

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 0 Sample

Young People



Journeys in the Spirit is offered with the intention of providing an opportunity for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of partnership in our shared journey in the spirit. Included are **getting ready**, for those coordinating 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. Some of the activities are included on additional sheets. Timings are not stated as this will depend on the group and how the activities are used.



Exploring our Spirituality

Getting ready

Preparing Hearts & Minds

Lots of people find it difficult to express their own spirituality and the thought of addressing these issues with young people is a daunting one. But it's not something we should be afraid of exploring.

“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

We all have spiritual experiences, our faith and spirituality are essential parts of us, and our everyday experiences are part of our spirituality. Making the spiritual connection is a key part of Quaker youth work.

John Lee has a simple model that is helpful for exploring our spirituality in our everyday lives. He talks about our spiritual journey as moving in four directions: inwards to ourselves, outwards to others, downwards

towards the world we live in and on, and upwards, towards the deeper mystery. With each different direction, different areas of our experience, faith and thought are explored:

Inwards:

Who am I?
Why am I?

Outwards:

Who are you?
How do I relate to others?

Downwards:

How should I live in this world?
How will I act?

Upwards:

Do I experience God?
What's it all about?

Equipment Needed:

Flip chart paper; A3 paper; A4 and A5 coloured card; Post-it notes; flip chart pens; collage materials: coloured paper, glitter, coloured pens and pencils, feathers, ripped-up magazines, etc.; copies of pyramid box template and copies of hexagon template (see *sheets 0.E and 0.F*), CD player.

Offering a range of ideas to use with young people in a Quaker context at a weekend or a series of sessions This youth edition for 12 – 18 year olds comes out three times a year.

Underpinning references for getting ready

The Bible:

1 Corinthians 12:4–11

Romans 12: 6–8
(Gifts of the spirit)

Quaker Faith & Practice:

27:43 (how the whole of life is sacramental)

1.01 (excerpt from the letter from the Elders of Balby)

Gather

Start with a period of silence, to settle and centre. Ask two of the young people to act as elders and end the silence when they think it is right.

Have a go-round of names. Ask people to share one thing that they enjoy doing/makes them happy/makes them feel 'alive', or one thing that makes them special (is good at football, likes collecting stamps, is in a band etc.).

Each person goes round the circle naming their (imaginary) unusual hobbies, which have the same initials as they do. First person starts and says hobby ("I'm Howard Nurden and my unusual hobby is hurling newspapers"), then second person introduces them then says their hobby ("This is Howard Nurden and his unusual hobby is hurling newspapers, I am Paul Levy and my unusual hobby is plucking leprechauns").

Engage

Share one or more of the underpinning references (see front page).

Pick one of the following words: God, light, spirit, spirituality. Ask the group what words/thoughts/ideas that they associate with this word. Start with words then move on to thoughts, ideas and feelings. They call them out, and they are written on a piece of large paper or flip chart, which is placed on the wall.

This starts the group thinking about spirituality in a fun way that emphasises that there are no wrong answers.

Stick large sheets of paper on the wall to make a graffiti wall. Ask the group to draw symbols to represent their understanding of light, God, spirit either individually or with others. Ask the group to re-gather in a circle and in quiet to think of a time when they have felt any of the things they have drawn. Invite people to share these feelings if they wish.

Respond

There are a number of different activities, or zones. Each zone explores the theme in a different way.

Create Zone activities are arty or creative ways of exploring the theme. Chat Zone gives people the opportunity to talk and share, with questions to guide their discussion.

Own Zone activities are individual activities which can then lead to sharing in pairs. God Zone activities focus on our beliefs about and experience of God. Mixed Zone activities are particularly suitable for an all-age worship or learning session.

While all these activities are suitable for a range of ages from 12-18 and including adults, the Mixed Zone may be particularly suitable when you are doing work with a mixture of young people and adults.

One way of organising this may be to split the group into four smaller groups, with each smaller group starting at one of the Create Zone, the Chat Zone, the Own Zone and the God Zone. After 15 – 20 minutes they could move to the next zone. When each group has gone around each zone the groups come together to do the Mixed Zone.

References

The following could be used as readings during worship:

Matthew: 18:20

Quaker Faith & Practice:
2.13, 2.01, 2.17

Advices and Queries:
1.08

Other ways into the theme

Show a film or a clip from a film to encourage an exploration of spirituality such as:

The Shawshank Redemption, Apollo 13, Field of Dreams, Gandhi, Pay it Forward, Cry Freedom

Discuss the views portrayed of spirituality within the film.

Activities

Sheet 0.A

Create Zone: reading

Chat Zone: picture

Chat Zone: extra activity

Sheet 0.B

Own Zone: activity

Own Zone: alternative activity

Own Zone: extra activity

Sheet 0.C

God Zone: ideas for music

God Zone: extra activity

Sheet 0.D

Mixed Zone: box activity

Sheet 0.E

Mixed Zone: box template

Respond continued:

Create Zone – Sacred Spaces:

Read the text (*Sheet 0.A*), if necessary adapt it to make it more suitable for your group, maybe print it out for small groups to read for themselves.

Ask participants to think of a special place for them. A sacred space for them, somewhere where they feel 'spiritual'. It could be up a mountain, in a park, at meeting, in their bedroom, on their own somewhere. It might be somewhere they've been once but was particularly memorable or it might be somewhere they've been lots of times.

Give each person a piece of A4 card and ask them to create a representation of their spiritual place/sacred space/special place, using the collage materials to create a picture that represents this sacred space.

When they've finished, ask them to pair up with someone and share their picture, where it is of, and why this place is important to them.

Chat Zone: Sharing something spiritual:

Invite the group to look at the picture (*Sheet 0.A*). Ask people to share what they think it is, how they feel when looking at it, and why they either like or dislike it.

Divide the group into pairs and ask them to talk about something which is spiritual for them. It could be a state of mind, something they do/have done, something that inspires them (eg food, hill-walking, candles, worship, sunsets, architecture, paintings, music).

Ask them to share with their partner, what it is and why they find it spiritual, swapping over so both have a chance to share.

A possible extra activity is included on *Sheet 0.A*

Own Zone – Personal Web:

This is a chance for people to think about the people in their lives who affect them. Everyone has connections with lots of different people. We are all part of different groups; connected to families, friends, school, meeting, sports clubs, bands, choirs, orchestras and other organisations and groups (see *Sheet 0.B* for full explanation and an alternative activity: *The Inner Us*).

A possible extra activity: *Spiritual Lifelines* is included on *Sheet 0.B*.

God Zone – Descriptions of God:

Listen to a piece of music that might inspire young people (see *Sheet 0.C*). Give each person a pile of Post-it notes. Ask them to write on these Post-its their responses to the prompt question 'For me God is...' (eg God is a life force, God is Love, God is Good). They can write as many as they want. Let the group know that they won't have to share anything they won't feel comfortable sharing. If people aren't comfortable with the word 'God' they can use spirit, force, power, light, etc.

In small groups share what people have written on their Post-its and, as a group, try to agree on five things that God is for them as a group. Write these on a large piece of paper in the middle of the group with "To us God is..." in the middle. When this has been done, replay the piece of music and ask people to read what is on the sheet thinking about it while the music is playing.

A possible extra activity is included on *Sheet 0.C*.

Mixed Zone – Spiritual Journey in a Box:

This is a reflective activity to be done individually, and in quiet to enable people to think (see *Sheets 0.D & 0.E*). This activity requires plenty of time.

Reflect

The following exercise is reflective and worshipful in nature, it should be done in silence and leads into a period of worship.

Ask the group to sit in a circle and give each person a hexagon (*Sheet 0.F*). Ask people to think about the things they have thought and talked about during the session. On their own, invite them to draw, doodle or write shapes, pictures or words that represent something they have learnt or realised about themselves, Quakerism or spirituality during the session.

When everyone has had a chance to finish, ask people one-by-one, and when they feel ready to place their

hexagon on the floor in the middle of the group, to form a patchwork of unique thoughts, feelings, beliefs and ideas. Encourage the group to spend some time sitting in silence reflecting on how everyone in the group brings unique ideas and talents and how this community of unique people fit together to make a beautiful whole.

Depending on the amount of sharing, you may wish to announce that you are going to spend a few moments together in silent worship, or the group may naturally fall into it. Either way end the session with some silent worship and thank everyone for their hard work during the session.

Review

For those responsible for coordinating the group to consider after the session:

- Did everyone have an opportunity to speak and be listened to?
- Did everyone have an opportunity to listen to others?
- Did everyone have an opportunity to reflect?

How did the activities encourage young people to:

- Think about their relationships with other people?
- Think about themselves and what's important to them?
- Think about the world/the environment (natural, political, etc.)?

What questions were young people encouraged to ask about 'God'?

Links to other organisations

Christian Aid; mpower resource for young people: www.christianaid.org.uk

Cafod Youth Topics; monthly activities on world issues: www.cafod.org.uk

Youth Work magazine; a monthly publication: www.youthwork.co.uk

RHP; resources for those working with young people: www.russellhouse.co.uk

Oxfam; resources for youth work: www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet

The Leavers; Quaker performing arts project: www.leavers.org

**This issue was written by Paul Levy and Simon Best
Editor: Howard Nurden**

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

Email bevelies@quaker.org.uk

Phone 020 7663 1013

Website: www.quaker.org.uk

Activities:

Sheet 0.F

Reflect: Hexagon template

Ideas and links for learning for whole meeting

Young people could facilitate an all-age meeting for learning using the pyramid box (*Sheets 0.E & 0.D*).

After the boxes are made young people could facilitate a discussion to explore people's differing spiritual journeys.

The next young people's edition of *Journeys in the Spirit* will be on the theme of the Quaker testimonies and will be available from 1 June.