



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition February 2012 Issue 60



Some Bible stories - The story of Creation

Getting ready

The creation story can be a difficult and controversial one both for adults as well as children. Few believe in the literal seven day Creation but it can be a good basis for starting to look at where we all come from. A Hebrew approach may be helpful in refuting literal views and reclaiming the deeper story of the seven days: "...one day? - not an ordinary day but a day of God {Divine Being}, an age...a thousand years, a thousand, thousand years." – from the *Book of Genesis, Oxford Univ. Press 1929*

It is also important to think about the scientific views on how the world began and how that may or may not fit in with the story in the Bible.

An important part of the creation story is the presence of the Divine, God or the Light within us all. From very small beginnings we develop into a whole, unique being. We continue to be created, to develop physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually throughout our lives and this is something we can stand back and see for what it is – truly amazing!

The aims of the creation story are to show how our beginnings are so important and to encourage us to notice what is all around us. The Bible story was written many years ago but people then were aware of how essential the existence of "me" is, and that for us as humans it is very much part of each and everyone of us.

Creation is out there all around us but we can also look inwards and discover our own creation. For us as adults our child within can provide the starting point – to learn who we are and where we came from. For the children we work with they are very often much more in touch with who they are – the Light within them reaches out. Let us discover that and share with them our experiences.

Gather

Prepare the room by setting out the chairs, and have any resources you need for the activities you have chosen

Prepare the flowers as shown on *Additional Resource 60.A* and have a bowl of water on a table in the centre of the circle

Begin by asking the children and adults to say their names - especially if there are people in the group who do not know each other.

Sit quietly for a few minutes. Give everyone a folded flower and ask each person to place their flower in the water. As the flower opens imagine you are looking inside yourself. What do you see? Perhaps there are thoughts inside about coming here today, or what you are going to do later on. How you are feeling just now? You might want to share your thoughts but it is fine to sit quietly. Allow 5-10 minutes for this exercise depending how deeply they get into it.

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.

Underpinning references

***Bible Stories* retold by David Kossoff.**

"Mind you, before God started to make the world, he gave it a lot of thought. Big job. Not much to go on. No previous experience in such work. No really good materials either. Just a vast midnight, always dark, covering a great waste of nothing but midnight, always dark, covering a great waste of nothing but water"

Engage

The Bible and creation. *Resources: The biggest Bible you can find; a coloured cloth; the creation story below folded up inside the beginning of the Bible.* Say that you are going to read a story from one of the biggest books of stories ever written. Read the Creation story below. As you tell each part of the story lay down, on a dark, plain cloth, the relevant picture from *Additional Resource 60.B*:

'In the beginning there was... nothing – just darkness and emptiness. Then on the very first day God gave us the gift of light. So now there is not just darkness, but there is light and dark. Now, I don't mean just the light in the light bulb. I don't mean just this light or that light. God gave us the gift of the light that all light comes from. It was good and that was the end of the first day.

On the second day God gave us the gift of water. Now, I don't mean just the water in a water glass or the water in a bathtub or shower. I don't even mean just the water in a river or a lake. I don't even mean just the water in the ocean, or the water that comes down from the sky in rain. I mean all of the water that is water. This is the water that all the rest of the water comes from. It was good and that was the end of the second day.

On the third day God gave us the gift of the dry land. God divided the water and the dry land, and gave us the gift of green and growing things. It was good and that was the end of the third day.

On the fourth day God gave us the gift of the day and the night. God gave us a way to count our days. Here is the great light that rules the day, the sun, and here are the lights that rule the night, the moon and the stars. It was good and that was the end of the fourth day.

On the fifth day God gave us the gift of all the creatures that fly in the air. Not just the birds but all of the creatures that fly. And all of the creatures that swim in the water. All of them. It was good and that was the end of the fifth day.

On the sixth day God gave us the gift of all the creatures that walk upon the earth: creatures that walk with two legs, like you and me, and all the creatures that walk with many legs. It was good and that was the end of the sixth day.

On the seventh day God rested and gave us the gift of a day to rest – and to remember the great gifts of all the other days. Pause and then ask wondering questions saying: I wonder, which day you like the most; I wonder, which day do you think is most important; I wonder, is there a day you could leave out and still have all the days you need. Allow time for answers between questions (*The text for this story is from the 'Godly Play' selection of stories. For more information see www.quaker.org.uk/using-godly-play*)

'**Becoming me**' – a story of creation. (See sidebar.) This is a simple story with beautiful pictures. If you have problems with the word God this book deals with the creation story without using it. The focus is on "me". Take time to read the story, show the pictures and encourage the children to comment and ask questions. The story deals with beginnings – birth and recreation. It suggests the inner part of us – that small voice within. It then suggests being part of the bigger world, even things we don't like we have to accept we are part of.

Cycle of nature. Talk about Charles Darwin and evolution. Tell a story about Charles Darwin using *Additional Resource 60.C*. For younger children the story of "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" is useful here. (See sidebar.) Discuss the idea that creation keeps on going and is not just something that happened once. Look at a simple lifecycle such as the caterpillar and the butterfly.

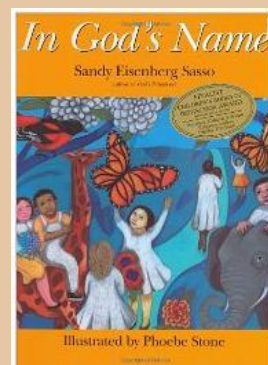
'**In God's name**' - a story. (See sidebar.) Read the story and show the pictures.. Talk about the fact that Quakers often find it difficult to use the word God. Ask what names Quakers might give to God. You could say, after children have spoken if they wish, that Quakers say "there is that of God within us all". Some Quakers talk about the Light within or the love within. This is special and gives people strength. We can recognise the light in other people.

References & other resources

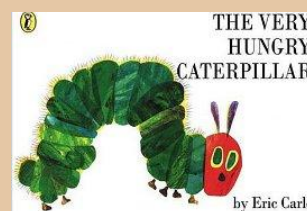
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Becoming me – a story of creation by Martin Boroson & Christopher Gilvan-Cartwright
ISBN 978-0-7112-1834-5. Also see: <http://becomingme.com/>



In God's Name by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso ISBN -10: 1-879045-26-5



Very Hungry Caterpillar ISBN-10: 0140569324

The additional resources listed in the text are available at:

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children>

References & other resources

“Man has been endowed with reason, the power to create, so that he can add to what he’s given. But up to now he hasn’t been a creator, only a destroyer. Forests keep disappearing. Rivers dry up, wild life’s become extinct, the climates ruined and the land grows poorer and uglier every day.” (Uncle Vanya 1897) Anton Chekhov

A website with evolution resources

<http://learnthingsweb.hubpages.com/hub/How-to-Teach-Evolution-to-Children>

The additional resources listed in the text are available at:

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children>

Respond

The Bible and Creation.

Prepare materials in advance for each child to make a simple zig-zag book. This can just be an A3 sheet of paper folded lengthways into seven equal panels. Alternatively, and giving more drawing space, have seven pieces of white A5 (or A4) card for each child. You will also need masking tape to stick the finished sheets together. Have lots of drawing, colouring and collage materials available. Remind children about the seven days (or ages) and say that they can draw or decorate each of the panels with a picture of what they think happened or was made on that day.

‘Becoming me’ – a story of creation. Having read the story ask the children what they think the story is about and what is happening. Introduce the idea that when they are born they are part of creation. Also, about being part of the wider world and what happens to creation when things go wrong. We do not like war and the way we, as humans, treat the world but we are all part of the same creation and have to take responsibility for what happens in the world.

Talk with the children about how we all begin – as a very tiny seed that grows into a baby. This is the same with animals and plants. Provide some plant pots and compost and some seeds that grow quickly like mustard and cress. Plant the seeds and label them. Look at them again in the following weeks and observe how much they have grown.

Ask children to close their eyes and think of something in the world about them that brings them joy or a sense of wonder. Whatever comes into their minds. Use clay or paint to create this. Do this as quietly as possible so that they can really focus on what they are doing. This is an activity they can do individually and all ages can do this.

The cycle of nature

Having talked about the story of Charles Darwin explain that this is the story of evolution and one that most Quakers believe is what actually happened. Go on to talk about the Creation story. See *Getting Ready* and *Engage* on pages 1 and 2 of this issue of *Journeys in the Spirit*.

Ask the children what they know about evolution. They usually know quite a bit and will tell you about the “big bang”. Talk about the idea that creation is happening all the time, not just once many, many years ago.

Look at a simple life cycle such as the caterpillar becoming a butterfly. See *Additional Resource 60.D*. Children can make their own – they may have ideas of different cycles. There is a simple colouring sheet for younger children also on *Additional Resource 60.D*.

‘In God’s Name’ – a story.

Having read the story, ‘*In God’s Name*’, and had conversation as suggested in *Engage* on page 2 of this issue of *Journeys in the Spirit*, go on to ask the children if they know other names for God – such as Allah or some of the Hindu Gods. Talk about the pictures in the book ‘*In God’s Name*’ and how they alone tell a story of creation – everything is there. Make a collage together of images of nature and the world about us remembering that the Light, Love, God within us all is part of this creation.

Inspiration for the collage idea could come from a recent exhibition by the artist David Mach who creates huge collages based on stories from the Bible. See *Additional Resource 60.E* – the first picture shown is of Noah’s Ark but he did one of the Creation. It is made up of lots of images cut from magazines. The second picture on *Additional Resource 60.E* is another example of what a picture collage might look like.

Reflect

At the end of the session have some time for the children to ask any questions. There may be issues that have arisen as a result of the subject and children may need clarification if there are things they have not understood.

There may be specific things about what they think about God and what they personally believe. Be prepared for children who say they do not believe in God. Encourage them to say more and listen carefully and remember not to make judgements.

Ask the children if they would like to share with the adults what you have been doing in the Children's Meeting. Decide what everyone wants to share with the rest of meeting and how best to do this.

End with a short time of stillness together.



Review

The review can happen at the time or later but volunteers may well feel they need to speak to someone immediately after the session, especially if there have been issues around the existence of God. Children may have asked questions about science that need to be revisited.

It may be a good idea to let parents know the theme of the children's meeting in advance in case there are questions or comment they want to address to the volunteer. Children may also want to continue discussions with parents after the session.

For yourself reflect on how you feel the session went. Did the children participate well and learn more about creation? Are there things you might have done differently? It is worth discussing these things with other volunteers and at Children's Committee.

This issue was written by Madeleine Harding and edited by Chris Nickolay and Howard Nurden. Chris Nickolay wrote the Topical activity.

Issue 61 explores the story of the prodigal son – a story about families that has power and meaning today. This will be available on March 1st 2012.

Issue 62 explores the story of David and Goliath – how the smallest can challenge what appears to be very powerful. This will be available on April 2nd 2012.

Issue 63 looks in a different way at the story of Jesus feeding 5000 people. This will be available on May 1st 2012.

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 favourite board games and an exhibition in the Quaker Library.

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.

All these are available at:

www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren

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

Available free by subscription.

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