

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 0

Sample

Children



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 4 – 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; **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 guidance and activities are used.



The first of four issues on exploring our spiritual journeys together in a Quaker context. This issue offers ways to look inwards to ourselves.

Exploring our spirituality – inwards

Getting ready

Preparing Hearts & Minds

Early Friends were known for their love and friendship for each other and there are many references to this. Some thoughts to help with your preparation include:

- Loving our children and sharing our journeys alongside theirs enriches us all: "In a sense this is what spirituality means for me, it's how we care for each other, how we see, touch and taste the world and how we reflect on all that surrounds us and how this leads to faith, meaning and wholeness." Jane Nicholls
- "For us, Quaker children are not children who know how to be Quakers but children who are loved by Quakers. Sometimes it's hard but it gets easier after a few years and then we start again." An article in *Quaker Monthly*.
- Many of us find it difficult to talk about our own spirituality and addressing these issues with children can be daunting, but we should do it anyway:

"Spiritual development is about getting in touch with the deep parts of life – valuing the experiences of awe and wonder, of hurt and sorrow, relationships with other people and the natural world, and coming to an understanding of what is meant by the term 'God'." F. Cattermole.

Suggested questions for getting ready include:

Is the room prepared? Do my colleagues and I feel supported and comfortable with our plans and ourselves? Do I know and understand the needs of the children who are coming? Am I confident of the health and safety arrangements? Can I hold the whole session in a spirit of worship, with a sense of expectation and adventure? Getting ready inwardly and outwardly honours the work.

Equipment Needed:

Check for equipment listed on additional sheets and in *Engage, Respond* and *Reflect* as well. Also, CD player, selected books and copies of activity sheets as needed for different numbers of children.

Underpinning references

Advices & Queries 1.9

Quaker Faith & Practice 22.22

The New Testament
Mark's Gospel 10.13

Gather

- Ask for one or two children to be elders of children's meeting – explain the task. The result can be very deep. This helps establish the children's meeting as a meeting for worship. *Sheet 0.A.*
- Encourage children coming straight from meeting for worship to make themselves comfy on chairs, on the floor or cushions.
- Continue the silence together. It may help to have a focus such as a candle or an object relevant to the theme of the session – a mirror or a series of mirrors on the floor or a low table, a bowl of water offering a reflective surface (swish the surface a bit). You may wish to make a little ritual of this.
- Follow this with an opportunity to greet each other – use a talking token to enable disciplined sharing. *Sheet 0.A.*
- Alternatively, it may help to start with a simple cooperative game to help to draw the group together and allow for latecomers to join in seamlessly. This can then be followed by the period of stillness. *Sheet 0.A*

Resources: A focus for worship (see 'Gather'). A talking token. A selected co-operative game.

Engage

There are three possible ways into the theme. They could fit different ages but can also be multi-age.

1. Giraffe way inwards.

Begin by playing 'How could anyone' from Songs for the Inner Child by Shainna Noll, download from www.bignoismusic.com – Oxfam site.

- Display plastic, ethnic, wooden or soft toy wild animals in the middle of the circle. Have a giraffe toy to hold during the story.
- Ask each person about something they enjoy doing.
- Now use the giraffe toy to help tell the story of Gerald in 'Giraffes can't dance'. This is a story in which a young giraffe can't dance and is laughed out of the jungle dance competition. The giraffe is encouraged by a little cricket to dance to its own music and then is admired. This is about how we can all dance when we find music that we love.

Resources: Plastic, wooden or soft toy wild animals including a giraffe. CD player. Giraffes can't dance book.

2. Zebra way inwards.

Begin with a little music, gentle, reflective, African, such as the 'Lion King' sound track – try downloading from www.bignoismusic.com – or ask a member of the meeting, child or adult, if they have something suitable.

- Read the 'Zebra Question' poem (*Sheet 0.B*)
- Ask each person to say two things about themselves like the zebra did. If they are very little ask for one or two and then begin a small conversation about what an opposite might be – a useful question might be, "and can you be....?"

Resources: Sheet 0.B, CD player.

3. Soul bird way inwards.

Read all or a section of *The Soul Bird*. Start a conversation with, "I wonder what drawers or boxes our soul birds might have?" Then ask everyone to stand on one leg, like the soul bird and then sit ready.

Resources: The Soul Bird book.

References & other resources

Advices & Queries 1.09

'Don't just do something sit there'

by Mary Stone

A book on how to talk about stilling and centering with children.

ISBN: 185 175 105

Paperback

Available from the Quaker Bookshop, local library or bookshop.

'Giraffes can't dance'

by Giles Andreae

ISBN: 84121 565 1

Paperback

Available from the Quaker Bookshop, local library or bookshop

'The Soul Bird'

by Michael Snunit

ISBN: 1841 1989 78

hardback

Available from the Quaker Bookshop, local library or bookshop.

References & other resources



For paper craft animal templates on the internet go to:

<http://cp.c-ij.com/english>

Click on 3Dpapercraft, then Animals and then choose giraffe or zebra and A4 Download.



The New Testament
Ephesians 5.9

'The Spirit of the Child'
by David Hay and Rebecca Nye

A brilliant account of research work on the spiritual life of children.

ISBN: 184 310 3710

Available from the Quaker Bookshop, local library or bookshop.

Respond

Do one of the first three zones and then either Zone 4 or 5

1. Giraffe Zone – if you started with 'Giraffes can't dance':

- The children can respond to the story using pens, crayons, paint, collage, clay, by retelling the story with the toy animals or by looking at the book. Encourage and enable the children to respond in their own way; they may have issues of their own which they are facing which we may not know about. A useful question to assist response might be: "I wonder how the giraffe felt or you might feel if this was you?" Just as we may bring private issues with us to meeting for worship, so this may be one of few opportunities for children to reflect on themselves.
- They could colour and make a giraffe model – perhaps with help. See left hand column about how to get a free paper craft template.

Resources: Pens, crayons, paint, collage or clay, giraffe templates on thin card.

2. Zebra zone – if you started with the zebra poem:

- Children can respond to the poem and discussion by drawing, doodling, illustrating words or making a face or mask of his or herself; he or she can find ways to put two or more aspects of himself shared earlier on the face or mask – whichever they choose to do. Lay out and offer copies of *Sheet 0.C*
- Children could make a little zebra model – perhaps with help (See left hand column about how to get a free paper craft template).
- Give each person a copy of the poem – write his or her name on the sheet or card.

Resources: Pencils, crayons, pastels, watercolours, zebra templates on thin card.

3. Soul Bird Zone – if you started with *The Soul Bird* hold up a blank *Sheet 0.D*. Explain what it says.

Invite children to paint, colour or draw their soul bird and some of the drawers or feelings in their own soul bird.

Resources: Copies of Sheet 0.D. Pencils, crayons, pastels, water colours, glue, glitter, paint and glue brushes.

4. Box zone – There are two parts to this and children can choose one or both, depending on time – it can be returned to at another time; this can be a useful 'reflective return'.

- Make a 'who am I' box – a box about me. *Sheet 0.E*.

This can become a store of special things about each person – for now, for example 'what is special about me'.

- Make a hidden treasure box. *Sheet 0.F*.

This could be the first thing for the 'who am I' box. Have a pyramid box template available for each child.

Resources: See Sheets 0.E & 0.F. pencils, crayons, pastels, watercolours, glue sticks, PVA glue, glitter, paint and glue brushes, magazines, scissors.

5. Paper people zone – These are other ways to think about, reflect on, value and create images of some things children like and value about themselves.

- On an A4 piece of card children can draw a simple outline of themselves, their hand or the whole person could be drawn around on big paper.
- Remind the children about what they like to do and enjoy, what they feel good at (as shared in Engage). Invite them to draw, write or use collage to make simple pictures of these things on their picture of themselves or their hand.
- The outside of their picture can then also be decorated in whatever way they choose.
- If a 'who am I' box has been made their picture can be kept in it.

Resources: Pencils, felt tip pens, A4 and A5 card, wallpaper, pencils, crayons, pastels, watercolours, glue sticks, PVA glue, glitter, paint and glue brushes, magazines, scissors.

Reflect

Bring the children together to share what they have done – if they wish. Play a piece of music; if you have used 'How could anyone', play a little of it again whilst children are sharing. Ask for one or more person to share their ministry, what they have done or thought about, with the adult meeting.

Ongoing activity

Each children's work edition of *Journeys* will have an ongoing activity – a separate theme continued over several editions.

The first, beginning in March, will be about slavery, because 2007 is the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade between Africa, Britain, the Caribbean and America. Quakers played an early and significant role in the campaign for abolition. The ongoing activity offered will do several things:

- It will help 4–12 year olds gain an understanding, in their own terms, of what slavery was, and where it continues.
- It will present approaches to help

children discover how Quakers acted – through worship, business, campaigning, nonviolence, personal change and challenge. We hope to offer the voice of children from the past.

- It will seek to make the Quaker response then relevant to children's experience, understanding and ability to respond to the world now. This is a difficult subject and it is not just history.
- It will highlight the roles, skills, experience, courage, ingenuity and suffering of slaves in working for their own freedom.

Review

The review can happen at the time or later – it maybe by yourself or with others. Some useful questions to help volunteers consider and learn from the session include:

- Has each child 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 her or his inner self?
- What is there for you to learn from this session?
- What might you do differently another time?

Links to other organisations

Children & Young People's work database of ideas: www.quaker.org.uk/cyp

The Quaker Life Resources Room: www.quaker.org.uk/library

You can also phone and email for resources on worship, stillness, centering, stories and co-operative games. Contact details below.

Poetry ideas and activities: www.shelsilverstein.com

An American focus but lots of good things nevertheless.

Books and resources on cooperative games

www.dep.org.uk/resources/Bullying/BullyingCoopGames.htm

www.freechild.org/gamesguide.htm

This issue was written by Jane Nicholls and written and edited by Chris Nickolay

Published by Children & Young People's staff team, Quaker Life

Available free by subscription

Contact: Bevelie Shember, CYP Work Office, 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

The New Testament
Galatians 5.22

Linking with the wider meeting – a possibility for all meeting engagement and sharing.

Each time you do one of the inward activities why not think about using it in an all-age meeting for worship or simply as a shared activity. You could use some of the same exercises and activities.

Think about using the ongoing activity as a theme for whole meeting learning sharing and acting.

The next children's issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* looks at 'Exploring our spiritual journeys, the outward – relationships with others' and will be available from 1 March.