



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

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Issue 113



An easy-to-use plan for a Children's Meeting

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

Gather

Sit in a circle on cushions on the floor and familiarise yourselves with one another. You might try a name game, or prefer to ask the children to share something about their week. Thank each child for their contribution, and make sure that you share something of your week with the group too.

10 minutes

Engage

Ask the children what they think about when they hear the word change. Give them a few minutes to consider and answer the question. Do they think of considerable changes like; a baby being born, the loss of a loved one, moving, growing up or changing a habit?

Or more subtle changes like; day and night, changing seasons, changing a library book, getting a haircut or the time? Or do they consider the emotions that accompany change rather than the changes themselves? Can they think of examples of how a person might change?

Invite the children to take it in turns to share an experience of change.

- Was the change happy or sad?
- How did they cope with the change?
- What advice would they give to someone experiencing the same kind of change?
- How do the other children in the group think they would cope with the same kind of change?

Thank the children for sharing and share a change experience of your own. You may like to go first to get the group started. Try to think of a change that has had a happy or positive outcome and ensure that your story is appropriate for the ages of the children present.

10 minutes

Respond

Make a Diversi-tree of change. This can be done individually or as a group).

On a large piece of paper (A3), draw the trunk of a tree. The children might like to draw their own, or you can have some pre-drawn for them. Explain that the tree is going to represent them. Cut out leaves for all (see Additional resource 113.A in sidebar). On most of the leaves, they should write, (or draw), something about themselves, that makes them who they are today. These leaves will stick to the branches of the tree to form the bloom. On some of the leaves (5 or so), they should write something about themselves that is no longer true, but was once, a change that they have experienced, or something about their past. These will be the fallen leaves on the ground. Explain that change is inevitable. Just as trees grow and shed their leaves with the changing of the seasons, so too we humans grow and develop and shed our pasts. Just like every leaf that falls returns to the soil to feed the tree at its root,



every change that occurs in our lives, helps to shape who we are. Every year, through a process of change, trees grow taller, and become more firmly rooted. Every year, through a series of changes, some big, some small, we become 'us', establishing our own thoughts and developing our beliefs.

Consider how/where you might display these trees within your meeting house, or see if the children would prefer to take their trees home.

20 minutes

Reflect

Gather together at the end of the activity, approximately 5 minutes.

Share the following prayer and time of quiet.

The Blessing of Old and New

Thank you, dear God, for the blessing of things that stay the same:

for the people we have known forever and the familiar paths where we walk.

Thank you, dear God for the blessing of things that change:

for the newcomers with new customs, new ways of doing things, new paths to discover.

Thank you, dear God, for the blessings of old, and the blessings of new.

5 minutes