

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward



Issue 34

December 2009

Children

Quaker Work in Bolivia

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 worship in 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** (or even further inwards?) towards 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.



The eighth in the
'Our Quaker stories' series
May 2009 –
August 2010

Getting ready

This is a story about how people can help each other when a problem is shared. What can we do as citizens of the world, as Quakers, about our world which has some very rich countries alongside some that are very poor?

This edition of Journeys in the Spirit looks at the work of one small Quaker-led international non-governmental organisation (referred to as an INGO) and its work in the remote Aymara communities of North West Bolivia. It looks at several things:

- what has been achieved by people working together
- why basic human rights – having a safe and secure home, safe drinking water, food and health – are things for Quakers to do something about, part of our witness
- how climate change is affecting the lives of the world's poorest people's.
- how looking at the way other people live and have basic things in life helps us to think about our lives and what we do

Quaker Bolivia Link was started by a group of Quakers from the United Kingdom and the USA in the mid-1990s because of how a lack of money was really making life very, very hard for the local Aymara people. Raising funds to support small community-initiated projects, means that supporters of Quaker Bolivia Link have enabled over 150 communities to improve part of their lives.

Understanding how the Aymara people live and what is important to them - community, tradition, the natural environment, self-reliance - can help us reflect on our lives and communities and wonder, which are the richest? Are they rich in other ways?

Underpinning references

John Woolman's accounts of being among native Americans:

"that" he "might feel and understand their life and the spirit they live in".

Quaker Faith and Practice Chapters 20, 25 and 24. Dip into these – what catches your eye, thoughts and feelings?

Gather



Gather in stillness around a globe or map of the world – find South America and, in its centre, Bolivia. Say something about what makes it different from Britain - it is a long way from sea, high, close to the Equator and very far away from us. Also, gently say about the things we have in common with people living there, we need food, water, shelter, warmth and, above all, love, security and safety - we might have these things but for people in Bolivia it can be hard to get them. Lay down these two pictures by your map or globe – ask everybody just to look at them or pass them round – ask, ‘What do you see?’.

Engage

Why are so many people poor? This activity and those in Respond could be done solely in Children’s Meeting or as a whole Meeting. See *Sheet 34.A* for a picture about the people in Aymara communities and Quaker Bolivia Link. Have this to show to everybody. Start by reading the two paragraphs below in italics. Do this in your own words depending on the age of your group. Then go on to tell one or more of the stories on *Sheets 34.B, C or D*. Think about who reads them out.

Some years ago some Quakers from Great Britain and the United States of America visited Bolivia. They met some Quakers living in the city of La Paz. They visited other towns and villages on highland known as the Altiplano and in the foothills of the Andean mountains where the people called the Aymara live.

The Aymara people they met were gentle, kind and humble (what does this mean? – you could start a conversation about it) even though how they lived was very, very poor. Their homes were built of mud bricks, or adobes; they cooked on open fires with wood or animal dung, fetching water from the streams and springs, and the only means of making money was through selling the things they grew or animals they reared or by moving away to the towns and cities to work as builders, taxi-drivers or servants in the homes of the well-off.

Now ask everyone to close their eyes and imagine that they are living in a small Aymara village or *ayllu* – no electricity at home, gathering wood and dried donkey dung as fuel for cooking; collecting water from a spring every morning and evening for cooking and washing; walking 3 miles to school in a neighbouring village, which takes about an hour there and back. However, you live with lots of brothers and sisters with a large family of cousins and grandparents nearby. You all get together with neighbours and the rest of your *ayllu* to celebrate big events – the start of the farming year, the celebration of mother world, Pachamama. You have lots of space around your home for you and your friends to play in.

Ask everyone to open their eyes and respond to the following question: I wonder, what do you like about their life – what might you find difficult?

References & other resources

More information about Quaker Bolivia Link can be found on its website www.qbl.org

Other NGOs working in Bolivia include:

Practical Action
Christian Aid
One World Action
CAFOD
Oxfam
Plan International
CARE
Save the Children

- some of these have resources for children on their websites.

Quaker Faith and Practice 19.32, 20.27-36,

Quaker Faith and Practice 29.18 on the spiritual wisdoms of the native traditions:

On international aid:
Quaker Faith and Practice: 24.52, 24.31

Meeting for Sufferings statement on Climate Change 2009 - <http://www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-response-crisis-climate-change>

Quaker Faith and Practice 25.02, 25.11, 25.12, 25.15

Evo Morales President of Bolivia – speech on climate change EU - <http://links.org.au/node/769>

References & other resources

It is important to help farmers grow traditional crops, like quinoa, to provide themselves with secure nutritious food rather than 'cash crops' which they think they may be able to sell to get an income.



Quinoa Croquettes

1 cup of quinoa, 5 tbsp flour, 6 tbsp vegetable oil, 1 cup milk, salt and pepper to taste. Cook the quinoa in 3 cups of water and strain it. Toss the flour in oil adding the milk to form a white sauce. Mix the quinoa with the white sauce. Form the mixture into croquettes and bathe in beaten egg. Fry in hot oil.

Quinoa Fries

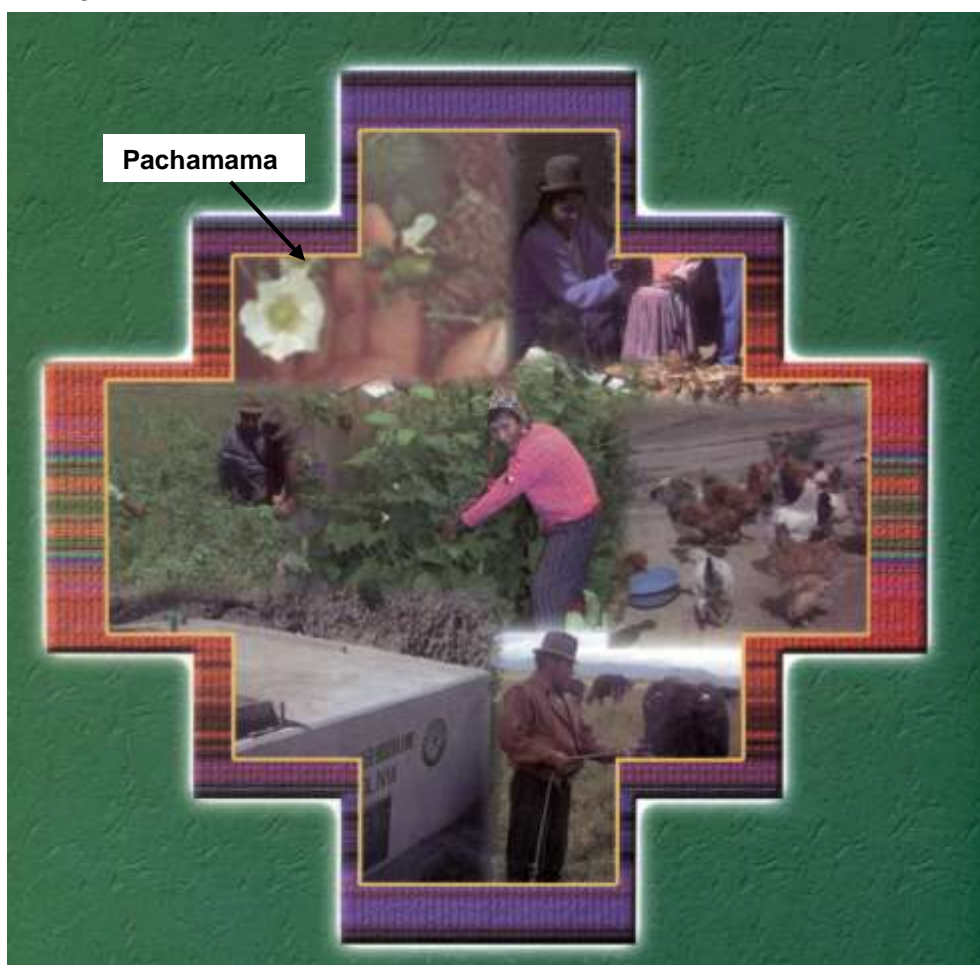
½ cup of quinoa, 1 tbsp flour, 1 egg, beaten, 1 head of onion, cut finely and lightly fried, salt and pepper to taste. Cook the quinoa in 1 ½ cups of water until it is thick and leave to cool. Add beaten egg, flour, onion, salt and pepper. Mix well with a spoon and lightly fry spoonfuls in hot oil.

Respond

Making a Chakana in children's meeting or all age meeting for worship.

This is a Chakana or 'Andean cross'. It is very important to the Aymara people.

- See *Sheet 34.E* for more information about what a chakana means.
- Print or make enough copies of the chakana on *Sheet 34.E* for everybody to have one. Have lots of good quality art materials available.
- Talk about what a chakana is and means to the Aymara people.
- Ask everybody to write, draw, colour onto their chakana special, important things about their family, their life, the world we live in and share; their ancestors (people in the past of their family no longer here); God, worship and the Light, the goodness, the spirit in each person. These can be shared with others or kept wholly or partly private. Conversation can go on as they are being made.



Making biscuits for sharing in children's meeting or all age meeting for worship using quinoa, eaten in Bolivia, which you can buy in whole food shops:

Quinoa Biscuits

- 1 cup of quinoa flour, 1 cup white wheat flour (or white mixed with wholemeal), ¾ cup sugar, 2 eggs, 2 tsp baking powder, 3 tbsp butter / margarine, 1 tsp vanilla essence, ½ cup milk, 1 tsp ground cinnamon (optional).
- Beat the sugar, softened butter and eggs together. Add the flour, baking powder, cinnamon and essence alternately with the milk to form a soft dough. Roll out the dough on a floured surface and cut into shapes as required (try making the 'chakana' or Andean cross, by placing one square on top of another). Bake in a moderate oven.

More recipes in the sidebar on this page.

Reflect

We have travelled in our minds to Bolivia and visited the Aymara people who live very different lives from our own. We have thought about how we are connected and the things that mean a lot to us all. Think about some small things that you can do that may indirectly have an impact on the lives of Maria and Oscar. Count them out on your fingers. With your eyes closed, picture a mountain in Bolivia with llamas and alpacas and the smiling faces of Aymara children and wonder at the richness of their lives. Give thanks to them for sharing their lives with you and enriching your day. Say the word *Yuspagara*, 'Thank you', in Aymara.

Review

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 how other people live, the difficulties of poverty, the benefits of people working together and the other strengths of communities?

On *Sheet 34.F* there are some questions that it would be helpful if you and/or older children could answer and return to QBL. If there is anything more with which your Children's Meeting would like help, please get in touch with QBL.

Topical activity

Climate change and the Aymara

Recently, the people of Bolivia have seen changes in the weather where they live, work and farm. The rains come later and are more violent; winters are harsher and severe frosts and hailstorms more common. The elders of the communities know these changes are serious and may have a disastrous effect on their lives. One day when people from Quaker Bolivia Link tried to visit the *Ayllu* (village) of Hucuri Milluni, on the Altiplano, they found everyone in a communal retreat or *ayni*. They had gathered together for three days in a building on the outskirts of the village, eating very little and thinking about their lives and problems as peasant farmers. They were seeking answers to these problems. An *ayni* is a bit like a Quaker Meeting for business. Think about having a Meeting for Business in Children's Meeting to discern how to help QBL. See *Issue 18* of the children's edition of *Journeys in the Spirit* which was about Quaker decision making – see sidebar for how to access this.

Links to other organisations and resources

www.quaker.org.uk/cyp - click on Ideas Store

The Quaker Life Resources Centre can be contacted on: 0207 663 1030 or at quakercentre@quaker.org.uk

www.qbl.org – for Quaker Bolivia Link (QBL)

You can help communities to have clean, safe water to drink by supporting various organisations that provide water in poorer communities e.g.:

www.Waterforpeople and www.WaterAid as well as QBL

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chakana> - for more information about Chakanas

This issue was written by Pattie Richmond and edited by Chris Nickolay

The next children's issue of *Journeys in the Spirit, Issue 35, available from Jan. 4th 2010 is about Elizabeth Fry; Issue 36, available from Feb. 1st 2010 is about John Woolman; Issue 37, available from March 1st is about the children of Bristol Meeting from the early days of Friends.*

References and ideas

Every one of us can help other people.

Mother Theresa, who worked with many poor people in India, said:

'We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love'.

There may be ways in which each person, of whatever age, can be part of change

What could your Meeting do as all ages together?

As suggested in Respond the stories and chakana activity could be used as the basis for an all age gathering and worship

For back copies of all but the most recent 3 issues of the children's edition of *Journeys in the Spirit* go to:

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/journeys-archive>

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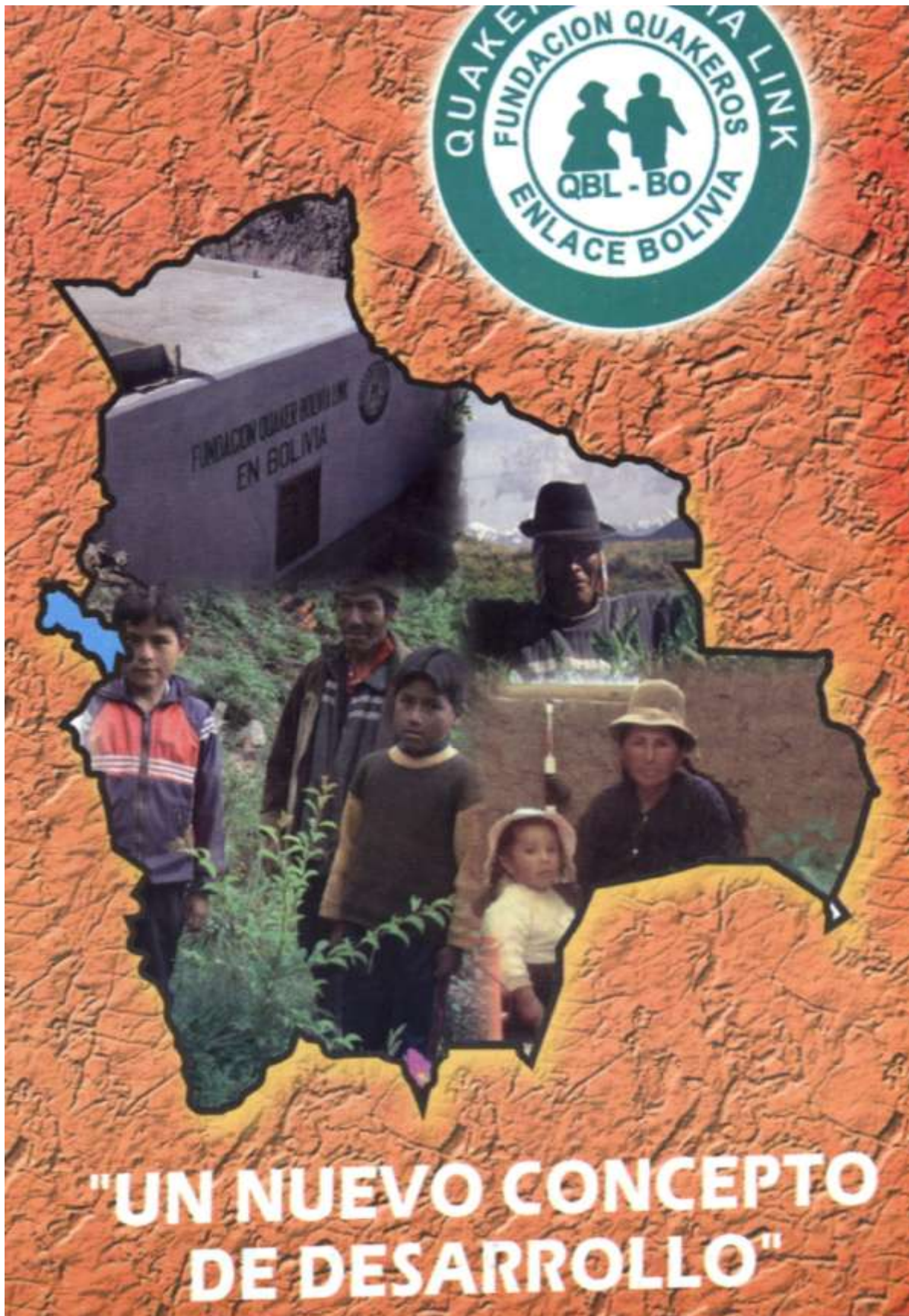
Children



Sheet 34.A Engage

Making a Difference

Quaker Bolivia Link – Walking cheerfully across the Altiplano and through the Andes



'un nuevo concepto de desarrollo' means 'a new concept of development' – a new way of doing things.

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Sheet 34.B Engage

Story 1 – water to drink

Safe drinking water

Maria lives with her family in Villa Puchini. She is the oldest and has five brothers and sisters. She walks 2 ½ hours with her brother Luis who is eleven to school in the neighbouring village. If she's lucky they get a lift in a passing car. Her younger brothers and sisters, Robert who is eight years old, Elsie 7, Estefania 6, and Brian 5, are able to go to school in Villa Puchini a 15 minute walk across the fields.

When she gets home from school Maria helps her mother Dona Severina, who is not well, in the house as well as on the land, digging potatoes or harvesting the crops, or tending the animals. They have some chickens, three cows, ten sheep and a llama. The family grow canahua, quinoa, barley and potatoes. Sometimes, as this year, the potato crop is attacked by disease and the crops fail; this year also the quinoa crop did not yield well, partly due to the extreme weather conditions. Droughts followed by periods of torrential rains severely affect their crops.

Pedro Machaca, Maria's father, is part of the local Committee that organised itself to obtain drinking water for the community. They asked their local council to design a system to pipe clean water from a spring. The council then asked Quaker Bolivia Link for some funds and technical help to build the system. There are now drinking water taps providing water to 27 families.

The water is pumped from a depth of 4 metres so it is highly unlikely to dry up even during periods of drought. Previously as well as her other tasks, Maria and her older brothers would have walked to the nearest spring to collect water; in dry weather they would have to walk further still. Maria is pleased that she has more time for other things, including doing her homework!

Many communities in the Altiplano rely on water from the melt waters of the Andean mountains, even if they are some distance from the mountains as these waters still feed into underground reservoirs from which water can be pumped.

Children and water in Puchini



A child, a woman and water in Tujsahuira



Some questions:

- I wonder how Maria feels about her father getting together with his neighbours to make a water system for everybody.
- Do you know where your water comes from? www.kidzone.ws/WATER/ - good activities.
- You can help communities to have clean, safe water to drink by supporting various organisations that provide water in poorer communities.
- www.Waterforpeople , www.WaterAid as well as QBL.

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Children

Sheet 34.C

Engage

Story 2 – a boy and his chickens

Greenhouses and chicken houses

Oscar is nine years old and lives with his mother and father, Don Simon, and his sister and her two children in a small house built of adobe mud-bricks in a community called Collana in an area known as Playa Verde. This name means Green Beach as in the rainy season the flat plateau is transformed into a field of green, whereas much of the year it is brown and dry. Oscar's community consists of about 100 people.

Oscar and his family have very few options of food to eat. The nearest market is about 10 kms away – a long way to walk and only one or two people in the village own a vehicle. On the land around their house they grow potatoes and quinoa and in the foothills and rough grassland they graze llamas, alpacas and sheep providing much needed meat, milk and wool.

Generally, Oscar's family can rely on the rains coming in November and December so that the seed they plant in September can germinate and grow at the wettest time of the year. Lately though the rains have been late and when they do come fall with such intensity that flooding and flash floods occur. Winter temperatures are also falling and frosts are more frequent; the dry winter months from April to December can be very hard.

That is why Oscar's community asked Quaker Bolivia Link to help them breed chickens which can provide nutritious sources of protein in the form of eggs and, when reproducing well, low-fat meat.

Oscar's father and aunt were helped to build a simple chicken house and corral, from adobe (mud bricks), plastic sheeting, wood and chicken wire. They contributed all the local materials and built the houses themselves with a little guidance from a technician who had helped build similar chicken houses in other places. They put some cash towards the cost of buying some balanced feed for the young chickens which once they had adapted to their new environment ate less grain and are now able to survive on leftovers and scavenging. Oscar takes responsibility for the chickens and especially collecting the eggs. The 20 chickens provide the family with 10 eggs a day and in time should produce 15/16 eggs a day. When there are too many they sell the excess to neighbours or at the local market or *feria*. Oscar's dad has fixed a gutter to the chicken-house to stop the rainwater soaking the patio ground.



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Sheet 34.D

Engage

Story 3 – all about llamas

Here are some photos of men and women on the Altiplano in Bolivia with their llamas. They live in the areas surrounding the village of Suriquina, about 150 kms from La Paz, a journey that takes at least 3 hours. Most of the families live some way away in the hills and come to Suriquina to take part in training sessions and to meet with the vet who helps them vaccinate their animals against disease.

Don Apolinar has six children. The two oldest now live in La Paz and work as builders. The others are boys aged 9, 10, 12 and his daughter is 24. Many young people leave their homes to work in La Paz even though they will only have manual labour or service jobs there. The projects in which QBL is involved, which revive traditional skills and train farmers in better methods to look after their animals and crops encourage some youngsters to get more involved again in producing food and caring for their land. Some then go on to train as vets or to study agriculture at the University and can return with valuable knowledge to pass back to their communities.

Through a project funded by QBL, Don Apolinar received a black llama which weighed a healthy 90 kgs. The animals were distributed by a draw – those who got a female were pleased. Why do you think this is? Dona Justina was delighted to get a female which was already pregnant.

Llamas and alpacas are very useful animals to keep on the Altiplano as they are adapted to the harsh conditions there. They are useful animals of burden, they provide wool that can be used for weaving and knitting, either for the family or for sale, and if the animals are killed for their meat their skins provide leather. Camelid (llama)meat is an excellent source of protein - it is one of the most nutritious animal meats you can eat and it can be dried to use at times when there is little other food around. This is called 'charque'.



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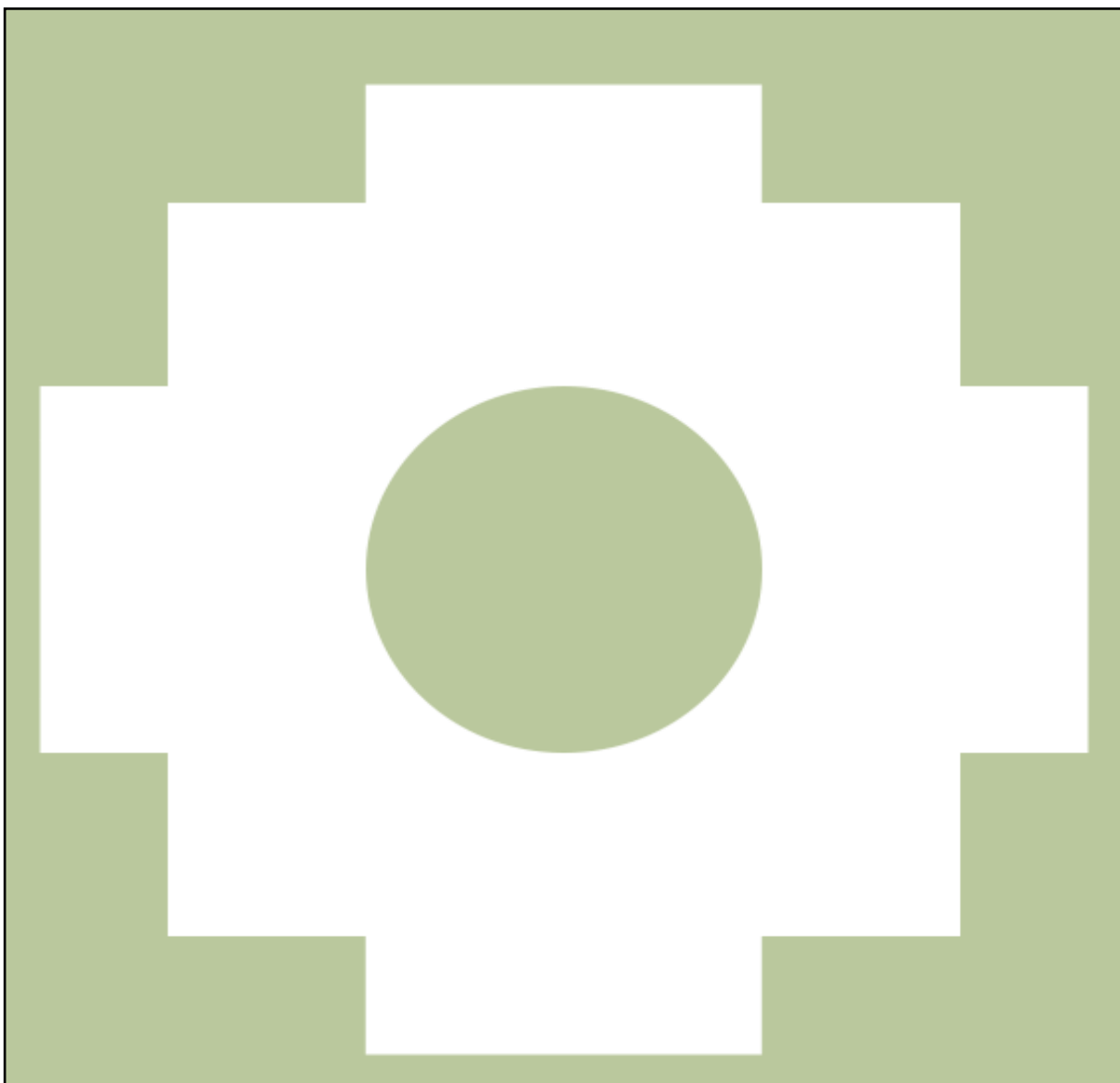


Sheet 34.E

Engage

What is a chakana?

Very simply, the 3 steps all around it remind people about Hana Pacha, the upper world – the stars and gods; Kay Pacha, the middle, every day, world that we live in; Uqhu Pacha the lower world – the spirits and ancestors. The smaller, middle step on each side is named after a season – autumn; summer; spring; winter. A very important point on the cross is at the top left – August 1st – the time of Pachamama – mother world or mother earth – when everyone gives thanks and gifts to her in special times of worship – see picture on page 3. The cross is a picture of a whole year and the life, memories, worship and feelings that are in it. This is a bit like the Journeys in the Spirit overall theme of ‘inwards, outwards, upwards and downwards’ – see the front cover of any issue.



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Children



Sheet 34.F Review

Review questions

Feeding back to Quaker Bolivia Link

1. In our meeting we carried out the following activities:-

Activity:

2. We are particularly interested in the following ideas:-
(circle as appropriate)

Making a Difference

Work of NGOs

Climate Change Something else....

3. We used the following:-

Globe / Map of the World Andean cross The stories All ages working together Cooking and recipes
(circle as appropriate)

4. We are considering :-

Adopting a QBL project or theme such as water or greenhouses. Please send us information on a project for water / chicken / llamas/ crops / any area (circle as appropriate) and how we can follow its progress

5. We have the following ideas / suggestions / thoughts on the work of QBL in Bolivia.

If you would like to send photos of your meeting or copies of anything you made, wrote or drew we would like to see them and hopefully use them in our QBL Newsletters and Appeals. Please let us know at:
pattierichmond@qbl.org

Please send completed review sheets to: QBL, 45 Wroxham Road, Sprowston, Norwich NR7 8TN.

Thank you.