the centre subject. Repeat the process with each of your secondary items. For example, from the simple word *Home*, in a matter of minutes, I came up with 6 primary connections and 30 secondary connects. Each of these could easily trigger an essay. With more time, I could have come up with more primary and secondary connections, as well as a third-level of ideas stemming from secondary connections already in the web.

#### Free writing:

Pick a block of time (e.g. 8 minutes) and start free writing about something. This something may be prompted by the list of questions in additional sheet 5.B. Keep your pen (or your fingers on the keyboard) moving. If you lose your stream of thought, write something like, "I have lost my train of thought. When will I get another idea...etc." until some other related idea emerges. It will. When you've finished your free write, circle any areas that interest you. Pay special attention to things that surprise you.

#### Brainstorming:

If you don't like webbing, try brainstorming. Put a word (e.g. Friends Meeting) or a topic (e.g. How I live out my Quaker faith) at the top of the page and list everything that comes to mind. This topic may be prompted by the list of questions in additional sheet 5.B. The secret is not to screen out any thoughts. Just get it all down on paper. The sillier the better for the creative process. You may not include these in your essay, but they will usually trigger other ideas that you will include.

#### Diving Deeper:

Select an item or concept that has arisen from your webbing, free writing or brainstorming activities (as above) and take 10 to 15 minutes to write a short essay (one or two pages) about it. When you are finished, pair up with someone else. Ask your partner to think of 3 - 5 questions that come to mind as you read your essay. When you finish reading the essay, write down your partner's questions as he or she asks them. (Don't take time to DISCUSS the essay, just get the questions.) Circle the two questions that you would be most interested in writing about. Then switch roles and repeat the process with your partner.

Now re-write the essay, answering one of those questions in your first paragraph. Read through your essay, looking for sections that beg for more detail. Pretend you have a camera with a telephoto lens that zeros in on movements, colours, small facial characteristics, shoestrings, pictures on the walls, etc. Then, pretend that this camera also has ears, a nose, a sense of touch, and taste. Choose the details that will bring your essay to life for the reader.

Readers are also interested in your thoughts, especially in a reflective essay. Look for places to include your thoughts at the time (or currently) about an item, scene or incident in your essay.

***Thanks to Barry Lane's book, 'After the End', for the concepts in these writing exercises.***

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## Sheet 5.F      Reflect

### Information about submissions to the Quaker Youth Book Project

- All submissions should include the name, address, phone number, e-mail and Friends affiliation of the writer and/or artist. A short, two sentence biography of the writer/artist is optional.
- Prose, essays etc. should be approximately 200 to 2000 words, to a maximum of four typed pages. Handwritten pieces are also welcome. Poems should be a maximum of 100 lines.
- Visual art such as paintings, collage, photographs, etc. should be submitted in their original form or as a digital scan or photograph with a minimum quality of 300 dpi (dots per inch). Digitized images are preferred but not required. All original works of visual art will be returned to the artist after the selection process has been completed. Visual art will be reproduced in black and white in the book.
- Friends are invited to submit written pieces in whatever language they feel most comfortable. The editorial board will be working with submissions primarily in English and Spanish, but we are confident we will be able to provide translation services for most languages spoken by Friends.

**Submissions will be accepted until February 28, 2009.**

Submissions should be sent to Harriet Hart who will submit them to the editorial board:  
[harrietdijhart@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:harrietdijhart@yahoo.co.uk) or mailed to:

Honeywood  
Clapham  
Lancaster LA2 8DR

Alternatively they can be sent directly to [quipyouthbook@gmail.com](mailto:quipyouthbook@gmail.com) or mailed to:

Quaker Youth Book Project of QUIP  
1216 Arch Street, 2B  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Contact Angelina Conti, project coordinator, with any and all questions at [quipyouthbook@gmail.com](mailto:quipyouthbook@gmail.com).

Visit the project website at [www.quakeryouth.org/quipbook](http://www.quakeryouth.org/quipbook)