

# Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 1

June 2007

Young People



There are four directions to our spiritual journey. Inwards to ourselves; outwards to others; upwards towards the deeper mystery; downwards to the world we live in. "Journeys in the Spirit" offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children and young people.

This youth edition for 12 – 18 year olds comes out three times a year and seeks to offer activities for one-off sessions or weekends. This is offered with the intention of providing an opportunity for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of partnership in our shared journey in the spirit. Included are **getting ready**, for those coordinating 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. Some of the activities are included on additional sheets. Timings are not stated as this will depend on the group and how the activities are used.



Offering a range of ideas to use with young people in a Quaker context at a weekend or a series of sessions. This youth edition for 12 – 18 year olds comes out three times a year.

## Engaging with the Quaker testimonies

### Getting ready

#### Preparing Hearts & Minds:

Quaker testimonies are an intrinsic part of Quakerism, and yet they can seem extremely nebulous. "Newcomers to the Society are often attracted by our values and practices, like peace work, simplicity of life and the pursuit of integrity. They are soon told that these are 'testimonies'. They then find that there is no authoritative statement of what the testimonies are, only hallowed examples of their implications in particular circumstances. They find that Friends debate the demands which the clearly recognised testimonies make on people, and also what new testimonies there ought to be. Thus they find that the testimonies are what Quakers stand for. They are religious, ethical, collective, demanding, developing – and vague." John Punshon: Testimony and Tradition.

This Youth Edition of Journeys in the Spirit therefore aims to explore the testimonies to make them less vague for young people and the adults who work with them. It is adapted from "Engaging with the Quaker Testimonies: a Toolkit", used with the permission of Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) Testimonies Committee. It takes simplicity, equality, truth, peace, with sustainability and the environment alongside, as the basic testimonies. However, the separate testimonies, which have Biblical roots, are in fact all aspects of the same belief in an eternal truth in the kingdom of God as something possible here and now.

Take time to think about the testimonies. Information about each testimony is available free online at [www.quaker.org.uk/qpsw](http://www.quaker.org.uk/qpsw) select on line resources, under QPSW General choose the testimonies leaflet. Spend a moment reflecting on what the testimonies mean to you. Some questions for getting ready include: Have we been able to find a moment of quiet to hold the coming session in the light? Are there particular needs and situations we may need to be aware of in this session? Are we confident of the health and safety arrangements? Are the spaces we are using prepared?

#### Equipment Needed:

Flipchart paper and pens, A4 paper, pens, pencils, felt pens, blue tack, copies of additional sheets as needed, cd player, catalogues, glossy magazines, scissors, glue.

#### Underpinning references

'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 everyone.'  
George Fox.

The Bible:  
James 2: 14 – 26

Quaker Faith and Practice:  
20.18

# Gather

## Engage

### Agree / Disagree

Designate one side or end of the room as agree strongly, the other as disagree strongly and the middle a continuum between the two. Then read each of the statements on *Sheet 1.B* in turn, asking people to move to where they feel is right for them. If appropriate, particularly if only one or two people are in an area, ask them to explain why they are where they are. If anything surprises you, again, ask members of the group to explain their position to everyone else. Alternatively, ask them to talk to the nearest people about why they are there. Use the pictures on *sheet 1.B* to generate further discussion.

### Explaining the testimonies - a role play

Give everyone the leaflet 'Living what we believe' (see side bar), give people time to read it. Split the group into pairs. Explain that one person is to be an enquirer and the other a Quaker trying to explain the leaflet using their own words. To start the role play the enquirer might say: 'I would like to know about this Quaker testimony thing'. Remind them they are playing a role, and when they are clear as to who will do what, they have 10 minutes to try it out, swapping over if appropriate.

When time is up, ask participants how they got on, what they found difficult, awkward embarrassing, unclear. You may like to write key points up on a flip chart and encourage the group to offer suggestions to each other.

### Living our testimonies

Invite people to read the reflection on *Sheet 1.B*. Encourage thinking about the relationship between ourselves and the Quaker testimonies by posing the questions:

- In what ways does what you do reflect the Quaker testimonies?
- What difficulties arise in trying to live out the testimonies?
- How do your actions make a statement to the world?
- Has God been revealed to you through the testimonies?

Encourage a quiet reflection on these questions, maybe playing some meditative music. After a while, invite people to share thoughts they feel comfortable so doing in groups of three. Come back together as a whole group and offer an opportunity for sharing thoughts all together. This exercise is probably more suited to older groups (maybe 15 years and over).

### References & other resources

The following could be used as readings in worship:

Advices and Queries:  
31,33,37,41

Quaker Faith and Practice:  
19.32

The 'Living What We Believe' leaflet is available free on request from Quaker Peace and Social Witness.  
Email: [mirandag@quaker.org.uk](mailto:mirandag@quaker.org.uk)  
Tel: 020 7663 1158.

### Other ways into the theme

Ask two experienced Friends to speak with the young people as if to a group of a new Quakers, for 5 – 10 minutes each on how they try to live out the testimonies in their lives.

Put up big posters of the 10 principles of simplicity (*Sheet 1.F*) and leave

# Respond

For an additional Truth and Integrity activity see *Sheet 1.C*.

For an additional Simplicity activity see *Sheet 1.C*.

For an additional Equality activity see *Sheet 1.D*.

For an additional Peace activity see *Sheet 1.E*.

For an additional Sustainability activity see *Sheet 1.F*.

## Truth and integrity

Ask everyone to think of two people who they admire, who have stood up for what they believe, one known personally to them and one well-known person, who could be historical or alive now. Then ask them to identify why they chose those people and identify any similarities between the two. In small groups, of about 4, share these together, and identify on a large sheet of paper any similarities or links between them. Then try to identify what these examples tell us about the importance of truth and staying true to ourselves. Ask each group to have a go at writing a definition of integrity based on their discussion. Come together to share definitions and key words. Display sheets from each group.

## Simplicity

Have a selection of catalogues and glossy magazines; plenty of scissors, glue, and big sheets of paper. Divide participants into groups of two to four and give each group a selection of magazines, scissors and glue, and a sheet of paper. Ask the groups to be as creative as they like arranging materials cut out of the magazines in such a way as to make a group statement about the everyday challenges to living a witness to simplicity. Allow time for each group to display and explain their creative statement and for group discussion of some of the issues raised.

## Equality

Encourage the group to reflect on their life in relation to this testimony: you will need paper, pencils and felt pens. Ask each group member on his or her own to illustrate using pictures and/or words, when they felt they were treated equally or felt people did not treat them equally, or someone they knew was not treated equally. Ask group members to share in pairs or threes their picture and how they felt.

## Peace

Ask each individual to think of a time when they have experienced the peace testimony in action. If possible this should be a personal experience, i.e. intervening to resolve an argument or not hitting back. Ask for this experience to be written, drawn or doodled. Next ask individuals to think of a time when they have experienced behaviour that was against a testimony to peace, i.e. bullying, teasing or nastiness. Suggest that this experience is captured on paper by writing, drawing or doodling. In groups of 5 or 6, individuals should be invited to share their experiences. Once this has happened, groups are to be encouraged to produce a poster, a tee shirt or a series of badges depicting up to three actions that promote peace and up to three actions that challenge non peaceful behaviour. These could be entitled 'Peace in our Time' and displayed for other groups to look at.

## Sustainability and the environment

Ask the group to share their thoughts about what should change in our lives, our communities and in our relationship with the earth to encourage sustainability. What would be different about our work, homes, food, travel and communications? How do they imagine a sustainable world might come about? Which are the key players – technology, personal action, government policy, corporations, the media, faith groups? What is our role as individuals and as Quaker groups? Following this discussion invite people individually or in small groups to find ways of expressing their sense of the way the world ought to be, and of the paths that might lead them there. They may wish to draw or paint, write poetry or prose, go outside and find an object that speaks to them or reflect in quiet.

# Reflect

## Guidelines for living?

In any group of Quaker young people, creative listening or worship sharing provides a safe way to explore and reflect in a personal way. You can request a sheet on this using the contact details in the shaded box below. Perhaps start with a question such as 'One thing I've liked about engaging with the Quaker testimonies is?' Hand out Richard Foster's 10 principles of Simplicity (see *Sheet 1.F*) copied onto a separate sheet. Pose questions such as: Which of these suggestions do you find most challenging? Which do you think is easiest to put into practice? Can you think of a time when you have had to stand up for something you think is important? How did you feel, both during the event and afterwards? What effect did it have on you and on others?

## So what do we do about it?

Divide people into groups of three and ask each group to try to imagine a visitor from seven generations time returning and asking questions of us today. Such as: What are you doing to make changes happen? How did your Quaker meeting make a difference? What might you do to make the world a better place? Following a discussion, groups may like to act it out as a role play, with one of them being the visitor (they might want to think about how such a person would dress, talk, be) and the others answering the questions. After this, encourage each group to write a list of things they might do to make change happen. These lists could be shared with the whole group or displayed for everyone to look at.

# Review

## For adults to consider after the session:

- Did everyone get the opportunity to speak and be listened to?
- Did everyone get the opportunity to listen to others?
- Were there magic moments when the spirit moved?
- Did the activities engage the whole group?

## How did the activities encourage young people to ...

- Reflect on their experiences? Learn about the Quaker testimonies?
- Think about their relationships with other people?
- Think about their relationship with God?
- Consider actions they might be able to take?

# Links to other organisations and resources

Christian Aid: mpower resource for young people: [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)

Cafod Youth Topics: monthly activities on world issues: [www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk)

Youth Work magazine: a monthly publication: [www.youthwork.co.uk](http://www.youthwork.co.uk)

RHP: resources for working with young people: [www.russellhouse.co.uk](http://www.russellhouse.co.uk)

Oxfam: produce resources for youth work: [www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet)

Leaveners: Quaker performing arts project: [www.leaveners.org](http://www.leaveners.org)

Quaker Youth Empowerment for Sustainability – Living Witness Project 01865 725244

Quaker Peace and Social Witness web pages: [www.quaker.org.uk/qpsw](http://www.quaker.org.uk/qpsw)

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**Special thanks to QPSW Testimonies Committee.**

**Published by Children & Young People's Work Office, Quaker Life.**

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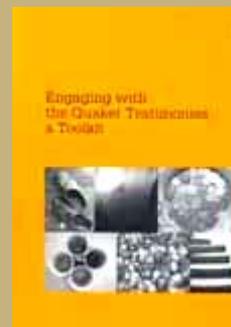
Website: [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk)

## Ideas for whole meeting learning

Encourage the young people to organise an all age meeting for learning, maybe after a shared lunch following Sunday morning worship.

Perhaps use *sheet 1.A* to facilitate thinking about the testimonies.

## Testimonies Toolkit



The Quaker Bookshop tel. 020 7663 1030 cost £8 plus postage & packing ISBN 0 901689 59 9

**The next young people's edition of Journeys in the Spirit will be on the theme of the abolition of the slave trade and 21<sup>st</sup> century human trafficking, it will come out on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2007**