



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward



Youth Work Edition

Issue 35

October 2018

Shared Spirit

The youth edition of Journeys in the Spirit provides a range of ideas to use with 12–18 year olds in a Quaker context. It offers activities for one-off sessions or weekends and comes out each year. Some suggestions are made about age suitability. Timings are not stated, as this will depend on the group and how the activities are used. Each issue explores a theme.

Journeys in the Spirit is offered with the intention of providing an opportunity for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of worship in partnership on our shared journey in the spirit. There are four directions to our spiritual journey: inwards to ourselves; outwards to others; upwards (or is it further inwards?) towards the deeper mystery; downwards to the world we live in.

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The theme for this issue

Quakers are a small group compared to other faith groups around the world. With more multicultural communities growing all over the UK, it is important to gain some understanding of what people of other faiths believe and practice.

Making connections between Quakerism and other faiths can help lead to shared understanding of important issues and make it easier to work together.

This issue focuses on finding those similarities in values and practices that create our 'shared spirit'.

Using the material

This material is designed to be used with 12 – 18 year old Quaker young people. This might be through a series of one-off sessions or as a theme for a longer day event or residential.

It is good to try and use the ideas from a variety of 'Points', as this ensures that there are a balance of approaches. Hopefully this will make what you do suitable for a range of different young people.

The material is also adaptable to use with adults, or adults and young people together. Some aspects would work well in worship for all ages.

Do consider especially whether any of this might be used in Inter Faith Week in November.



Gathering Points

Worship

Start with everyone sitting in a circle and having a minute or so of worship. Read Advice 6 in Advices and Queries if it seems appropriate:

“Do you work gladly with other religious groups in the pursuit of common goals? While remaining faithful to Quaker insights, try to enter imaginatively into the life and witness of other communities of faith, creating together the bonds of friendship.”

Beginnings

Explain that this session will look at connections between Quakerism and other faiths. Ask the group to go round saying their name (if people aren't familiar with each other) and one thing they know about another faith. This could be a belief, a practice, a story about another faith or something else.



Starting Points

Quaker values

Ask what we mean when we talk about 'Quaker values'. What are they?

Invite the group to write down their Quaker values and see what similarities and differences there are between them. Then discuss why each is important for Quakers. The group may want to take inspiration from the publication *Living our beliefs*, which can be accessed online at www.yqspace.org.uk/living-our-beliefs.

Making connections

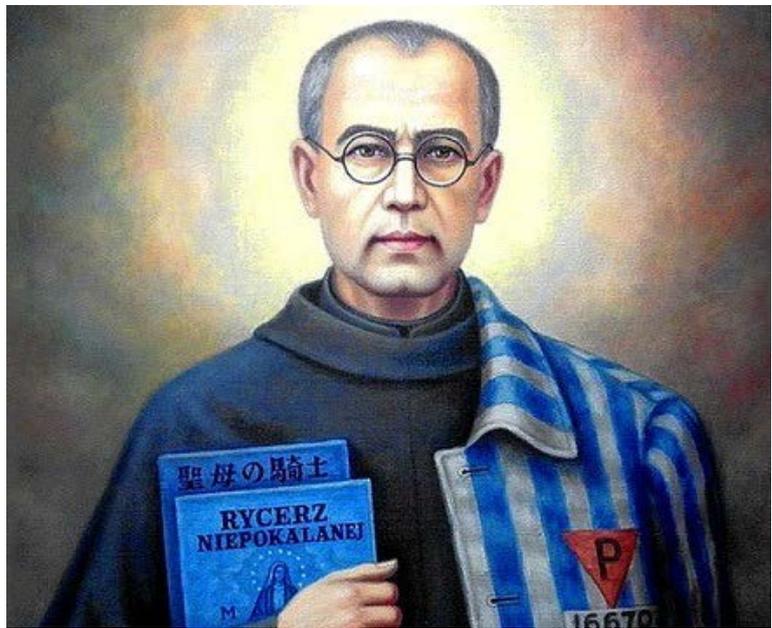
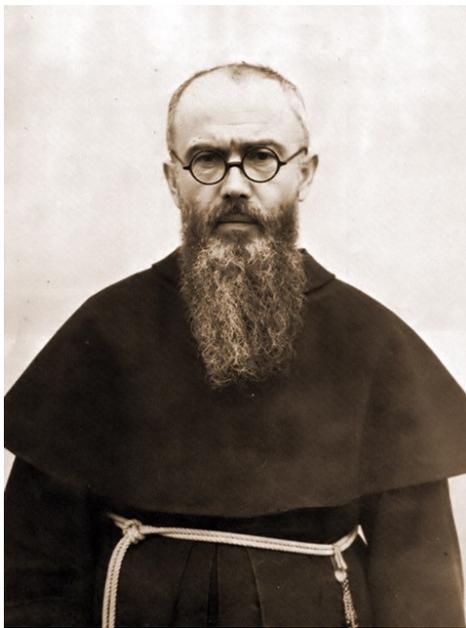
Have a ball of string handy. Ask the group sit in a circle, on the floor if possible. Starting with one of the Quaker values that someone came up with in the last activity, ask if anyone can make a connection between that value and another faith. For example, a connection could be made between the Quaker value of peace and Buddhist teachings of peace. Where a connection is found, the ball of string is rolled from the first person to the second. That person can then think of another value and someone else in the circle can find a connection. Continue until no more connections can be thought of, or you run out of time! The end result should show a web of connections across multiple faiths.

Reflection Points

Saint Maximilian Kolbe

Read out the story of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, which you can find at www.quaker.org.uk/resources-youth, scrolling down to 'Resources for current issue' and selecting 'Saint Kolbe' under Reflection Points.

Ask the group to think about the values they hold, as Quakers, and see if they can pick out any of the same values in the story. They should write down any words, or draw any images, that come to mind, either about the values shown or to express their feelings about the story.



An imaginary interfaith event

Ask the young people to imagine they are going to an interfaith event. People from many different faiths will be there, including Buddhists, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. The event provides time and space for people to get to know each other, as well as a session on a topic that concerns the people there. The young people may want to close their eyes to imagine this.

Read out the following questions for the young people to consider. They can write down their thoughts, or just reflect internally.

1. What are your initial thoughts and feelings about going to the event? Are you excited? Anxious? Apprehensive? Interested?
2. What are some questions you would like to ask of other people at the event? They could be specific to one religion, or questions for all.
3. Are there any questions you would hesitate to ask? Why?
4. What do you think the topic for the session will be? Is there a topic you would be interested in exploring with an interfaith group?

If the group feels comfortable, they could share their thoughts and feelings with each other and discuss any interesting questions.



Listening points

Eating together

Listen to the podcast from 'The Food Programme' about eating at a Sikh temple. It can be accessed at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09784x4 (play from 4.30-13.58). Ask the young people what they think about the Sikh value of open hospitality. Does it bear any similarity to Quaker values?

Religious music

Listen to 'King Without a Crown' by Matisyahu, a Jewish artist, accessed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChV5BZ8SmS0. If possible, play the video as well as it shows some lyrics. Then listen to 'Prayin' by Plan B, a Christian artist, accessed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=NfjLJcZ06Gw. Note the similarities in theme - looking to God for consolation in hard times. Discuss as a group the importance of belief to all who have a faith.



Viewing Points

The Interfaith Amigos

Watch the TEDxDU video by The Interfaith Amigos, accessed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPnZArtsG_c. Encourage the group to share their thoughts about it. Was anyone surprised by the connections between the three men?

Give some time for the group to think about their universal values, or universal truths. Ask people to share if they would like to, explaining why their value or truth is important.

The beauty and diversity of Muslim life

Watch the TED talk by Bassam Tariq on being a blogger, filmmaker and halal butcher, accessed at www.ted.com/talks/bassam_tariq_the_beauty_and_diversity_of_muslim_life?referrer=playlist-misconceptions_of_islam_and_mu#t-266124.

Ask people what they learnt from this. What questions could be asked to find out about the diversity of people from different faiths?

Bronx to Bradford: Friars on a Mission

Watch the video 'Gabriel's Room' from the BBC documentary 'Bronx to Bradford', accessed at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04zvspb. Ask the group to write down the best word they can think of to describe Brother Gabriel's room, and life. Then encourage them to think about why he wants to live like that.

Did the video make the group think differently about the Quaker testimony to simplicity?



Talking points

Religious practices

Print out the pictures of religious practices, found at www.quaker.org.uk/resources-youth, scrolling down to 'Resources for current issue' and selecting 'Religious practices' under Talking Points. Put them in the middle of the group and explain them using the brief descriptions.

Each of these practices brings the worshipper closer to God, or closer to the ideal end point of worship. What practices do Quakers have that help with this? Are there any similarities between the practices of other religions and those of Quakers?

Places of worship

Print out the pictures of different places of worship, found at www.quaker.org.uk/resources-youth, scrolling down to 'Resources for current issue' and selecting 'Places of worship' under Talking Points. Place them around the room and ask the group to look at them and think about the similarities and differences between them. They could think about the physical spaces as well as the people in them. What similarities might there be in the thoughts or focus of the worshippers?

When everyone has had time to look at all the pictures, have a discussion about the ideas that came up for people. Then talk about what people think about when coming in to meeting for worship. What might be some barriers for people of other faiths to enjoy meeting for worship? And what barriers might other places of worship pose to Quakers in order for them to participate? Could there be any ways of overcoming those barriers?

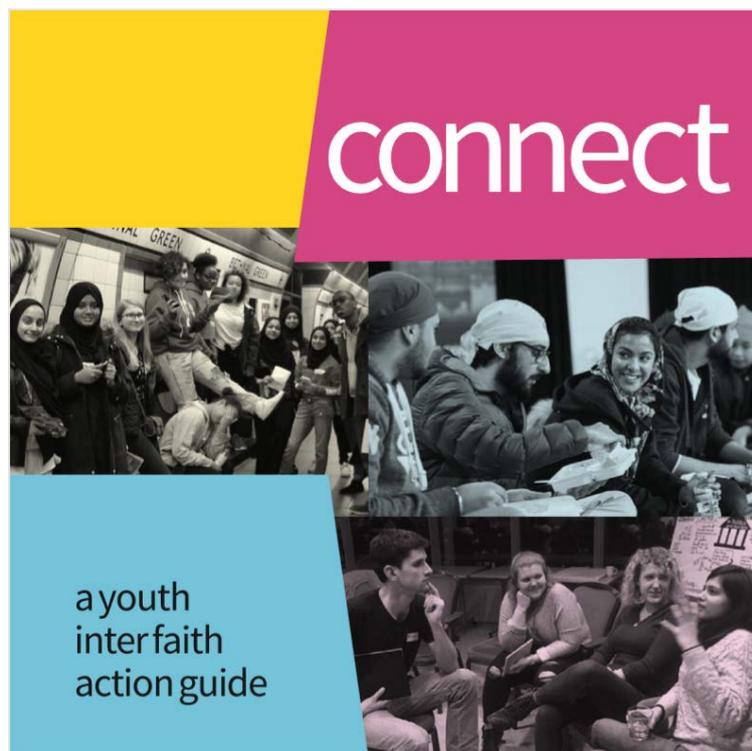




Action points

Some actions that could be taken

1. Visit other places of worship
Get in touch with other churches and places of worship in your area to arrange a visit. This could be during the usual time for the young people's group, or a separate trip. Ask if any young people from the other faith are able to be there during the visit to talk with the group.
2. Invite people from other faiths to visit the Meeting House
You could arrange this as above, or ask people to come during Quaker Week, 29 September – 7 October, and share a meal. For help with planning and ideas for activities, use the resource 'Engaging with schools', which can be accessed online by going to www.quaker.org.uk/children-and-young-people/work-quaker-setting/resources-young-people and scrolling down to 'Engaging with Schools - Outreach with children and young people'.
3. Arrange to do something for Interfaith week, 11-18 November 2018
Look on the Inter Faith Week website, www.interfaithweek.org, and see if there is an activity happening near your Meeting. If not, use their resources to create an activity.
4. Look at the interfaith action guide for young people from the Inter Faith Network
It can be accessed at www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/Connect2018.pdf. Are there any ideas for activities or events that you could do as a group?
5. Talk to someone in your Meeting who is involved with ecumenical or interfaith work about their experience. You could invite them to do a talk or question and answer session in the young people's session, or arrange it for the whole Meeting.





Worship points

Some readings for worship

Have some worship and ask someone to read one or more of these quotes and passages to let the group reflect on:

“...be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, 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 every one.”

Quaker Faith and Practice, 19.32

“The more we listen carefully to one another the closer we come to an intimate connection with the greater whole. We are challenged to become beacons for change in the world and to have the courage to ‘hope beyond imagination’.”

Epistle of Britain Yearly Meeting 2014, found in Living Our Beliefs, p.71

"My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together."

Desmond Tutu

“There is a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and ages has different names; it is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of religion nor excluded from any where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whichever person this takes root and grows, of any nation, they become family.”

Paraphrased from Quaker Faith and Practice, 26.61



Ending Points

Ending thoughts

Using a beanbag or ball to indicate who is talking, go round the group sharing thoughts and feelings about what has been learnt and explored in these activities.

Use the following questions as prompts:

Have you learnt anything new from these sessions?

Has anything changed your attitude or outlook towards other faiths?

Why is it important to learn about other faiths? How can this help the world to be a better place?

Is there anything you would like to do, as an individual or as a group, to take what you have explored in these sessions further?

Review

Those responsible for planning and coordinating the use of this material should come together to review and reflect. It would be nice if some of the young people could also give their views. Some questions that might be helpful to consider as a part of this are:

- How has engaging with this issue enabled young people to explore connections between Quakers and other faiths?
- In what ways have young people explored the value of making those connections?
- Have young people been able to express their thoughts and feelings about interfaith relations?

Could the young people present their thoughts and feelings to adults in meeting?

Additional resources & links

The Inter Faith Network: www.interfaith.org.uk

Inter Faith Week: www.interfaithweek.org

Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations: www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/our-structures/quaker-committee-for-christian-and-interfaith-relations

Living our beliefs:
www.yospace.org.uk/living-our-beliefs

The Quaker bookshop:
<http://bookshop.quaker.org.uk>

Links to other organisations

Christian Aid:
educational resources on global issues
www.christianaid.org.uk/schools

Cafod:
resources for education on world issues
www.cafod.org.uk/education

Youth Work magazine:
a monthly Christian youth work publication
www.youthwork.co.uk

Russell House Publishing:
resources for working with young people
www.russellhouse.co.uk

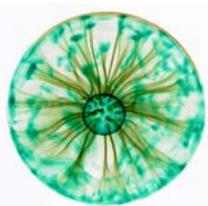
Oxfam:
resources for youth work on global issues
www.oxfam.org.uk/education

This issue

This issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* Youth Edition was written by Ellie McCarthy. The editor was Howard Nurden.

Next issue

The next issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* Youth Edition will explore gender diversity and will be available in June 2019.



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Published by Children & Young People's Staff Team, Quaker Life

