

# Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 11 January 2008

Children



## Introduction

This children's work edition of "Journeys in the Spirit" comes out monthly. It offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children aged 4–12 years in a Quaker setting. 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.

Underpinning each issue is the idea that 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.



Third in the series exploring Quakers: a people of God: being and doing.

## Quaker United Nations Office

### Getting ready

#### Preparing Hearts & Minds

The United Nations is the grand body bringing together the world's governments to try to discuss and solve the world's problems, like war, hunger and climate change. The Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) brings the views and concerns of Quakers around the globe to the United Nations and carries out research, lobbying and advocacy to this end. It also provides a meeting space for diplomats to discuss issues in private that they couldn't speak about in public.

QUNO has two offices, in New York (USA) and Geneva (Switzerland), the two main headquarters of the UN. The two QUNO offices work on different issues: this is because different UN bodies and agencies are based in different places. So QUNO New York looks at emerging crises and peace building, while QUNO Geneva focuses on three main areas: peace & disarmament, human rights & refugees and global economic issues. This edition of *Journeys* will focus on issues covered by the Geneva office. (Please note: Because of the complexity of some of the issues additional Getting Ready information is included on *Sheet 11.A*).

**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 on additional sheets and in the Engage, Respond and Reflect sections. With large numbers of children, additional copies of activity sheets may be required.

*The Journeys issues in this series that focus on work supported by Britain Yearly Meeting are an outcome of collaboration between the Quaker Life Children and Young People's Team and the Quaker Peace and Social Witness and Quaker Communications Departments.*

*These are intended to encourage Meetings to work in an all age way to understand and support the work, timed to connect with the annual appeal.*

*We want everybody to know that they can and do make a difference.*

#### Underpinning reference

Quaker Faith & Practice  
23.101

# Gather

Welcome the children and any adult helpers. Light a candle. Beside the candle have a coloured picture of the earth from space or an inflated globe. Ask everybody to think about our earth, that it looks after us and that we can all look after it and the people who live on it with us. Ask an elder to hold silence for at least a few minutes. Extinguish the flame when the silence closes.

# Engage

This edition begins to explore four issues about Quaker work at the UN. Some activities may be less appropriate for very young children. In all these big issues Quakers have helped to get people together to make change happen.

Encourage everybody to think about which of these they would like to find out more about and help with. Maybe there is a longer project here. If people choose a particular issue then, during the Reflect time, invite them to think, before next meeting, about how they can raise money to help. Children's meeting can ask the Local Meeting to focus on one or more issues of concern? What could be done in or out of meeting? Begin your Engage session by saying, 'We are going to find out about ways that some Quakers are helping other people':

**Children of prisoners zone.** QUNO looks at how children are affected when their mother or father goes to prison. It explores the practical changes to a child's life and encourages the Meeting to consider how children of prisoners may feel. See *Sheet 11.A* for more information about some of the issues and changes that occur when a parent is imprisoned. See *Sheet 11.B* for a way to help everybody think about what it might be like to have a parent go into prison.

**Landmines zone.** QUNO looks at the effects that landmines have on people and helps the campaign to ban landmines. On *Sheet 11.C* there is a simple illustrated story to help to begin talking about this difficult issue. Print out, copy or cut up the sheet. Stick each picture onto a piece of card. Read the text on each picture. Lay each card down or pass it around the group. Alternatively you could give each person a copy of the sheet and then read it through.

**Conscientious objection zone.** QUNO looks at the situation of people who refuse to fight, why they say no and what happens to them. This zone encourages everybody to think about what they may so no to or refuse to do. Introduce this by saying that, in lots of countries, people, including children and teenagers, are made to be soldiers even when they don't want to be. Some brave people say no. If you have a member of the meeting who has been a conscientious objector, invite them tell their story. Encourage the children to ask questions. See the sidebar for links to three stories about the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War from Friends in Cotteridge Meeting, Birmingham. Abridge them and read one or all of them to the children's meeting – then ask questions like: '*I wonder which part of these stories you liked? I wonder which part of the stories you liked the best? I wonder which part of the stories you think were most important? I wonder if there is any part of the story in you or that, in a way, you are in?*'

**Who owns ideas zone.** Begin with a question - if you have an idea to who does it belong to? Wait and then ask: If you are ill can your mum or dad get medicines for you? What would it be like if they couldn't get them? Did you know that special rules mean that if people invent a medicine, only they can make it - nobody else can make it without the inventors saying that it is OK and then getting paid, lots? This means some countries can't afford to buy medicines to help their people get better. A few years ago the world's countries agreed that, in an emergency, the rules could be ignored and people could have the medicines. QUNO was part of this. It is still hard to get some medicines – with HIV and AIDS for example. End with a question – 'I wonder what you think about this? Move onto Respond.

## References & other resources

Quaker Faith & Practice 20.44, 23.89, 23.93

### Children of prisoners:

*The Impact of Parental Imprisonment on Children* by Oliver Robertson, 2007, QUNO, an overview of the issues facing children.  
[www.quno.org](http://www.quno.org)

### Landmines:

International Campaign to Ban Landmines website  
[www.icbl.org](http://www.icbl.org)  
[www.globalgang.org.uk](http://www.globalgang.org.uk) and follow links to games – a very good computer game for older children.

### Conscientious objection:

[www.quno.org](http://www.quno.org)  
From 1950 QUNO worked to get conscientious objection to military service accepted as a human right at the. In Nov. 2006 the UN said yes, saying no to military service is part of 'freedom of thought, conscience and religion'.

Stories from Quakers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War:  
[http://tre.ngfl.gov.uk/uploads/materials/12426/Tom Haley shorter.rtf](http://tre.ngfl.gov.uk/uploads/materials/12426/Tom%20Haley%20shorter.rtf)

[http://tre.ngfl.gov.uk/uploads/materials/12421/Ob Barnett shorter.rtf](http://tre.ngfl.gov.uk/uploads/materials/12421/Bob%20Barnett%20shorter.rtf)

[http://tre.ngfl.gov.uk/uploads/materials/12428/Brian Filkin shorter.rtf](http://tre.ngfl.gov.uk/uploads/materials/12428/Brian%20Filkin%20shorter.rtf)  
- from 'Teacher Resource Exchange'

## References & other resources

Quaker Faith & Practice 19.35

Action for prisoner's families is a good organisation working on this issue.

[www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk](http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk)

A quotation from this website:

*'Is daddy in here because he had a gun?' The question came out of the blue. It came from the lips of a three ear-old boy whose wide eyes were sizing me up. It was his first visit. I don't know' I replied. 'I haven't met your Daddy. Have you come to see him?' 'Uh huh' 'Who have you come with?' 'Mummy'. 'What does your mummy say?' 'Daddy went to the place for bad boys. He's been naughty. Can I paint?'*

*'If we want peace in our country, we need to do some work. We should never fight, lie or say bad words and we should behave in a good way to everyone,' says Haseebulla, 11, from Afghanistan. (With thanks to Christian Aid for permission to use this quotation)*

# Respond

## Children of prisoners zone:

After the children have considered how it might feel to have a parent put in prison, encourage them to think about how to help and whom to engage with. QUNO writes about children of prisoners (and women in prison) and gives their studies to governments, prison officers and UN officials so they are aware of the issues. Where could the children raise awareness? They may want to get in touch with the people who run a local prison or asylum detention centre, sending them letters, drawings or models about the issue and asking questions about what is done for families and visiting children. What could they do to help? They may want to tell the government. They may want to ask the adult Meeting to get involved, perhaps by writing a Minute, or may choose to write their own Minute and tell the adults about it.

## Landmines zone:

If you have read the story with pictures on *Sheet 11.C*, then follow this up with the story on *Sheet 11.D* about a family affected by a landmine. One way of responding to this story is by making puppets to represent the people. Younger children may need or welcome assistance from an adult or older child. Simple puppets can be made from pieces of stiff white card, on which the children draw their characters and then cut them out. The figure template on *Sheet 11.B* could be used. The puppets then have a stick or garden cane attached to their back with sellotape to support them. The play can be performed by children crouching behind a table with the characters held above them so they are visible whilst someone reads the story to the meeting. Alternatively the story can be presented by children and helpers being in a row and when their part is read they simply step forward.

## Conscientious objection zone:

Ask the children to think of something they feel really strongly about and which they would never want to do - one serious and one not so serious. Everybody can make badges symbolising their resistance and objections. Badge-making machines can often be hired from local authority play resource centres, stationary shops can provide delegate badges with removable card inserts, or you could use sticky address labels. See *Sheet 11.E* for pictures of Quaker United Nation badges to cut out and use with personal badges. Children could give badges to people in the rest of meeting and they could be asked to put on them what they will or do resist. Make a poster or picture that tells a story of someone who has been brave without fighting – who do they know who has been brave? It is worth saying that the past and our present resistances are a source of joy.

## Who owns ideas zone:

After a conversation about medicines and how people won the right to get medicines in emergencies they can make their own 'medicines' for the rest of the Meeting - see *Sheet 11.E* for a recipe. The children could be asked if they want to tell the story to the rest of the Meeting. They could work together on a play or an illustrated story that each person contributes to; a beginning sentence could be: "Once upon a time there were people who were sick and couldn't get any medicine..." – the rest could be talked about and written as a group. Ask the group who the characters in a story about this might be. Don't forget to include a QUNO Quaker! The playlet or story could be performed or read to the whole meeting and then the 'medicines' or sweets given out. (Give a little health warning about never playing with real medicines.)

# Reflect

After a period of quiet, especially if difficult issues have been talked about, ask each person to close their eyes, think of something they love and bring it to the front of their mind. Ask them to keep the thought or picture there for a few moments and then, placing their fingers on their forehead, pluck the thought out and, placing their hand on their heart, put the thought or picture in their heart.

Talk about ways to raise money together with the whole meeting for issues each person feels strongly about or ask everybody to think about it before the next meeting.

## Ongoing activity on getting ready for Yearly Meeting 2008: What is Yearly Meeting?

Yearly Meeting is a big gathering for all Quakers in Britain. It's like going to meeting on a Sunday but people from all over the country come, and because they come so far it only happens once a year. Yearly Meeting first happened over 300 years ago when Quakers decided that they would like to meet together so that they could get to know each other and be close to God.

*"We did conclude among ourselves to settle a meeting, to see one another's faces, and open our hearts one to another in the Truth of God once a year, as formerly it used to be". Yearly Meeting 1668*

On *Sheet 11.F* there is a simple way to think about what this might mean and to help people get ready for coming to Yearly Meeting 2008.

(At every Yearly Meeting there is a programme for children and young people. For more information contact the CYP team at Friends House.)

## 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 her or his thoughts and feelings about the work of QUNO and what Quakers do in the world?  
Was everybody OK with quite difficult information? What is there for you to learn from this session? What might you do differently another time?

## Links to other organisations and resources

<http://www.child-soldiers.org/coalition/> - Quakers are part of this coalition

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

[www.globalgang.org.uk](http://www.globalgang.org.uk) - Excellent Christian Aid website for children – go to Games and Gamezone for the 'Landmine challenge' game.

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## References & other resources



*'The Peaceable Kingdom' by Edmund Hicks*

Over the past sixty years, Quakers have sought to support the work of the UN and its vision, like that of the painter Edward Hicks, of a world where opposing forces could live together in peace.

**Linking with the wider meeting** – the landmine story and puppet show or reading would be a powerful activity for the whole meeting to share and support each other in.

**The next children's work issue** of 'Journeys in the spirit', number 12, February 2008, will be on 'Stilling, centering and listening inwardly'. Issue number 13, March 2008, will be on Britain Yearly Meeting Peace work in the UK and Issue 14, April 2008, will be on 'What is worship?'