



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work September 2016 Issue 105

A simple plan for an all - age Meeting for Worship



Preparation:

Resources required: The story of The Mouse's Tale by Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen: Quaker faith & practice for the relevant quotes. A large piece of blue paper with a simple boat cut out and stuck on the sea. Pens, pencils, glue sticks and any scraps of tissue paper or coloured paper and some simple boat templates (see picture below).

During the Meeting

Begin by welcoming everyone to this all age meeting for worship. Start with a few minutes of quiet.

Quakers have been reading *Quaker faith & practice* and reflecting on every part of the book. They are finding the bits they like and thinking about whether any other parts need to be changed. Today we are going to think about chapter 23 – Social Responsibility. It covers a very great deal and includes many things such as:

- Faith and Action
- Social Justice – this is about things like poverty, housing and slavery
- Individual and the Community – people's personal stories
- Education
- Friends and State Authority

Now we will hear a passage from *Quaker faith & practice* (23.02) written a very long time ago by William Penn. It brings much of this together.

Read the passage

The words are quite difficult to understand. Perhaps William Penn was saying that true goodness doesn't turn people away from the world but indeed enables people to live in the world in a better way. Goodness helps them feel inspired to make the world a better place.

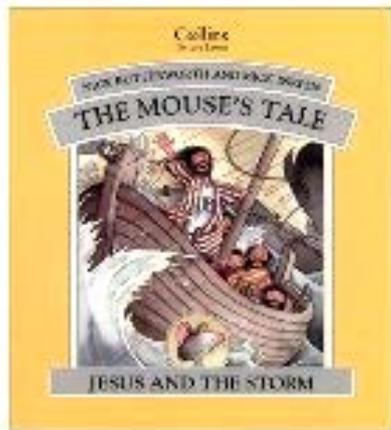
If the world is like a ship we should be prepared to stay at the helm and guide the ship to a port or harbour. In other words we should not just look after our own needs and abandon ship leaving others to struggle alone. Then storms and difficult times will drive the ship onto rocks or run aground on sand. It is a colourful way of thinking about people's journeys through life.

William Penn paints a wonderful picture of a ship needing someone to steer it so it doesn't run aground. In William Penn's time crossing the ocean in a ship was fraught with difficulties and dangers. Today there are people making dangerous journeys in boats that are not very seaworthy. There are refugees trying to get away from places where they are in danger or treated badly. They arrive in other countries with very few possessions and then are forced to live in tents until they can get a house.

William Penn was suggesting we travel alongside people who are troubled to help them feel safe and cared for. Quakers today do this. They are called Ecumenical Accompaniers and work in places like Palestine.

Now we will hear a story about someone who did help people on a boat when there was a terrible storm.





Read the story of The Mouse's Tale

Invite people to think about what they would want to give other people to help them on their journey through life. What would they need on this boat that might have some choppy times as it sails across the seas? Or what might they need when they arrive in a strange place – like refugees? People might have some words of comfort or want to draw a picture of what they can take with them (or give them when they arrive after their journey). Provide some simple boat templates to use as in the picture below. Encourage people to do the activity quietly and thoughtfully. Others who do not want to do the activity can

uphold the others in the silence. Some may want to share what they have put in their boat. This is ministry.

Give people time to do this before ending meeting for worship with shaking of hands.

