



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition July 2019 Issue 122



Imagining the future

Getting ready

In this issue we will be thinking about what it might be like to be a Quaker in future. What might our Quaker communities look like? What will it be like to live as a Quaker in the world? What might it be like to be a Quaker child in 2044?

Although the future can often seem alarming and unpredictable, the aim of this session is to give children a sense of agency and power in shaping the kind of future they want to see and the kind of Quaker meetings they want to be part of.

'The more we listen carefully to one another the closer we come to an intimate connection to 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

Materials needed: junk materials (boxes, tubes etc.), card, paper, scissors, pens, pencils, sticky tape, pictures of new and innovative buildings – (eco builds, 'hobbit' houses, Steiner schools, co-housing) and perhaps pictures of futuristic worlds and landscapes as inspiration, writing paper and envelopes, Lego.

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 your usual way, perhaps sitting in a circle and holding a time of stillness. You may want to light a candle in the centre of circle to help everyone to focus. Explain that today we are going to think about what it might be like to be a Quaker in 25 years time; ask them how they think it might be different? Ask them what they might like to see?



Underpinning references

As we try to respond to new leadings we often cannot discern what will remain important and what will be seen as ephemeral. There will be tensions as we wrestle with our diverse perceptions and convictions, and tensions can be creative. Our hope and our experience is that when we are faithful we shall be rightly led.

Qf&p ch.29

Engage

Katie goes to meeting

Tell the following story:

Katie and her family - her mums Lucy and Nadia and baby Tobi - arrive at meeting as usual on Wednesday evening. It's a lovely, balmy summer evening and everyone gathers in the garden for their usual shared supper. Katie's family have brought freshly baked scones and a large pizza to share. The food is all vegan and has been ever since the Yearly Meeting made the decision to become an all-vegan community in 2024. They were the first church to do so...

Everyone of every age helps get the meal ready and the meeting clerk, Jo - who is a few years above Katie in school - leads them in a few moments of silence. Over food, they all talk about their weeks and what they have been doing, telling stories and sharing news.

After the meal, they go into the second meeting room and gather for worship. The second meeting room is nearly seven years old now and is built entirely from eco bricks and reclaimed material and was designed to be cool in the summer - summers are so much hotter than they were when Katie's mums were young - and warm in the winter. Katie loves this room, it is peaceful and still and flooded with coloured light.

As worship begins, the monitor screens are turned on and they are joined by the Friends who can't be with them. There is Tom, a young adult Quaker who is travelling in Australia and who joins them for worship once a month; Trevor also join them via a webcam in his prison cell (Trevor is serving a sentence for taking part in the International Climate Protest of 2029); Maude and Lily are also joining them from the nursing home where they live.

Worship involves stillness and silence, some singing, a craft activity and some spoken ministry (this week it comes from two of the younger children and from Maude in the nursing home) and some reading from the new Book of Quaker Discipline. Katie feels the warmth and Light inside her - her mum Lucy calls it God, but Nadia doesn't have a name for it and doesn't think you need one.

She is one of the elders this evening, so at the end of worship Katie shakes hands with Grace, who has just turned 97

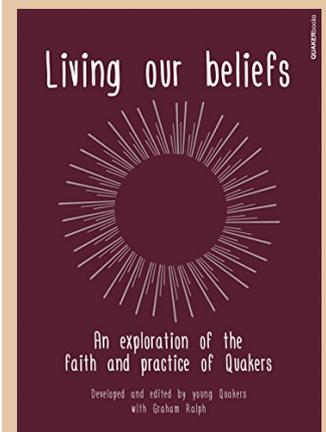
As Katie looks around she notices how different all these faces are - so many different ages and races and stories and experiences - all coming together to share and worship, to find strength and support and inspiration. She is so glad to be part of this Quaker family.



References & other resources

"All you need for worship is a quiet place out of doors or a plain meeting house. All you need to share the light within and help find truth is plain, clear language among seekers. All you need for living are a few possessions, simplicity of spirit and a readiness to answer the divine spark in every person"

Robert Lawrence Smith - A Quaker book of wisdom. Taken from *Living our beliefs*



Available from the Quaker Bookshop

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

Respond

Katie goes to meeting

Ask the children what they notice about the story of Katie going to meeting? What is different from their meeting? Is anything the same?

Do you think you would like to be part of Katie's meeting?

Using the craft materials, ask the children to make a model, plan or picture of what they would like their meeting to look like? What would the building look like? Who would be there? What would they do? Encourage them to be as bold and imaginative as they can.

You may want to use pictures of new and innovative buildings - eco builds, 'hobbit' houses, Steiner schools, co-housing - and perhaps pictures of futuristic worlds and landscapes as inspiration.

Talk with the children about who would attend the meeting and how they would attend – have they all come to the meeting house or are they joining from somewhere else?

Letter to the future meeting



Talk with the children about what they might like to tell the future meeting about. Are there things that they really enjoy about meeting and being a Quaker in their community? What would they change? What would they keep and why?

Have paper and envelopes available and invite the children to write or draw a letter to the future meeting including the things that you have just talked about. Talk with the children about when they would want people to open and read the letters? When the letters are finished, gather them up and store them in a box with 'open in 2030 or whichever date you've agreed on for people to see them and an explanation of what they are. Organise to store these somewhere safe.

Lego meeting

Build (or have someone build) a Lego meeting house that looks similar to your meeting. There should be people seated for meeting for worship and other elements of gathering that your meeting has.



Once everyone has had chance to look at the model, take it apart and then talk with the children about what it might look like in the future. Who would be there? What would the building look like? What form would meeting for worship take? Would the children want to keep anything from the previous model or would it be a completely different building?

References & other resources

For inspiration on creating model buildings go to:

<https://bit.ly/31H0XCw>

and

<https://bit.ly/2ZxepHi>

How to build a Lego house:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3l0WlJuX2A>

Reflect

After the activities, gather together and reflect again on Katie's story. You might want to ask some wondering questions:

I wonder what you liked about Katie's meeting?

I wonder what you noticed was different from your meeting?

I wonder what you would like to do differently in your meeting?

I wonder what you think it will be like to be a Quaker child in the future?

You might encourage the children to ask some of the adults in the meeting what they think Quaker communities will be like and what things we might do differently.



Materials available online are:

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.

Review

After meeting reflect on today's session, on what went well and what might have been done differently.

Where there any ideas of things that the meeting could do differently that it would be good to take further?

Was there anything that the children shared or explored that you might want to come back to at a later session?

If you have done the 'letter for the future' activity, does it need to be agreed at a business meeting where the letters will be kept? Think how the children could be involved in this discussion.

This issue was written by Alistair Fuller and Mel Cook. 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 1 August 2019: Topical Activity **Postcards**

Available from 2 September 2019: **Communication**

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