



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition May 2017 Issue 109



Quaker faith & practice Chapter 22 Close Relationships

Getting ready

This issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* looks at Chapter 22 of *Quaker faith & Practice* 'Close Relationships'.

Our name, the Religious Society of Friends, suggests that we think of ourselves not only as Friends in the Truth, which the early Quakers saw themselves to be, but also as a society of friends, prizing friendship highly and recognizing its value for the religious life. In our intimate relationships, as in the wider community of our meeting, openness to one another can open us to the Holy Spirit and enable us to acknowledge that of God in our own hearts and in those of our friends.

Qf&p 22.02

This issue will explore those relationships in our lives that give us a glimpse of God or the divine, that help us recognize what is most precious and real and important. It may help us think of ways in which we can develop those relationships and build a community of friendship between all in our local meeting.

Resources Needed: *pictures of people- these can be photos the children have brought in of friends/families, photos of Friends in the meeting, or use the pictures in additional resource 109.A, 2 large coffee jars, sand or glitter.*

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 the way you normally do. If you have no regular routine you might like to think of welcoming everyone and making sure that everyone knows each other's names.

It can be helpful to begin with a time of stillness; you might want to use a glitter jar (see sidebar) as a way of settling or centring down.

It can be helpful as you begin, to share any news from the past week(s) that children or other adults might want to share. While we explore relationships, perhaps the news might relate to a friend or family or meeting member. Hold these contributions quietly for a few moments.

Continue talking about the way Quakers think about and reflect on their friendships— as the children have just done — as a way of helping them to think about God or the divine. Perhaps ask: Who in your week has made you happiest? Who have you done something positive for? Who has made you think? Who has challenged you to be your truest self?

Underpinning references

Advices and Queries 21- Do you cherish your friendships, so that they grow in depth and understanding and mutual respect? In close relationships we may risk pain as well as find joy. When experiencing great happiness or great hurt we may be open to the working of the spirit.

Qf&p 22.02 and 22.04

Glitter jar:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/thingstodo/mood-jar>

Engage

Families and Friendships

Talk about *Quaker faith & practice* Chapter 22, 'Close Relationships' and how it is full of stories about who we relate to and how these relationships nourish and challenge us. These relationships may be family, friends, members of the meeting or chance encounters. Relationships change overtime and can challenge us when we take a different path from our friend. Some relationships and friendships come to an end, others may start.

The chapter has stories of the use in recognising the feelings that we have at different times in our relationships. The celebration of and sharing these feelings can mean we all grow, individually and as a Meeting community.

Read one of the story books (see *sidebar*): they all explore relationships and what is important in a relationship. Chose the one/ones you think might be most appropriate for your child/children at this time.

Then perhaps chose one of these activities, maybe the children's meeting could try different activities over the month.

Activity 1

Lay out the pictures of different people from additional resource A (see *sidebar*) on the floor or table so they can be seen by all.

Ask: I wonder who these people might be? I wonder how they might relate to each other? What is special about this person? How might they help us see God or the divine? I wonder what this person does to make a strong relationship?

Encourage the children to think of who they know: siblings, friends, parent, carer, grandparent, teacher, cub leader, sports instructor, neighbour, member of the meeting.

Perhaps the children could make a poster with a picture of a child in the centre and the other pictures representing different relationships around. They may wish to label the relationships (mother, teacher etc.) or write about the relationship - depending on their age.

Activity 2

Ask the children and adults to bring in a picture of someone- family member or friend or use pictures of Friends from Meeting.

Ask the children and adults to put the picture down in front of them in the circle, all sitting quietly.

Ask children to talk, when ready, about the person whose picture they have brought in.

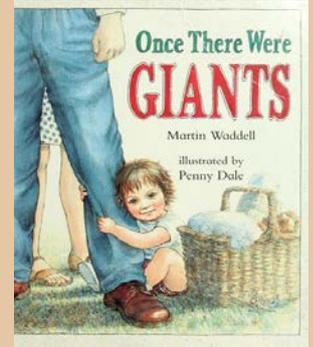
Ask wondering questions to prompt: I wonder who that is? I wonder why you have chosen that picture/person? I wonder what is special for you about that person? I wonder what they do for you? What you do for them?

Encourage the children to listen in a sense of worship, perhaps the child speaking could hold a speaking stone, to encourage focus and turn taking.

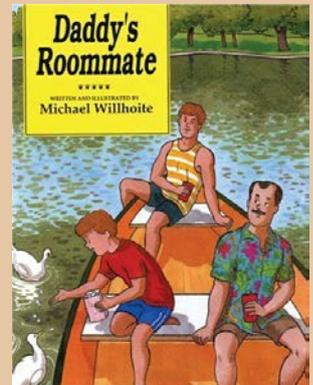
For an additional activity – Living Word Cloud – see *additional resource 109.B* (see *sidebar*).

References & other resources

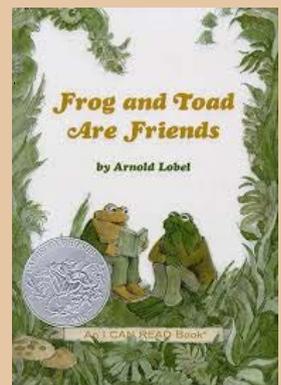
Books about families and friendships:



ISBN:978-0744578362



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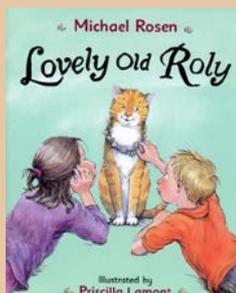
ISBN:978-0007464388

[Additional Resources 109.A and B](#) (direct link) or accessible at www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren by selecting 'resources for current issue'.

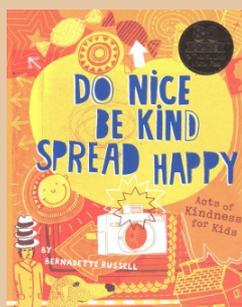
References & other resources



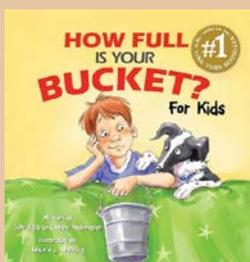
ISBN: 978-1408326343



ISBN: 978-0711214897



ISBN 978-1782401056



ISBN: 978 - 1595620279

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Respond

Celebrations

We have been thinking about who we have relationships with and how these people are special, the other part of chapter 22 is how we celebrate these relationships.

There are special Meetings for Worship to celebrate the different stages of people's lives and relationships such as marriages or a funeral.

We may celebrate the lives of those who have died, at a special Meeting for Worship to celebrate the grace of God in the life of a deceased Friend. The Memory Tree book (see sidebar) or Lovely Old Roly (also in the sidebar) could help children think about that kind of celebration.

If you can, read one of these books and then discuss with the children how we celebrate the everyday lives and relationships within our Meeting?

Read the story *How full is your bucket* (see sidebar) if you can get hold of it. Wonder about these questions : We each have an invisible bucket. When our bucket is full it feels great. When it is empty we feel awful. Filling someone else's bucket also fills our own.

Some other ideas to try :

Children could write on a card, either made or create a 'postcard' by re-using the non written side of a greetings card to write a message to be given to someone in Meeting. The words could say something like; "I like the way you.... make the tea/ smile when I come in/ give notices in a clear voice/ look after the baby/ the etc." or " I see God in you when you....." or " You are special to me because....."

Children could make a poster together of the attributes they recognise in others, that bring them closer to the divine: kindness, caring, laughter, listening, sharing, time, generosity.

Make a thankfulness jar. Decorate a large clean jar. Perhaps find and cut out positive words and images to stick on the jar or use glitter or ribbons. Ask children to think of and share ideas about people to whom they are thankful or who make them happy.



Write or draw these ideas on slips of paper to put in the jar. A slip can be withdrawn and read whenever we wish to celebrate the lives and relationships with others.

Share some of the ideas from the book - *Do Nice, Be Kind, Spread Happy* – if available (see sidebar). This book gives suggestions for random acts of kindness towards others. Talk with the children about what these could be. Some ideas in the book are sending an 'unbirthday card' or leaving a book in a public space for someone to find. Other ideas include writing a report for their teacher listing all the ways they help them learn or make them laugh. Another is sticking post it notes in places that people might need cheering up.

People all over the world commit random acts of kindness every day in an attempt to make the world a better place. You can see what others are doing here: <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/get-inspired>

Reflect

It is helpful to have some time at the end of the session to reflect and share together as a group.

You might want to ask the following questions:

- Who are the people that help you feel closest to God; most peaceful and safe and happy
- When sad or difficult things happen, who might you share these things with?
- Who could help you to remember that you are precious and loved?
- Who could you help remember that they are unique and precious to God? How might you do this?
- If you have journals, can you continue reflection through drawing or writing in them?

As Children's meeting is just part of the whole Meeting, it is important that the adults in meeting are aware of what the children are doing. Children may like to share with the adults in meeting what they have been thinking about throughout this topic. Plan with the children how this might happen and how they may ask the adults to share what they have been doing and thinking about too.

Review

It can be helpful to take time afterwards together as volunteers to reflect on the session and discuss how the Children's Meeting went.

Questions that might be helpful are:

How did the children respond to this topic? How did they participate? Were there aspects of it that they found difficult or unsettling? Or things that you might have done differently?

Do the children now have a greater understanding of Chapter 22 in *Quaker faith and practice*? Did they learn about themselves and also about Quaker heritage and values? Did the session allow for children and adults to share and grow together?

Are there issues that need to be shared with Children's committee? Can this work be shared for the growth of the whole all age worshipping community?

This issue was written by Judith Acton and 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 June 2017: **Topical Activity** Refugees

Available from 3 July 2017: **Approaches to God & prayer**

Materials available online are:

[Additional Resources Sheets](#)

[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.

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

Available free by subscription.

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

Phone: 020 7663 1013

Email:
cypadmin@quaker.org.uk

Website:
www.quaker.org.uk/cyp