



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition May 2014 Issue 87



YMG 2014 - Being a Quaker and a child

Getting ready

As the Yearly Meeting prepares to consider the issue of what it means to be a Quaker today, this issue offers some suggestions to help children to explore what it means to them to be a Quaker.

Children will have diverse experiences and it is helpful to reflect on the experiences of the children in your meeting. Some may have been coming to meeting for as long as they can remember, whilst it may be the first time for others. Some will be part of a busy children's meeting, whilst others may be the only child regularly attending. Some will enjoy attending meeting more than others but perhaps few will have any choice about whether they attend. Many children are likely to be the only Quaker at their school, which may impact on how they feel about coming to meeting, whether they consider belonging to the meeting to be an important part of their identity and whether they feel comfortable with talking about Quakers to their friends outside of the meeting. A positive sense of identity is strongly linked with self-esteem and well-being.

As you prepare, it is also helpful to reflect on your meeting in relation to *Advice & Queries 1:19*: *Does your meeting rejoice in the presence of children and recognise the gifts they bring? Do children have the opportunity to share their insights with the meeting? Are adults in the meeting ready both to learn from them and accept their responsibilities towards them?'*

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

Journey to meeting

After welcoming everyone, ask about their journey to meeting today. If the group is large or has some children who talk more than others, you might like to pass around an object, such as a stone or a stick and ask the children to wait until they are holding the object for their turn to share. Explain that it is fine to pass the object on if they don't want to speak.

To start with, they might like to share the details of how they travelled to meeting. Did they come on foot, by bike, by car or on the bus? How far did they travel and how long did it take?

Then ask everyone to share why they came to meeting. You may get quite a variety of replies here. For some children, meeting is part of a normal Sunday. Others might say that the decision to come was made by another family member or that they were keen to come themselves today for a particular reason. Accept the reasons given and thank the children for sharing them.

Underpinning references

Advice & Queries: 1:19

Jesus welcomes the children: Matthew 19:13; Mark 10:13-16; and Luke 18:15-17.



Engage

Guess who?

For this game you will need a number of pieces of paper, each with the name of a person clearly written on it. Include the names of some historical Quakers maybe known to the children, such as George Fox or Elizabeth Fry, the names of some adults in the meeting that the children are familiar with and the names of the children themselves. Using a safety pin, attach one piece of paper to the back of one of the children at a time and ask them to guess who they are by asking questions that require a 'yes' or 'no' answer of the other children. Younger children may need help reading the labels and thinking of questions when it is their turn e.g.

- Am I a boy or a girl?
- Am I an adult or a child?
- Am I alive today?

Discussion

When the game is finished, lay all the names out side by side. How easy was it to identify the different people? Did anyone ask the question:-

- Am I a Quaker?

Did this question play a part in helping the children to identify themselves?

How we describe ourselves can vary depending on where we are or who we are with. Ask the children about how they would describe themselves to others. Children may give a range of information, such as their name, age, interests and skills but also the labels that others have given them e.g. 'I have learning difficulties'; 'I'm funny'; 'I'm quiet'; 'I'm naughty'. Would the children describe themselves as a Quaker? Would this depend on where they were or who they were with? For example, they might describe themselves as a Quaker when with their family but not at school.

Interviews

Ask the children if there are any adults in the meeting that they would like to get to know better. What do they know about this person already? What would they like to know about them? Put together a list of questions that they would like to ask and invite the adult to attend a future children's meeting to answer the questions. Encourage the children to include questions about being a Quaker, such as:-

- When did you start coming to Quaker meeting and why?
- What does it mean to you to be a Quaker today?
- What do you like about our meeting?
- What would you like to change about our meeting?

Ask the children to think about what their own answers to their questions might be. They might like to have a go at interviewing each other.

Stories of Quaker children

Tell one or more stories of when children have played a particularly notable part in a meeting. This could be a true story from your own meeting about a time when a child ministered in Meeting for Worship, for example, or a story from elsewhere, such as *Quaker faith & practice*: 19.35 or the Quaker Tapestry (see sidebar for information). In the sidebar there is also a link to Series 4 of *Journeys in the Spirit* and stories about some Quaker children.

References & other resources

Quaker Faith & practice: 19.35 describes how in Bristol in 1682, the men and women of the meeting being in prison, the children, who were mostly boys and girls aged 10 to 12 years kept the Quaker meetings, despite being beaten.

In 1981, 11 year old Jonathan and other children in his meeting were doing drawings about Quakerism. Jonathan knew his teacher Anne Wynn-Wilson was a skilled embroiderer and asked, "Can't we do this in embroidery?", and thus the Quaker Tapestry project was born.

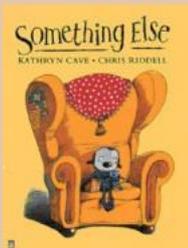


www.quaker.org.uk/childrens-work-edition-series-4 - look for issues about Betsy Gurney, Ben West, John Woolman and Luke Howard.

References & other resources

Something Else by Kathryn Cave & Chris Riddell

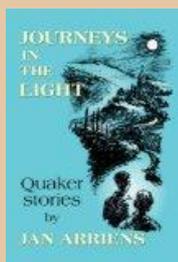
A book about being different for younger children.



ISBN: 978-0140549072
Buy this online.

Journeys into the Light by Jan Arriens

A book of stories that speak of Quakers living faithfully from the 17th century to the present day.



Available from the Quaker bookshop
020 7663 1030 or
at :

www.quaker.org.uk/shop

Additional Resource 87.A can be found at:
www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

Respond

'All about me' booklet

Invite the children to create a booklet about themselves. Explain that they can choose what to put in it and that they can choose who to show it to or choose not to share it with others.

To make the books, staple together A4 sheets or use scrap books for a longer activity.

The book could include information about:-

- My favourite things
- What I like doing
- My family and friends
- Where I live
- What makes me different, special and unique
- My beliefs – what I believe
- My Quaker meeting
- How it feels to be a child in my meeting

The book might include pictures, writing, photos or finger/hand prints.

Part of the meeting?

Using the circle diagrams on *Additional Resources 87.A* and some stickers (small round sticky dots all of the same colour work best) or fat felt pens, ask the children and adults present to put a sticker or dot on the charts to show whether they feel:-

- They are welcome at meeting
- They enjoy coming to meeting
- That adults in the meeting listen to children

How did the children respond? They might like to explain why they placed their stickers in particular places and discuss their ideas about this.

The charts can be adapted to explore children's thoughts about other questions or issues related to the local meeting or their thoughts about other aspects of their identity.

Children might also enjoy seeing how adults in the meeting respond to this activity.

Postcard to an adult

Ask the children to think of an adult in the meeting that they don't know very well and invite them to write (or draw) the adult a postcard to tell the adult a little bit about them and what they like doing.

Arrange for the children to give their postcards to the adult they have chosen and encourage the adult to send one in return or, even better, for the pair to have a conversation. Can they discover any similarities or shared interests?



Reflect

Questions to think about:-

- How did thinking about who we are and our sense of belonging to the meeting make us feel?

Have time for children to share their thoughts.

Within the meeting it is important that everyone feels welcome and that we recognise that although each one of us is different, we all have special gifts.

- What can we do to make everyone feel welcome?
- What special gifts do we have?

Have some time to be quiet and give thanks for each person.



Review

- How did the children (and adults) respond to this topic?
- Did relationships within the children's meeting enable the children to be open about their feelings and experiences?
- Are there any issues which some children might like to have the opportunity to explore further or talk about again at a later date?
- Are there any issues that need to be followed up with parents/carers?
- Have the children raised any issues for the children's committee or the meeting as a whole to follow up?

This issue was written by Kathy Chandler and edited by Chris Nickolay and Howard Nurden. The Topical activity was written by Chris Nickolay

Issue 88 is the second in the series linked to the Yearly Meeting Gathering theme. It has the title, '*Quakers in the world*'. Available from 2 June 2014

Issue 89 is the third in the YMG series. It has the title '*I matter – I change the world*'. Available from 1 July 2014.

Issue 90 is the first in a new series about *Living as a Quaker*. It has the title, '*Living a transformed and transforming life*'. Available from 1 August 2014.

Materials available online are:

Current issue *Additional Resources* sheets

An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting

A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship

A topical activity – this time about having a silly tea party at Meeting.

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

Go to:

www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren and choose from the range of links in the sidebar.

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Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

May 2014 Issue 87



An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting about being a Quaker and a child

Make sure you have a little time of worship for yourself and other volunteers before the session – even a couple of minutes are good. The outline is based on a 45 minutes children's meeting.

Gather:

Journey to meeting. After welcoming everyone, ask about their journey to meeting today. If the group is large or has some children who talk more than others, you might like to pass around an object, such as a stone or a stick and ask the children to wait until they are holding the object for their turn to share. Explain that it is fine to pass the object on if they don't want to speak.

To start with, they might like to share the details of how they travelled to meeting. Did they come on foot, by bike, by car or on the bus? How far did they travel and how long did it take?

Then ask everyone to share why they came to meeting. You may get quite a variety of replies here. For some children, meeting is part of a normal Sunday. Others might say that the decision to come was made by another family member or that they were keen to come themselves today for a particular reason. Accept the reasons given and thank the children for sharing them. **10 minutes**

Engage:

Stories of Quaker children. Tell one or more stories of when children have played a particularly notable part in a meeting. This could be a true story from your own meeting about a time when a child ministered in Meeting for Worship, for example, or a story from elsewhere, such as *Quaker Faith & practice*: 19.35 or the Quaker Tapestry. Here is a link to Series 4 of *Journeys in the Spirit* and stories about some Quaker children - www.quaker.org.uk/childrens-work-edition-series-4 - look for issues about Betsy Gurney, Ben West, John Woolman and Luke Howard. **15 minutes**

Respond:

Part of the meeting? Using the charts on *Additional Resources 87.A* and some stickers (small round sticky dots all of the same colour work best) or fat felt pens, ask the children and adults present to put a sticker or dot on the charts to show whether they feel:-

- They are welcome at meeting
- They enjoy coming to meeting
- That adults in the meeting listen to children

How did the children respond? They might like to explain why they placed their stickers in particular places and discuss their ideas about this.

The charts can be adapted to explore children's thoughts about other questions or issues related to the local meeting or their thoughts about other aspects of their identity.

You could also ask if there is anything else that Meeting could do to help them – this might encompass things they would like to know more about or need help with; it might also be that there are some things that could improve or change children's meeting. Children might also enjoy seeing how adults in the meeting respond to this activity. **15 minutes**

Reflect:

Questions to think about:

- How did thinking about who we are and our sense of belonging to the meeting make us feel? Have time for children to share their thoughts.

Within the meeting it is important that everyone feels welcome and that we recognise that although each one of us is different, we all have special gifts.

- What can we do to make everyone feel welcome?
- What special gifts do we have?

Have some time to be quiet and give thanks for each person.

5 minutes



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

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A simple plan for an all-age Meeting for Worship

Preparation – you will need a small ball of play dough for each person in the meeting, plus some extra dough for those who are missing (see below for a recipe). Before the meeting, prepare a flat surface in the centre of the room for the dough models to be placed.

During the meeting

Begin with a time of silence, then welcome everyone to worship. Explain that children's meeting has been considering what it means to be a Quaker and a child today; each child has been thinking about their own identity and to what extent they feel a part of the meeting.

Read advices and queries 19:

Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting and recognise the gifts they bring. Remember that the meeting as a whole shares a responsibility for every child in its care. Seek for them as for yourself a full development of God's gifts and the abundant life Jesus tells us can be ours. How do you share your deepest beliefs with them, while leaving them free to develop as the spirit of God may lead them? Do you invite them to share their insights with you? Are you ready to both learn from them and to accept your responsibilities towards them?

Invite everyone in the meeting to take a ball of dough and make a model that represents them. As they do so, ask them to reflect on what it means to them to be a part of the meeting and on the gifts that they bring, as well as the gifts of others in the meeting, particularly the children and young people. Remind everybody that people of any age can minister in meeting. This can be through joining in with the activity or in the form of words.

Encourage everyone to notice those who are missing from meeting today, as well as those who are not able to make their own model; they can take an extra ball of dough and make a model for them.

When the models are complete, ask the children to arrange these in the centre of the room, where everyone can see them and wait for any spoken ministry that arises.



Play dough recipe:-

Ingredients for 8 people (multiply to give quantity needed)

1 cup of water

1 cup of plain flour

2 tsp of cream of tartar

½ cup salt

1 tbsp cooking oil

Food colouring or powder paint

Put all the ingredients in a pan and stir over a medium heat until it makes a dough. Cool and store in a plastic box in the fridge.



Journeys in the Spirit



Children's work

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Topical Activity

A silly tea party

Friends can be very good at sharing food and having lunches or tea. Here is a different way for people to get together and share food and have a lot of fun. Children can help a lot with making and even inventing possible things to eat.



Here is a website with lots of jelly recipes:

www.kidspot.com.au/best-recipes/Family-eating+90/5-fun-jelly-recipes-recipe+3600.htm



...and here is a website with lots of ideas and links to ideas for silly sandwiches:

<http://tinyurl.com/o5rfswp>



Children could also make invitations to give to members of the meeting and anybody else they wanted to invite – friends or neighbours for example.



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

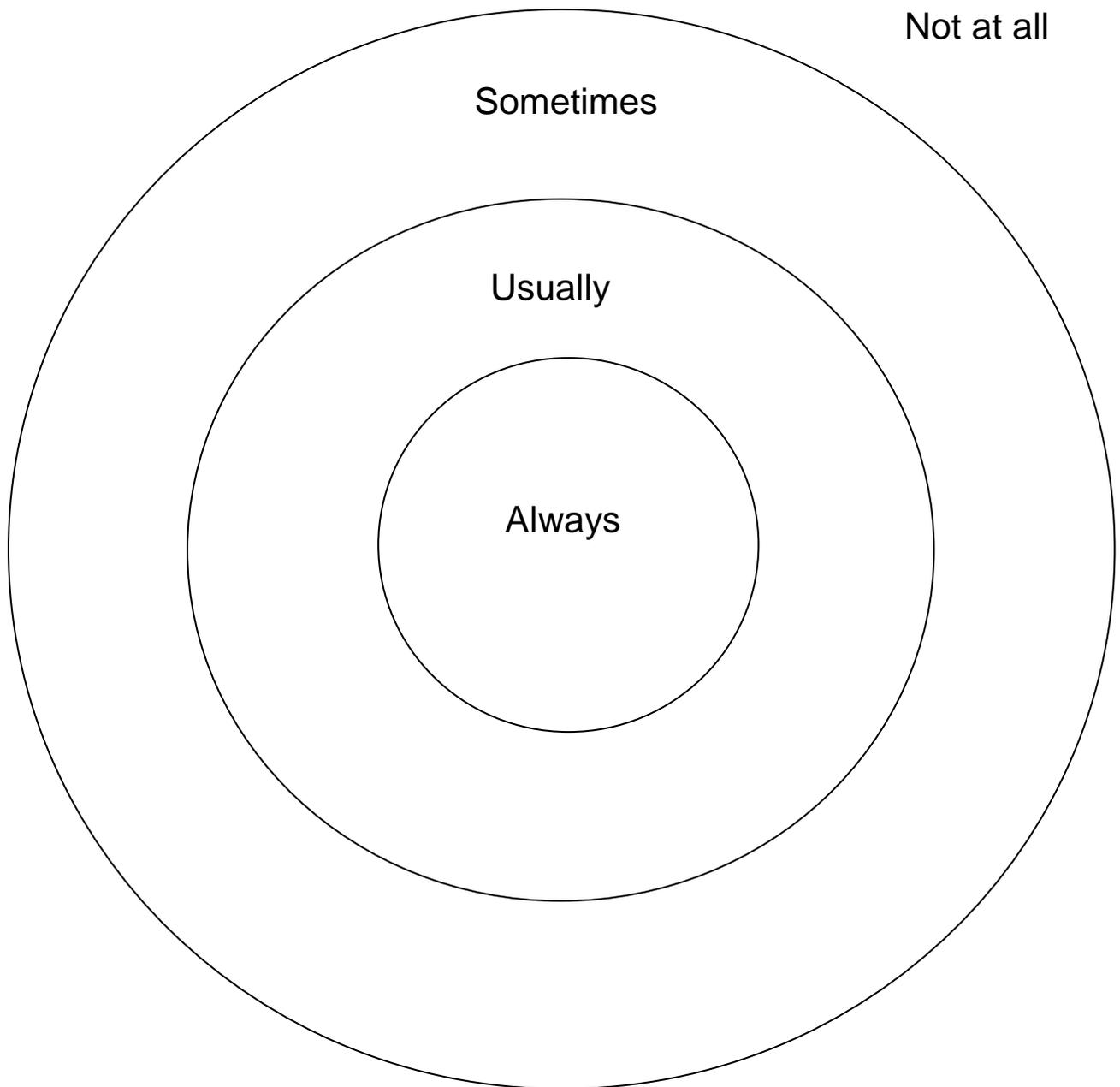
Additional resources 87.A

Respond

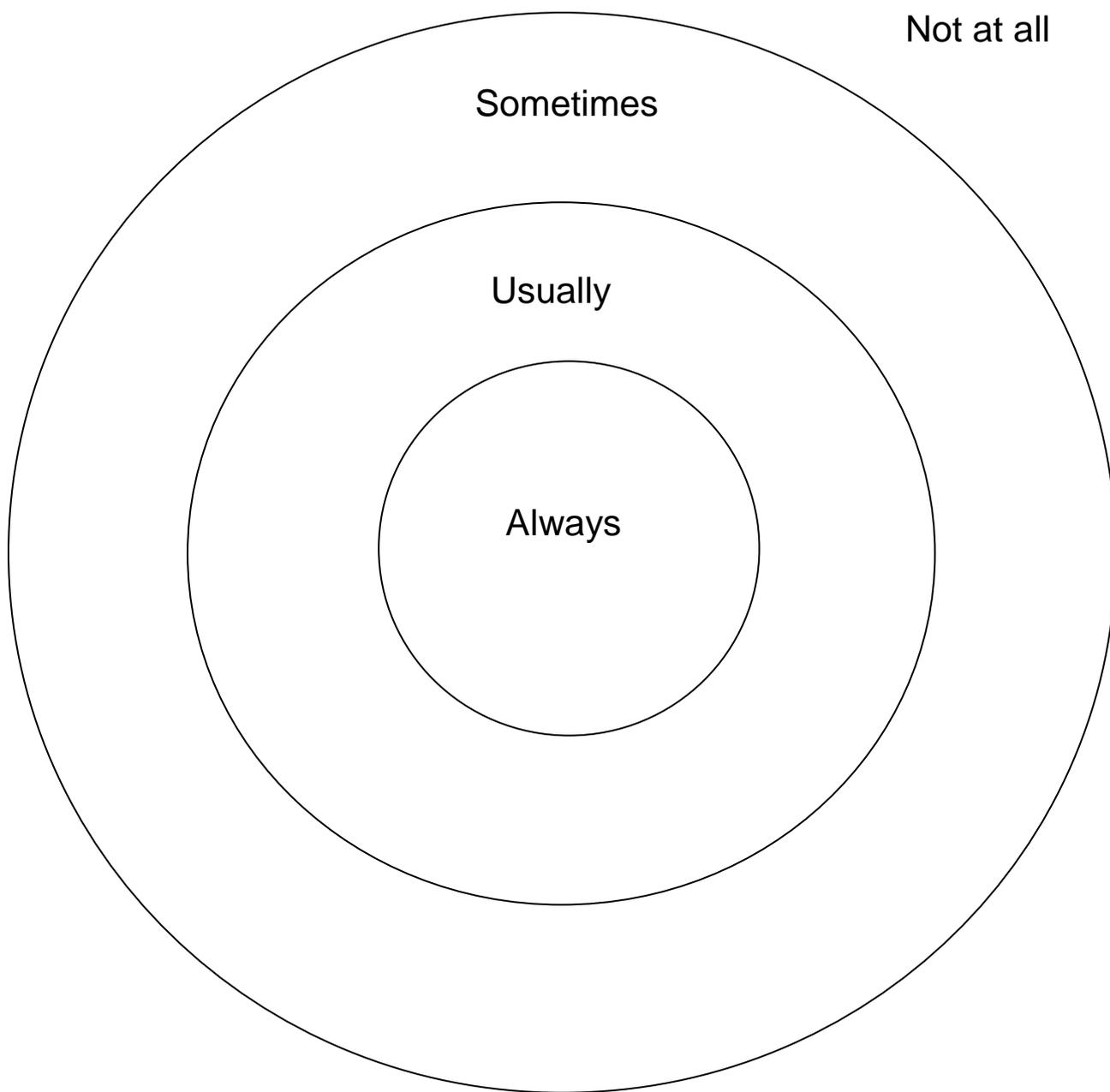
A part of the meeting?



I feel welcome in the meeting:-



I enjoy coming to meeting:-



I think that adults in the meeting listen to children:-

