

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 32

October 2009

Children



One Quaker family – some little stories

“Journeys in the Spirit” offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children and young people. This children’s work edition of “Journeys in the Spirit” comes out monthly. It offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children aged 4 –12 years in a Quaker setting. It 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.

Included are sections on: **getting ready**, for those co-ordinating the programme; **gather**, meeting, centering, focusing; **engage**, beginning to think about the theme; **respond**, activities linked to the theme; **reflect**, ending appropriately; and **review**, evaluating what has happened. To offer a balanced session you should aim to do something from each section. Some of the activities are included on additional sheets. Timings or ages are not stated, as this will depend on the group and how the guidance and activities are used.

Underpinning each issue is the idea that there are four directions to our spiritual journey. **Inwards** to ourselves; **outwards** to others; **upwards** (or even further inwards?) towards the deeper mystery; downwards to the world we live in.



The sixth in the ‘Our Quaker stories’ series.
May 2009 – August 2010

Getting ready

This issue focuses on one Quaker family’s experience in a particular field - missionary work. The Rodwell family went to China 100 years ago, with the Friends Foreign Mission in China. How Quakers organised things was very different then although when you read some of the stories the heart of what they ended up doing was similar to what many Friends do today.

Today, many Friends are again growing in confidence about speaking of what we believe and hold to be true. The Britain Yearly Meeting Framework for Action and its encouragement to reach out in different ways, such as through Quaker Week from October 3rd–11th 2009 are examples of this. How can children be part of this?

How might talking about or even admitting to being a Quaker be different or the same then and now? Can we still be too scared of talking about what we believe? How do we worship and work together to build confident inner lives, and share the experience appropriately with others? from the Rodwell family and earlier Friends about how to do this?

The topical activity on climate change is one way that we as Quakers are reaching out – it’s about what we do as an expression of what we say. We can’t all stop warlords fighting – but each of us, of any age, has ministry to offer.



Underpinning references

Quotes: Wm. Penn, QF and P, 19.48

Advices and queries 2 and 5

1 Corinthians, Ch.1:V. 12 – 31

Friends seek God’s help in choosing what they are uniquely suited to do, in a world which is so full of needs that we cannot respond to all of them - *Two individual Friends from Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting respond to the Framework for Action*

Gather

Everybody sits in a circle, and introduces his or herself, saying one thing which they think is different about them - it might be having red hair, or speaking another language. Then go round again and each person says something that they share with the others – something the same.

Have things available which are about difference - some chopsticks with some spoons and forks, a book in a different language (QF and P will do!), a children's book, a Bible, pictures from magazines of different people.



Engage



This is Joanna Rodwell. When she grew up her daughter was Meg Hill who is telling the stories that follow. See Sheet 32 A for pictures of Joanna and her family and of Meg.

Meg says: “Joanna’s parents were Quaker missionaries. Quakers then thought that they should go to other countries and tell them about our God, and about Jesus. They also trained in healthcare, so that they could help people to get well, and look after their children better. When they got to China, though, they realised that the Chinese had their own ways of understanding God, and that people there were just like anyone else – sometimes kind and loving, and sometimes full of anger and fear. So my Grandparents realised that they needed to work alongside the Chinese people, and not think they should teach them what to believe. So I think they learned to respect each other.” On Sheets 32A -32.C there are five little stories about Joanna, her mum and dad, her family and people who helped them. These are called:

Little Story 1 - ‘Everybody looks the same!’

Little Story 2 - ‘War and other scary things 1’.

Little Story 3 - ‘War and other scary things 2’.

Little Story 4 - Joanna up a mountain’.

Little Story 5 - ‘What’s not in the picture?’

Read one or more of these stories and then follow with an activity from the Respond section.

There are activities linked with each of these stories. Think about which ages the stories of war are told to. They have been written carefully so as to be suitable for most ages and the activities are designed to help children process and express any thoughts and feelings. Say that in telling these stories they become part of our own story and we become part of theirs.

References & other resources

Poem “Tyger, Tyger burning bright,” by Wm. Blake - something we all share is being part of the Divine – some would say, ‘made by God’.



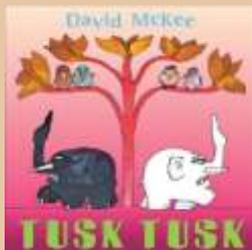
Quaker Faith and Practice query no: 17:

Do you respect that of God in everyone though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or be difficult to discern? Each of us has a particular experience of God and each must find the way to be true to it. When words are strange or disturbing to you, try to sense where they come from and what has nourished the lives of others.

Listen patiently and seek the truth which other people’s opinions may contain for you. Avoid hurtful criticism and provocative language.

Do not allow the strength of your convictions to betray you into making statements or allegations that are unfair or untrue. Think it possible that you may be mistaken.’

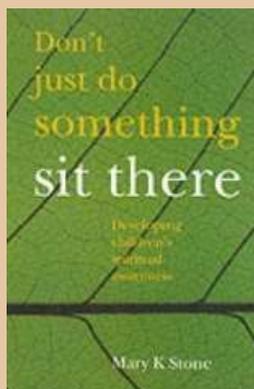
Is there a way you could rewrite this Advice for children?



A story about a war between different elephants that has a surprising and positive outcome. Available from the Quaker Bookshop ISBN-13: 9781842705797

Making a Scroll:

<http://www.quietfish.com/notebook/?p=3115>



ISBN-10: 185175105X available to buy from the Quaker Bookshop on 020 7663 1030 or at quakercentre@quaker.org.uk and to borrow from the Quaker Centre Resources Space 0207 663 1030

Little story 1: 'Everybody looks the same!'

Show everybody the picture of Joanna in Engage again – ask everybody to think about her being in a country her mum and dad called home but she didn't know or like. Ask if anybody has ever been in a new place that they hadn't been in before – maybe on holiday, a new school, a new home with new neighbours or in a different country. What was that like? Offer time for anybody to speak who wants to. Activity: use the faces on *Sheet 32.C* – have several sheets available. Ask everybody who has spoken to pick one show what they have felt in different situations they have described – happy, puzzled, scared, angry, sad or excited?

Little story 2 - 'War and other scary things 1'.

For this and the next story, have a selection of toys children could use to act out the stories, include construction toys – bricks etc. Also have lots of good quality arts material for children to use. Before inviting children to use equipment or play ask questions to stimulate conversation like, 'I wonder how Meg's grandmother felt when she was in the house with her children. I wonder how the children, including Joanna, felt. Listen and comment positively as appropriate – say things like, 'that's interesting – I think that's true' or 'I think I might feel like that too' and then invite others to speak. There may be 'silly' or nervous comments – just accept these and move on.

Little story 3 - 'War and other scary things 2'.

As well as the suggestions in 'Little story 2' also look at *Sheet 32.D* for activities about making scrolls like that awarded to John Rodwell and his Friends. (See sidebar for an internet link to another way to make a scroll. See Reflect section on Page 4 for the Chinese characters that spell peace). You could also ask a series of wondering questions: 'I wonder, which part of this story did you like the best; I wonder, which part of this story do you think is most important; I wonder which part of this story are you in or is in you; I wonder if there is any part of this story that you could leave out and still have all the story that you need'. There can then be time for use of toys and equipment and arts materials.

Little story 4 – 'Joanna up a mountain'.

Ask the children, 'I wonder, what you think about Joanna going up the mountain'. You could also ask, 'I wonder what you would have asked the Buddhist monk?'

If you can, get a copy of '*Don't just do something, sit there*' by Mary Stone (see side bar for how to obtain).

The book has a lot of very good guidance for adults working with children about stilling, centering and guided visualisations. Visualisations can be powerful and need to be done with care. A visualisation that links with **Little Story 4** begins with eyes closed, being still, quiet and relaxed. It continues with imagining going on a safe walk through a wood or forest up a hill or mountain. At the top of the hill or mountain, still safe, there is a wise person. In the imagined walk the next task is to sit and wait for the wise person to give you a gift, or she, or he, may have a question to ask of 'you'. After a little while there is a walk back down the hill or mountain, stopping at the bottom, resting for a little while and then opening eyes again. A slow pace to the telling of this is important. Mary Stone refers to a similar visualisation and offers a list of questions that children can then be asked for which the answers are written down or drawn – with no requirement to share unless people want to. Finally, one more question that can be used after **Little Story 4** – ask, 'I wonder, if you were asked what do you believe what would you answer?' Replies can be spoken, written or drawn.



Little story 5 – 'Whats not in the picture?' If you have used this story and asked the questions afterwards you could tell the 'Tusk Tusk' story – see side bar - or just have an assortment of creative materials to be used for quietly illustrating the story or one about themselves.

Reflect

Joanna grew up, had a family and, when she was much older wrote a book about being a Quaker. Just for moment remember the stories of Joanna and her family. They are part of our big Quaker family. As Quakers we think we can do good things in our world – even when it might be hard. Even a very simple thing like remembering to have a thankful silence before a meal can help - small people can help a family to do this.

Say something like, lets have a little more quiet time, and say a quiet thank you for something good in your day or life. Re-join Meeting (where appropriate) and hold on to the silence.



These are the traditional Chinese characters for the word 'peace'. In this time of reflection lay out white card and black pencils, crayons or charcoal for drawings of this symbol to be copied in the quiet and stillness. Have an original on a bigger piece of paper.

Review

The review can happen at the time or later – it maybe done by yourself or with others. Some useful questions for the use of volunteers to look back over and learn from the session include: Have children been able to participate in their own way? What went well and why? Has each child been able to reflect, even a little, on something about her or his thoughts and feelings stimulated by the stories and activities in their time together? What is there for you to learn from this session? What might you do differently another time?

Topical activity

In December 2009 a very important meeting is taking place in Copenhagen, involving people from all over the world. It's the United Nations Climate Change Summit. This is happening because the Earth overall is getting warmer. Ice at the North and South Poles and elsewhere is melting this is making sea levels rise. Low-level land will be submerged, countries will get hotter and weather patterns will change. Human activities such as using fossil fuels are making a major contribution to climate change. See *Sheets 32.E & F*.

Please remember: On November 4th in Friends House in London there is a special gathering of people from the United Nations and lots of different churches and religions. The meeting is called: **Climate change - we can change**. See *Journeys 31* Topical activity for how your children's meeting can help with this.

Links to other organisations and resources

www.quaker.org.uk/cyp - and click on Ideas Store.

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/friends-china-0> - links to a Quaker Library online exhibition with more photos. Some of this is written by Joanna as an adult.

<http://babelfish.yahoo.com/> - a translation website

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/copenhagen> - Quaker Peace & Social Witness Resources

This issue was written by Meg Hill and edited by Chris Nickolay; Wendy Edwards wrote the Topical activity

The next children's issue of *Journeys in the Spirit Issue 33*, available November 2nd looks at *how to tell our stories about knowing God in each of us*; *Issue 34* available December 2nd looks at *stories of Quakers in Bolivia*; *Issue 35* January 4th 2010 is about *Elizabeth Fry*.

Ideas & other resources

Joanna Kirkby's book:
'The two oceans : the dark and the light'
ISBN: 1850722668

Joanna writes about the lives of three 17th century Quakers, her parents in China, the Quakers in 1920's Russia, and about herself as a Quaker. Available from the Quaker Bookshop on 020 7663 1030 or at: quakercentre@quaker.org.uk.

What could your Meeting do as all ages together?

Little Stories 2 & 3 could be told as the start of a Meeting for Worship – with a little introduction. Follow this with the shared production of a long scroll, making peace word copies or feeling faces.

Alternatively some of the topical activity on climate change could be done as a whole Meeting.

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

Available free by subscription.

Contact:
Bevelie Shember,
CYP Staff Team,
Friends House,
173 Euston Road,
London NW1 2BJ

Phone:
020 7663 1013

Email:
bevelies@quaker.org.uk

Website:
www.quaker.org.uk