

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 6

August 2007

Children



Introduction

There are four directions to our spiritual journey. **Inwards** to ourselves; **outwards** to others; **upwards** towards God, 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 children's work edition for 5 –12 year olds comes out monthly. It is offered with the intention of providing an opportunity for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of partnership on our shared journey in the spirit. Included are sections on: **getting ready**, for those co-ordinating 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. To offer a balanced session you should aim to do something from each section. Some of the activities are included on additional sheets. Timings or ages are not stated, as this will depend on the group and how the guidance and activities are used.



The third of five issues to focus on the exploration of Quaker Testimonies. This issue offers ways to look at the testimony to sustainability

Testimonies: Sustainability Getting ready

Preparing Hearts & Minds

Early Quakers had a strong sense of unity with nature, and modern Quakers have responded to the increasing threats to the natural world with a growing sense of love and care for the whole of the creation. Many Quakers accept that we now have a Testimony to Sustainability closely linked to our Testimonies to Peace and Simplicity.

Sustainability might seem a difficult word to explain to children. This edition of Journeys in the Spirit offers ways to explore how the Earth feeds us and provides for all our needs, how observing nature can make us feel wonder, awe and a sense of closeness to God and how we can look after the Earth or live 'sustainably', so that future generations can also enjoy these gifts. Advices and Queries numbers 41 and 42 are very relevant. The activities focus on what we can do to help, touching lightly on the problems the natural world is facing. You may wish to deal more deeply with the problems if you feel it appropriate for your group. Resources to help with this are suggested in the sidebar of the section *Respond*.

Some questions for getting ready include: Is the room prepared? Do my colleagues and I feel supported and comfortable with our plans and ourselves? Have we been able to find a moment of quiet to hold the coming session in the light? Are there particular needs and situations I may need to be aware of in this session? Am I confident of the health and safety arrangements? Have I reflected on the theme?

Equipment Needed:

Check for equipment listed on additional sheets and in Engage section, Respond zones and Reflect section as well. Selected books and copies of activity sheets as needed for different numbers.

Underpinning references

The Creation was open to me: An anthology of Friends' Writings on that of God in all Creation from Quaker bookshop.

The Quaker Testimonies by QPSW Testimonies Committee March 03 Quaker Bookshop

A Living Quaker Witness to the Earth by QPSW Earth Group 2003. From Quaker Bookshop.

Quaker Faith & Practice 25.02

Advices and Queries 41 and 42

Gather

To help the group gather together give everyone (children and adults) the opportunity to share something that has happened to them recently. You could use an object related to the theme as a talking token. Whether you use this disciplined way of sharing, or simply share, make it clear that it is quite OK to 'pass'.

If you have a short period of silence (see *Sheet 0.A of Issue 0 of Journeys in the Spirit* – see sidebar) you could invite a child to read their choice from the Advices and Queries written by the children of Dorking Meeting on 'Living in the World' (see *Sheet 6.A*), or you might like to play *The Butterfly Song* (see sidebar). Alternatively here are some suggestions that you might use if following on with the Whale or Robin zone:

- Whale zone - whale song (download humpback whale song from _____ noting the huge variety in the sounds produced) or the song 'Baby Beluga' (download from _____)
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Engage

There are 4 suggested ways to approach the theme - each one highlighting an aspect of sustainability. Each way in, or zone, has an opening activity to start the group thinking about the issue and is based on a living creature. The aim is to develop a sense of wonder at the diversity of the creation and, as explained below, also introduce an aspect of sustainability.

- **Whale zone** aims to help an understanding of the need to conserve resources - not to take too much of anything so that it gets used up. Read the story 'The Whale Song' (see sidebar) ensuring that all have a chance to see the wonderful illustrations. Ask the children what they know about whales. For some facts about Blue Whales see *Activity Sheet 6.B*
- **Worm zone** aims to help an understanding of how we deal with rubbish and the need to recycle things. Introduce the children to a real worm if possible and to the wonderful array of microscopic animals that live in a teaspoonful of soil - the worms exciting home. Facts about worms and life in the soil can be found on *Activity Sheet 6.C*. You might like to listen to and/or sing the Wiggly Woo worm song while watching the worm (see sidebar)!
- **Rabbit zone** illustrates the impact we humans have on the Earth and what we might do to cause less damage. Discuss footprints. Where do we make/find them? Sand, snow, mud. Young children might enjoy making footprints in rolled play dough perhaps with one shoe on and one shoe off! Squash and re-roll the dough after examining each print. Show the children a rabbit's footprint - *Activity Sheet 6.D* and see if they can guess who it belongs to. Now draw round each child's foot on a sheet of paper and compare their footprint to that of the rabbit.
- **Robin zone**. This zone aims to encourage an understanding of biodiversity and its importance. Give each child a paper robin shape to colour in and then a sheet of paper to stick the robin on and encourage them to draw for the robin everything they think a robin needs. Discuss the drawings and see if together they have thought of everything – a nest, somewhere safe to put the nest (e.g. a tree), worms and insects for food, water to drink. *Activity Sheet 6.A*

References & other resources

Sheet 0.A from Issue 0 of Journeys in the Spirit is available to download from www.quaker.org.uk/cyp - follow the link to Resources.

The Butterfly Song By Brian Howard. For lyrics and music and/or to purchase CD see www.butterflysong.com

Resources and materials needed for Engage.

Whale zone:

The Whales' Song Red Fox publishers by Dyan Sheldon ISBN 0099737604

Worm zone:

A tub with a little earth containing one or more worms.

Wiggly Woo song.

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/tweenies/songtime/songs/w/wiggly.shtml

Rabbit Zone:

A4 paper, pencils or coloured pens, freshly made play dough (recipe *Activity Sheet 6.D*), picture of a rabbit's footprint (*Activity Sheet 6.D*).

Robin zone:

Robin shapes to colour in (*Activity Sheet A*), colouring pens/pencils, sheet of A4 paper for each child, glue stick (e.g. Pritt stick)

References & other resources

For whale zone:

www.greenpeace.org.uk/what-we-do

Click 'oceans', 'what we are doing', and 'ending whaling'.

For pictures try

http://oceans.greenpeace.org/en/fun-stuff/wallpapers?MM_URL=moreWallpapers

Resource depletion:

New Scientist 26 May 2007 has excellent charts and diagrams.

About oil: Try

www.powerswitch.org.uk in particular

www.powerswitch.org.uk/portal/images/stories/leaflets/issues/peakoil/introduction.pdf

For Rabbit zone:

101 ways to save the Earth: use the Friendly Whales action plan to make the earth a better place for us all. By David Bellamy. From Quaker Bookshop.

Useful information on rabbits:

www.ehsni.gov.uk/wild004.pdf

For Robin zone:

101 ways... as for Rabbit zone. Large sheet of paper such as a flip chart. Colouring pens/pencils. Magazines with bird and animal pictures, scissors, paper glue.

Walk Cheerfully,

Step Lightly

download from

www.quakergreenaction.org.uk or £1 from

Respond

Activities are suggested for each zone to follow on from the introduction to the zone outlined in *Engage*.

Whale zone Talk about the different approaches to whales shown in the story to develop an understanding of how different people view whales. You could show pictures of Greenpeace activists (*see sidebar*), who think whales should not be hunted at all, putting themselves between whaling ships and the whales. Also tell them about the work of the International Whaling Commission (www.iwcoffice.org) which uses the research results of scientists to set quotas for whalers based on how many whales can 'sustainably' be killed each year. Move from this to the 'whale game' – *Activity Sheet 6.B*.

After the game ask questions which lead the children into thinking about resources which don't reproduce themselves. What about metals – for example, what is copper used for? (wires and cables, TVs and computers); what would happen if all the copper is used up? What other resources do reproduce themselves - trees, food animals, fish and crops. What about coal and oil that are formed over millions of years - what are they used for? What happens when they are used up? What can we do to make sure they are not used up? (*See sources of useful information in side bar*).

Worm zone Explain how worms process leaf litter and other rubbish by eating it. Some children may know about wormeries for recycling kitchen waste. Talk about other ways of getting rid of kitchen and garden waste - bonfires, landfill, composting (www.css.cornell.edu/compost/why.html). What about our rubbish? Draw out any knowledge about the drawbacks of bonfires (smoke, greenhouse gases) and landfill, big holes in the ground, (running out of space for them, production of methane gas which causes climate change) - it's surprising what young children know now-a-days! Emphasise the benefits of composting (see above website) and explain that they are going to find out how to make a compost heap - see *Activity Sheet 6.C* on making a compost collage.

Rabbit zone Talk about the rabbit's environmental footprint, which is how much of the Earth it affects. Talk about its food and where it comes from and its house and what it needs to make it. Lead them to the realisation that the rabbit only affects the woods or field where it lives and the only rubbish it leaves (droppings and bits of left over food perhaps) is recycled back into the earth. Now talk about the children's environmental footprints – where their food, clothes, toys, furniture etc comes from and their electricity etc and where their rubbish goes and see if they know how this affects the earth. *101 way to save the Earth...* is useful (see sidebar). Introduce the idea that we can make our environmental footprint bigger or smaller and move on to the environmental footprint activity on *Sheet 6.D*.

Robin zone What would happen if any of the things the robin needs became very scarce or disappear? Introduce the idea of extinction. Ask everyone to think of wild birds and animals they know and make a BIG list. The variety of living things on the earth is what we mean by biodiversity. Choose your favourites from the list and draw pictures beside them or cut out and stick on pictures from magazines (e.g. *BBC Wildlife* or *RSPB Birds*). Are any on the list in danger of extinction? Scientists say that 1 in 4 mammals and 1 in 8 birds are now under threat – www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/red_list_2004/Extinction_media_brief_2004.pdf. This includes skylark, yellow hammer, house sparrow, starling and song thrush (see www.rspb.org.uk/Images/Bocc2_tcm9-132673.pdf) and polar bear, tiger, cheetah, leopard and elephants – (see http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/SpeciesReport.do?lead=10&listingType=L). Talk about how we can help them to survive by living more simply - *101 ways to save the earth* is useful for children and for their parents *Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly* produced by Quaker Green Action could help their family with ideas.

Reflect

Try and make time for the children and any adults helping to share their feelings about the session they have done. Some aspects are a bit worrying. Reassure them that people all over the world are doing lots of things to help the Earth get better and that we can all help. In a little closing worship ask everybody to think about what they would like to do? What animal, bird, fish, plant or other creature would they like to help or ask meeting to help with? This could be written or drawn on a piece of paper and, if people want to, said out loud. Talk about what they would like to share about their session with the adults in Meeting and decide together how this will be done. Is there anything they want to ask for help with?

Ongoing activity

Voices of people who were made slaves – hope, despair & being strong

This is background for adults working with children – not all of it is suitable for sharing with children. The voices of people who were made slaves come to us in lots of ways. Already, in previous issues of 'Journeys in the Spirit' we have heard these voices in the forms of song and quilting – ways to feel strong and sustained, to communicate, resist and escape. How else do we hear these voices? There is some writing from the time, for example Olaudah Equiano. People fought to escape from or take over slave ships; people rebelled against their owners – some won their freedom, many didn't and were killed as examples. We know that slave owner's food was poisoned. Sometimes, terribly, women would destroy their babies to stop them becoming slaves. Were there non-violent ways and voices? Song, music, signs and symbols to show the way to escape and keep up hope were some; there is an account of people made slaves working very hard and breaking their tools – would they be punished for working hard? *Sheets 6.E and 6.F* for an activity to help reflection on the different voices from the past. See *Abolition Journeys Additional sheet 4* for a quotation from *Olaudah Equiano* – see side bar

Review

The review can happen at the time or later – it maybe by yourself or with others. Some useful questions for the use of volunteers to look back over and learn from the session include:

Have children been able to participate in their own way? What went well and why?
Has each child been able to reflect, even a little, on something about sustainability?
What is there for you to learn from this session? What might you do differently another time?

Links to other organisations and resources

Quaker Life Resources Room can be found via this link - [www.quaker.org.uk /cyp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/cyp) ; phone and email for resources on the contact details below.

The Quaker Library is at www.quaker.org.uk/library

Explore the story of John Woolman, his killing of a robin and the growth of his insight and ministry – look for the Journal of John Woolman, years 1720 – 1742, in your meeting house library or in the Quaker Life Resources Room; Also go to:

<http://www.bartleby.com/1/2/1.html> to download text from the Journal.

This issue was written by Anne Brewer and edited by Chris Nickolay who also wrote the ongoing activity

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Available free by subscription.

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

Phone 020 7663 1013

Email bevelies@quaker.org.uk

Website: www.quaker.org.uk

References & other resources

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Abolition Journeys Additional sheet 4 is available at: www.Quaker.org.uk/library and then follow the links to Abolition and Abolition Journeys

Linking with the wider meeting.

The Robin Gather, Engage and Respond activities would be very good for an all age meeting for worship – the John Woolman story could be also be used in the Gather Time.

The next children's work issue of 'Journeys in the spirit' will focus on the testimony to Truth and Integrity and will be published on September 1st.