



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition September 2017 Issue 111



Finding Hope in Turbulent Times - Developing Spiritual Practices

Getting ready

Experience and nature of worship

Quaker faith & practice 2.01

“Worship is the response of the human spirit to the presence of the divine and eternal, to the God who first seeks us. The sense of wonder and awe of the finite before the infinite leads naturally to thanksgiving and adoration.

Silent worship and the spoken word are both parts of Quaker ministry. The ministry of silence demands the faithful activity of every member in the meeting. As, together, we enter the depths of a living silence, the stillness of God, we find one another in ‘the things that are eternal’, upholding and strengthening one another.

This month's issue is based on the idea that we can find hope, and build resilience and strength through Quaker worship. To do this effectively we need to understand what worship is and how we can practice this well.

Resources needed: pens, scissors, paper, templates for the ‘Respond’ exercise you are doing.

Journeys in the Spirit offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children and young people.

This children's work edition comes out monthly. It offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with 5–12 year olds in a Quaker setting.

It provides opportunities for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of worship in partnership on our shared journey in the spirit.

Gather

Gather in the way you normally do. If you have no regular routine you might like to think of welcoming everyone and making sure that everyone knows each other's names.

If you have been in Meeting for Worship before gathering as children, you might wish to gather in an active way. One idea is to stand in a circle, say your name and an action that starts with the same sound, and then do that action. E.g. my name is Jude and I like jumping, while jumping. Children can be helped to think of actions that match their name and that they can perform safely.



If you go into Meeting for Worship at the end, it may be helpful to begin children's meeting with a time of stillness.

It can also help the children and adults to re-connect by sharing any news from the past week(s).

Underpinning reference

Exercise is good for us; prayer is the right kind for the spirit. As with physical exercise there are many kinds, to do by yourself or with other people, at different intervals, with different aids. It takes time and commitment to develop the right kind for each one of us.

Quaker faith & practice 20.12.12

Engage

What is Quaker Worship and how do you do it?

It is not always easy to think about Quaker worship – what it is, how we do it and how it feels. Sometimes it is not easy to do, adults also find it hard and need to practice.

Sometimes just sitting in silence can seem boring and uninteresting. Maybe nothing happens. This activity helps us think of ways to appreciate the quiet.

Now we are going to try a way of settling ourselves so that we feel calm. It will only be for a brief time. Carry out the settling exercise (taken from page 8 of the Worship Kit, see sidebar).

What is it that we are doing in Meeting for Worship?

Sometimes we don't quite know what to do, if anything. What are the adults doing? We may feel fidgety or bored or want to be somewhere else and that is perfectly understandable. This activity is another way of settling in meeting. It helps get rid of unwanted thoughts and focus on where we are. It will take 5-10 minutes. Ask everyone to sit in a circle and use words like these:

“Look around and see who is here, see where everyone is sitting. Smile at friends. You are here with friends and in a safe place.

Close your eyes and listen to noises outside the room. Birds singing, distant traffic noises, maybe people moving about. Listen to them and then let them go.

Listen to sounds inside the room. People changing position, shuffling, coughing, perhaps people near you breathing. Listen to the sounds and then let them go.

You may be able to go deeper inside yourself and hear things like your own breathing or your heart beating.

Now listen to things going on inside you. You will have thoughts inside your head, things that happened this week at school or home, thoughts about what you are doing today, tomorrow or in the future.

Listen to these thoughts and then let them go. Perhaps now you are feeling calm and peaceful. I will stop speaking and we can enjoy this feeling for a few minutes.”

After the quiet you may want to invite the children to think about how it feels individually, they may want to write about it in their journal.

What do we call God?

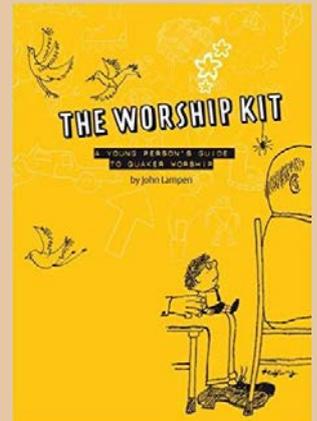
We are now going to think about the different names for God. Quakers often struggle with the word God and look for other names that they feel more comfortable with, names like Light or Spirit or Goodness.

Sometimes having words to help us think about something can help us explain to others what we feel.

Have a few minutes of quiet and think what our names for God might be. It could be a feeling, a colour, something in Nature, someone or something we know and like. The children could remember this name and write about it in their journal or draw a picture or cartoon.

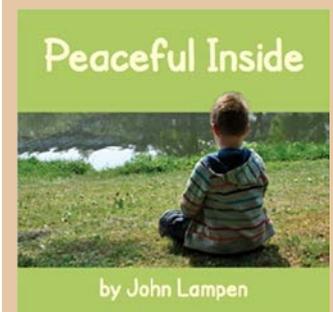
References & other resources

The Worship Kit
John Lampen



ISBN-13: 978-1907123146

Peaceful Inside
John Lampen



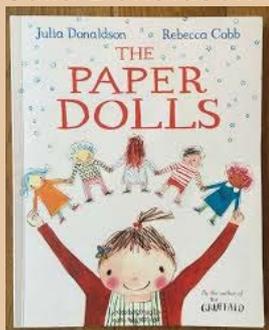
ISBN-13: 978-0956302298

Both these books are available from The Quaker Bookshop: Tel: 020 7663 1030/1031
Email: quakercentre@quaker.org.uk

Additional Resources 111.A accessible at www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren by selecting 'resources for current issue'.

References & other resources

The Paper Dolls by Julia Donaldson



ISBN

150980546X,
9781509805464

Watch 'Becoming me' at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEQFIo1IFbk>

The Paper Dolls and Becoming Me

can all be suitable books to use as a stimulus for P4C (Philosophy for Children and Communities). For more information on P4C go to:

www.sapere.org.uk

Additional Resources 111.B & 111.C accessible at

www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren
by selecting 'resources for current issue'

Respond

Activity 1

We have been thinking about settling in meeting for worship. So what are we doing when we try to settle? It might be that we are trying to find "that of God within us all". What does that mean? There are other faiths that believe God is a person, usually a man, who looks over us and protects us. But Quakers generally do not hold that belief. God is more like the good within us, the many feelings within us.

These things are like gifts inside us. There are memories and feelings. They are important for our own stories – stories about who we are, what we are like and what we have to offer. These may be things like gentleness, vibrancy, laughter, delight, curiosity, wonder and many more. All these things are inside us – here in our hearts.

For this activity use the template (see sidebar for *Additional Resource 111.B*) to draw the 'people' outlines and write, draw or stick on things that represent the qualities inside us. These people will be very special – they are each one of us. The children could stick in things like seeds for growth, rice for food and nourishment, sequins for treasure or special memories. When you have finished your people, bring them back into the circle for a minute or two of quiet to finish. The children could spend time talking about their person if they would like to.

Activity 2

We could also think about what we see of God in others. We could make paperchain people – see sidebar for *Additional Resource 111.C*



Decorate these and write or talk about quality we see in different people or would like to see, that may be seen of that of God within.

Activity 3

Children could play a variation of the name game from the gather section, standing in a circle and throwing a ball to one another saying for example "I see that of God in the way Lizzie laughs" or: "I can see that of God in the jam Jude makes. I see that of God in how Peter plays football". Perhaps they could include saying the names of other people in the Meeting or other people that they know.

Reflect

It is helpful to have some time at the end of the session to reflect and share together as a group.

You might want to ask the following questions:

- Who are the people that help you feel strong and help you recognise that there is that of God within you?
- When worrying or difficult things happen, who might you share these things with?
- What have you recognised about yourself and others that can give you hope?
- Can you continue reflection through drawing or writing in your Journals?

As Children's meeting is just part of the whole Meeting, it is important that the adults in Meeting are aware of what the children are doing. Children may like to share what they have been thinking about today. Plan with the children how this might happen and ask the adults to share what they have been doing and thinking about too.

Review

It can be very helpful to take time afterwards, together as volunteers to reflect on the session.

These questions might be helpful in this reflection.

How did the children respond to this topic? How did they participate?

Were there things you might have done differently?

Did the session allow for children and adults to share and grow together?

Are there issues that need to be shared with Children's committee?

How can this work be shared for the growth of the whole all age worshipping community?

This issue was written by Judith Acton and edited by Mel Cook and Howard Nurden.

Journeys in the Spirit is published in two formats on alternative months. One month the issue is on a theme, with an easy to use structure set out in a four page booklet with additional online resources. The alternative month is a topical activity – something about the news or of a seasonal interest.

Available from 3 October 2017 **Topical Activity** Sharing about us

Available from 1 November 2017 **The Bible** (Ruth)

Materials available online are:

Additional Resources Sheets

An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting

A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship

These can be accessed through

www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren by scrolling down to 'resources for current issue'.

For a 'How to use Journeys in the Spirit guide', the catalogue of previous issues and a link to the resources for recent issues, go to www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren and scroll down to find what you want.

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