



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 44

October 2010

Children



Advices & Queries: Stillness & opening - Query 3

Getting ready

Advices and Queries began in Yearly Meeting 1682 when Friends from each of the then quarterly meetings were asked three questions:

“What Friends in the Ministry in their respective Counties departed this life since last Yearly Meeting?” “What Friends Imprisoned for their Testimony have died in prison since the last Yearly Meeting?”; “How the Truth has prospered amongst them since the last Yearly Meeting, and how Friends are in Peace and Unity?”.

In 1791 they became “general advices” “for consideration” at monthly and quarterly meetings. In 1833 they were re-written as general advices for Friends to think about adopting personally. The Advices and Queries (A&Q) book that is currently used was adopted by Yearly Meeting in 1994.

Advices and Queries “..are intended for use in our meetings for private devotion and reflection, as a challenge and inspiration to us as Friends in our personal lives and in our life as a religious community...”

The sections in Advices and Queries are: 1:7 - the Inner life; 8:13 - Meeting for Worship; 14:16 - Meeting for Worship for Business; 17:20 the Worshipping community; 21:30 - living as a Quaker; 31-42 testimonies and faith in action. This issue of Journeys in the Spirit looks at *Advices and Queries 3* - about silence, stillness and listening inwardly.

For an introduction to working with children on Advices and Queries see Journeys in the Spirit, children’s edition Issue 21, November 2008.

Gather

When you are all gathered together and settled ask everybody to imagine that they are in a busy kitchen – in their home or school or somewhere else. Ask everybody to think about the sounds, what people are doing, the smells and how people are talking to each other. After a little while ask everybody to think about being in a kitchen and feeling very calm as they help with cooking or help to get a table ready for a meal. Ask people to say something about what they imagined or thought of. Once there was a man called Brother Lawrence. He lived in a monastery. He wasn’t educated enough to be a monk so worked in the kitchens. He said something like:

“The time of busyness is no different from when I pray. In the noise and clutter of my kitchen, while lots of people are calling me for different things, I can still feel God and great peacefulness...”

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 contains resources and ideas for 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.

Underpinning reference

Quaker Faith & Practice 19.17

“I was filled with the love and presence of the living God, which did not ravish my heart when I felt it, for it did increase and abound in me like a living stream.....”

Engage

You can begin this session by looking at *Journeys in the Spirit, children's edition Issue 21* for ideas about how to introduce Advices and Queries. See sidebar for details of online archive. Alternatively, just hold up a copy of Advices and Queries, say this is a special book of words for Quakers and that you are going to read something from it.

Now read a version of Advice and Query 3. There is a link to Advices and Queries no.3 in Quaker Faith and Practice in the sidebar. This is suitable for older children. Here are two versions for younger children:

- “Do you have quiet times in your day? You and I need to find a way into quietness and silence so that we can know more about God and how strong we are inside. When we do this it can help us everyday with people or things we do.”
- “Can you be really still and quiet? Can you be so quiet that you might hear a bird fly, a feather float or a flower open? Be very still. Breathe in, breathe out – softly say the word, God. Breathe in, breathe out – softly say the word, God. When you say the word think about a special light, like a magic candle, inside you.”

Ask children the questions below - adjust the language for younger children:

- What bit of the day is most busy for you?
- Do you have any quiet times or find somewhere really quiet?
- Is Saturday or Sunday different?
- Is there noise where you live? On your journey to the shops or to school or to visit your friends or family what sort of sounds do you hear? Can you block out the sounds around you and listen to your own thoughts?
- What are the quietest or stillest times in your day or your week?
- When you have a time of stillness do you feel closer to God? Or is there a time when you feel closer to God?

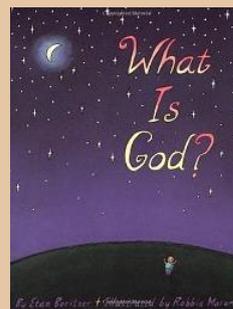
Now, ask the children to shut their eyes, just for a moment. Ask everyone to think of a sound that they like and hear a lot. Now ask them to imagine that they can hear their sound but that all around it is quiet. Ask everybody to concentrate on the quiet and try and hear the silence – just sit quietly. Do this for a minute or two. Ask children, if they want to, to say something about what they thought or felt, saw or heard whilst doing this. You could ask, “what colour was the quiet?” or “if you could touch the quiet, what would it feel like?”

 To help go from this part of session to the next see the sidebar for a book.



Some people feel closer to God when they are surrounded by nature, or by water or in the mountains. The photograph here and the ones on the online *Additional Resources 44.A* may help children imagine or feel stillness or a ‘bigger quiet’ that they can be in.

References & other resources



 **What is God?**
By E. Boritzer &
Robbie Marantz
ISBN: 920668887

Advices and Queries no.3 online
www.quaker.org.uk/advices/3

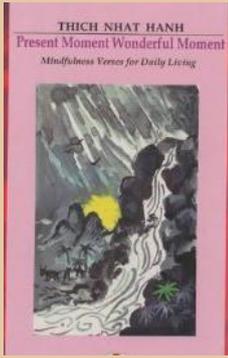
“True Silence....is to the Spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment”

W Penn: Quaker Faith & Practice 20.11

The resources for the current issue mentioned in the text:

Additional Resources 44A. More pictures of quiet places are available at:
www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren

References & other resources



📖 **Present Moment, Wonderful Moment** by Thich Nhat Hanh

📖 **'Twelve Quakers and God'**, a Quaker Quest pamphlet, page 5: "For Quakers, God is not a matter of belief but of experience". Available from the Quaker Bookshop.

Psalm 46 Verse 10: "Be still and know that I am God"

The resources for the current issue mentioned in the text

Additional Resources 44.B – 2 more stilling and centering activities

Additional Resources 44.C for Advices and Queries written by the children of Dorking Meeting

- are available at : www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren

Respond

Depending on which activities you choose you will need: *easy peel oranges for each child, paints thickened with PVA glue, paint brushes, big sheets of white paper and scissors, coloured pastels, pencils and crayons.*

Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese Buddhist Monk; he practices meditation as a way of helping him feel alive. He thinks we are so busy that we can forget what we are doing and who we are. Below are several activities that help with concentration and centering – they can also be fun.

Walking meditation. This can be done even in a small space. Ask everybody to stand in a circle, one person behind another, and close their eyes. Ask everyone to think about their feet, their shoes and to feel the surface that they are on. Ask everybody just to breathe and keep their feet firm and still on the ground. Ask everyone to open their eyes and, very, very slowly, start to walk around in a circle. Tell people to concentrate on two things: on lifting their feet as they move forward, and on the ground walked on as each foot is put back down. As people walk they could say to themselves, '*I am walking slowly, I am walking calmly, I am at peace*'. Try and keep the focus on the walking and nothing else. When it feels right gather back together and ask people what that was like.

Follow on activity: everybody draws around their feet on a sheet of paper and then decorates it with paint, pastels or pencils. The feet can be cut out, named and then stuck in a circle on a large sheet of paper for display with a little description of what has been done and why – include a version of Advices and Queries 3 written out by a child.

Examining our hands in stillness. Ask everybody to sit in a circle and hold one hand out just in front of them. Say something like, "*Everybody look carefully at your hand - the length of your fingers, the shapes of the nails, the way your hand moves as you bend your fingers, the lines on the palms of your hands.*" Remind everyone to breathe slowly, in and out. By focusing on just one thing you can still your mind. When it feels right stop the activity and ask people what that was like, what they thought or felt. How do people feel about their hand? Did people notice that they were very still?

Follow on activity: Everybody draws around their hand on a sheet of paper and then decorates it with paint, pastels or pencils. The hands can be cut out, named and then stuck on a large sheet of paper for display with a little description of what has been done and why – include a version of Advices and Queries 3 written out by a child.

Peeling an orange. In a circle give each person an easy peel orange. Ask everyone to look at it – notice its size and shape, weight, the texture of the skin and where it would have been joined to the tree. Ask people to slowly start to peel the orange – noticing the smell and the feel of it – the texture and the layers and, once the peel is off, how different the inner and outer parts of the orange are. Now ask everybody to smell it again and then break the orange into its smaller pieces and see how they have joined together. Are there any pips? When every one is ready say that they can take one piece and eat it slowly being aware of the sensation of the taste on your tongue. Then, if people want to, the rest can be eaten – quietly if possible.

Follow on activity: collect the peel, put it on a plate and cover with a cloth ready to take into Meeting so that everyone can smell it. Wash hands. Have white paper and lots of orange crayons, pastels and pencils for everybody to draw an orange.

Additional activities online. See side bar for details.

Reflect

Sometimes words cannot express what has been felt. It may be useful to finish with a circle and quiet time.

Say something like, “Now we will have some time to think about what we have been doing together and get ready to leave our Meeting. If anybody has anything they would like to say about children’s meeting today please just say – you can whisper it to someone else to say for you if that is easier.”

Have children as Elders for this.



Materials available online are:

Current issue additional Resources 44. A, B & C

An easy to use outline for a Children’s Meeting session based on this issue

A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship including how to make a simple labyrinth in your Meeting House.

Other organisations, resources and links.

A topical activity about child migrant prisoners in the UK.

Also a ‘How to use *Journeys in the Spirit*’ guide; an archive of previous issues; a link to special issues, a discussion forum and a link to the *Journeys in the Spirit* Youth edition.

All these are available at: www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren

Review

Some questions to reflect on for yourself and to talk about with colleagues or other Friends are:

- Have the children managed to engage with this session?
- Have they been able to be still and to think about the world around them?
- Was what you offered appropriate for all of the ages?
- What went well and why?
- What is there for you to learn from this session?
- What might you do differently another time?
- Did you manage to plan in advance?
- Did you manage to have worship before the session?

This issue was written by Adrienne Jeorrett and edited by Chris Nickolay.

Journeys in the Spirit Series 5 continues with Issue 45 which is about A&Q’s 37 and 38 (*truth and integrity*) and is available on November 1st; Issue 46 is about A&Q 39 (*happiness*) and is available on December 1st; Issue 47 is about A&Q 23, 24 & 25 (*diversity, family and marriage*) and is available on January 3rd 2011.

**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/cyp