

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 24

February 2009

Children



Quakers in South Asia – working with peace builders part 2

(A follow on to Issue 22 December 2008)

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 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** towards God, the deeper mystery; **downwards** to the world we live in.



The sixteenth in the series exploring Quakers: a people of God: being and doing

Getting ready

Quaker Testimonies are lived out expressions of what Quakers see as eternal truths, as gifts of the Spirit. In responding to those gifts and based on the foundation of Love and Truth, the inner call to be a peacemaker and peacebuilder is an important part of the Quaker contribution to life.

This issue contains further examples from Quaker work in South Asia to help children and the adults working with them hear about a world probably beyond their normal experience and give opportunities to empathise with the lives of others. We provide opportunities for children, and Meetings, to:

- Live nonviolently – practice deep respect for all beings
- Be aware of our own "story" and vulnerability.
- Listen to and learn about others' stories and vulnerabilities.
- Reflect on the impact of our Lifestyle on others
- Be aware of and possibly support nonviolent organisations
- Work for political, social, economic and environmental change



Underpinning references

Quaker Faith and Practice 1.02 1.

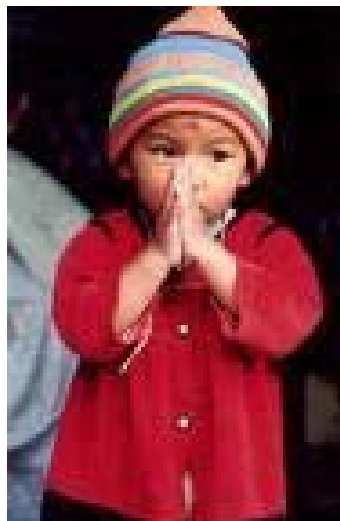
Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.

Gather

See *Sheet 24.A*. Settle in a circle. Say that we are going to hear about people who are trying to make their countries peaceful. Say that you are going to begin with a special prayer from one of those countries. In some parts of India people greet you by saying “Namaste” (pronounced “Namasstay”) – meaning “I salute that of God in you from the place of God in me”. The picture here shows you how to hold your hands when this is done. You could do it before the prayer on *Sheet 24.A*.

OM SAHANA VAVATU SAHANA BHUNATTU
SAHA VIRYAM KARAWAVAHAI
TEJASVINAVADITAMASTU
MA VIDVISHAVAHAI
OM SHANTI SHANTI SHANTI OM

*Together may we be protected
Together may we be nourished
Together may we work with great energy
May our journey together be brilliant and effective
May there be no bad feelings between us
Peace, peace, peace*



Engage

Nepal, Nagaland and football

1. Hope in dark places

Quakers from Friends House in London have been helping people in a country called Nepal. They had a special meeting of people from Nepal and other countries in the part of our world called South Asia – see *Sheet 24.B* and have a globe available too. People from Nepal were there because there had been fighting in their country for a very long time – 10 years. Now some of them wanted to learn how to get on with each other and not fight again. On *Sheet 24.C* there is a story about two women at the meeting – Radha and Thurka. It is a story with lots of sadness and with happiness too.

2. Peace keeps flowing like a river – it can move rocks; it just takes time.

In the north east part of India there is a place where the Naga people live – see *Sheet 24.B* for a map – again, have a globe available. Naga people want to have their own country and not be part of India. The people in charge in India, the government, won't let them have their own country. There has been a war about this for a long time. Naga people fight Indian people, Naga people fight Naga people. It has been a terrible time. Ten years ago, in 1999, some Naga people asked Quakers in Britain to help them find peaceful ways. Quakers have helped people talk and listen all this time – they visited eight times. Then, in June 2008, there was a very special meeting. See *Sheet 24.D* for a story about this.

3. Football for peace

When people met in Thailand to work for peace in Nagaland one way was to play football. There were two teams – the fighters became the United Nationals and the peace helpers became the Naga Parliament. The score was 2-2 but after a penalty shoot out the United Nationals won 4-2. See *Sheet 24.E* for more pictures to tell the story.



References & other resources

Galatians Ch.5 vs. 22 – 26.

'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law'....and:

'Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.'

Source:

www.biblegateway.com

"Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness ...and helping one another up with a tender hand."

Isaac Pennington, Quaker (1667)

Don't forget the Quaker Life Resources Room has lots of books and packs to help you and your meeting to share and learn more about peace, non-violence and other faiths – see links on page 4. This is about learning as a whole Meeting.

References and Resources

See "The Friend" September 18 2008 "Accompanying the Peacebuilders" by Jan Arriens.

Resources for masks:

Copies of the mask on *Sheet 24 F* or other plain masks, pens and pencils, oil pastels, sequins, gold and silver pens, glue sticks, crayons, coloured ribbon, scissors, acrylic paints, brushes and newspaper.



Resources for stone painting:

Acrylic paints, gold and silver pens, paint brushes, coloured felt pens, oil pastels, sequins, glue sticks, PVA glue, clear varnish, newspaper.

Friends have been aiding peace in Nagaland since at least 1960 when Marjorie Sykes, Quaker Ghandian, was a peace observer.

For a big range of children's books go to: www.quaker.org.uk/bookshop and use the search facility

Respond

Hope in dark places.

1. Before beginning a conversation based on the following questions, ask everyone to look at the photos of Radha and Thurka on *Sheet 24.C*. What is similar about them? How are they alike? How do they look different? If you have used their story to start this session then everybody will know a little bit about Radha and Thurka – can we see anything about their stories in their faces? Now, to widen out the conversation. A hard question – what can we know about people that we may not see by looking at them? (For example: do they have a family? Are they honest? Do they care about other people?). If we can't see these things how do we find them out? How can we know what is making someone sad or happy? Allow time for answers. Now take a little time to talk in pairs – tell each other one thing that makes you sad and one thing that you like to do.

2. Use the template on *Sheet 24.F* for making simple masks or buy plain masks from a craft shop – they can be more permanent. Everybody colours, decorates, draws or writes on the front of their mask, maybe their faces, things they like to do or special things that they want people to know about themselves. When that is done ask people to write, draw or decorate on the inside things that are important or perhaps secret to them – a special place, a favourite smell, a very important toy, their best friend. Talk about what has been put on the front of the masks – what is inside is private. *See sidebar for resource list.*

Peace keeps flowing like a river.

1. If you have told the story of the two men - V.S. Atem and Wangtin on *Sheet 24.D* go back to the photograph. Point out the stone and the cross that they are holding. Lay out an array of stones, rocks and a simple cross if you have one. Ask questions like, 'I wonder why the men are holding a cross?'. Allow time for answers – give your own thoughts about it. (Note: many people in Nagaland are Baptist Christians). Now talk about the stones. Ask questions like, 'I wonder what stones and rocks are good for?' Can stones speak? Why are they called 'speaking stones' in the Naga story? Now do the next activity.

2. Make sure that you have enough rocks and stones for everybody who is likely to come to your session – ask people in Meeting for help with this. Ask everybody to choose a stone or rock. Ask a question like, 'I wonder what your speaking stone would look like if it was decorated?' After a little conversation about this draw everybody's attention to the paints, brushes, glue, pens and sequins that have been set out. Say that everybody can decorate their stone or rock in the way they choose for the rest of the session. They can be taken home. They could be laid out in the main Meeting prior to being taken home. *See sidebar for resource list.*

3. Everyone has experienced disagreements and arguments and sometimes these lead to fights. Can you talk about a time when you strongly disagreed with someone or had an argument? What happened?

4. Making a living time line of working for peace. This is a simple way to show people that peace can take time and that we are all joined to, and can help, the process. See the bottom of *Sheet 24.E* for instructions and resources.

Football for peace.

If you have enough people in your children's Meeting or your whole Meeting, plan to have a football match. The idea could be introduced to the whole meeting by telling the story of the Naga match. Maybe link it to the football played in the First World War Christmas peace? Talk about how you organise two teams. What would they be called? Who would be referee? Plan to have a good tea afterwards. See *Sheet 24.E* for inspiration.



Reflect

Begin with a little looking back. Say something like, 'The stories and events we have heard have been about people who live in other countries – a long way away. I wonder if there is one thing you want to remember from today - what might that be?'

Ask, 'I wonder, how a story you have heard today might help you in your life?'. Ask, 'I wonder what you would like to do to help peace grow in Nagaland or Nepal?' Give each person a small square of card. On one side everybody writes, or is helped to write, Nagaland or Nepal. Now the card should be folded over twice so that, when unfolded, there are four squares. In each square everybody writes, or is helped to write, the name or names of people they have heard about today. Radha, Thurka and so on. A simple heart can also be drawn. The card is then folded back up again. It can be kept in a pocket or a special place for a time when it would help to think of people who have been strong and helped make peace – even when it was hard.

End with the prayer used at the beginning of the session. See *Sheet 24.A*.

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 people who work for peace in very difficult times and places and how this might help them? What is there for you to learn from this session? What might you do differently another time?

Topical news and activity

President Obama's children go to a Quaker School.

Exciting news. The new President of the United States of America and his wife have chosen a Quaker school for their two children. The school is Sidwell Friends School. Here is a picture of some children at the school. What could this tell us about President Obama and his family?



Links to other organisations and resources

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

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.

http://www.sidwell.edu/middle_school/index.asp

<http://nagaland.nic.in/> - a Nagaland government website with lots of information

www.quaker.org.uk/QPSW - for more information on Quaker peace work

<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/mag/2005/07/24/stories/2005072400130400.htm>
- information about Marjorie Sykes, Quaker Ghandian.

This issue was written by Stuart Morton QPSW and edited by Chris Nickolay

The next children's issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* looks at 'Belonging and membership' and will be available from March 1st 2009. It will be the first of two on this theme. These mark the end of the current series. The next series, 'Our Quaker Stories', commences on May 1st 2009.

Ways for all ages to connect with each other around the theme of being Quaker and acting nonviolently include:

Plan a football match, explore a shared multi-faith worship time, plan all age worship about speaking stones – tell the story of the reconciled fighters and the making of a peace agreement.

Learn to be quiet enough to hear the sound of the genuine within yourself so that you can hear it in other people.

— **Marian Wright Edelman** 1992 A
quote from the Sidwell School website

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Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 24.A Gather

Saying a prayer for peace together

Copy and cut out the words of this prayer. Give one or more to each person to say or be helped with saying. Arrange everybody in the order of the words. Each word could be numbered – that might be easier to order. This will need practice but, as the words have a rhythm about them, you should find, after a few goes that it becomes like a song. It needs to be said or slightly sung in quite a low tone. This could be fun – something for the whole Meeting to do?

OM SAHANA VAVATU

SAHANA BHUNATTU

SAHA VIRYAM

KARAWAVAHAI

TEJASVINAVADITAMASTU

MA VIDVISHAVAHAI

OM SHANTI SHANTI SHANTI

OM

Use it again in the Reflect or closing part of your session. Everyone can recite it or just one person. Remember to read the translation as well.

Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 24.B

Engage

Nagaland, Nepal and India

Nepal



See Sheet 22.A of Journeys in the Spirit issue 22 for a nice picture of a globe



Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 24.C

Engage

A story of two women

This is a story of two women who live thousands of miles apart but still helped each other.

Radha lives in Nepal. She has two young children. Her husband was a soldier who wanted to help the poor people in Nepal. (Note: he was a Maoist). He had been taken prisoner and killed by the army of Nepal. All Radha had left was a piece of land to farm to feed her family. Her husband's family were cruel – they said it was all her fault. Her young son was very, very angry about his dad. He said that, when he grew up he would get his own back and kill people. Of course, underneath, he was very, very sad.

Radha didn't want to come to the meeting and talk but she did. It turned out very good that she did. In the group was a young woman called Thurka (pronounced 'Turka'). She was a peace person from the island of Sri Lanka – it is at the bottom of India, like a tear. She told her story. When she was much younger, her dad and her uncle had disappeared, they had been taken by the army in a war on her island (this war is still going on today) – she never saw them again. Still, she worked for peace. I suppose she didn't want anybody else to go through what she had. Thurka's story made Radha feel a big rush of hope. Maybe her children could get over their terrible sadness and not hurt other people? Maybe she could also try to help peace grow in Nepal?

What do you think?



Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 24.D

Engage

A story of some fighters

It was going to be a special day and it might be hard to do. Forty people had come a long way from their home. Some of them were men who had been fighting each other and hurting people in Nagaland where they lived. Some Quakers were there to help find ways to stop fighting.

Everybody sat – people were nervous, even scared. Women and men needed to tell their stories. Everyone agreed to listen. There would be a little quiet after each person spoke. There was a special stone, a speaking stone – when a person wanted to speak, she or he had to hold the stone; when someone else held it everyone had to listen. Two men, V.S. Atem and Wangtin Naga, began to speak. They were brave – back in Nagaland they had been fighting, they had small armies. They told a long story. Their fathers and their grandfathers had been fighting in wars in Nagaland for more than 50 years. Now, they said, it should stop. They made a promise to help each other – some of the people in their armies wouldn't like this.

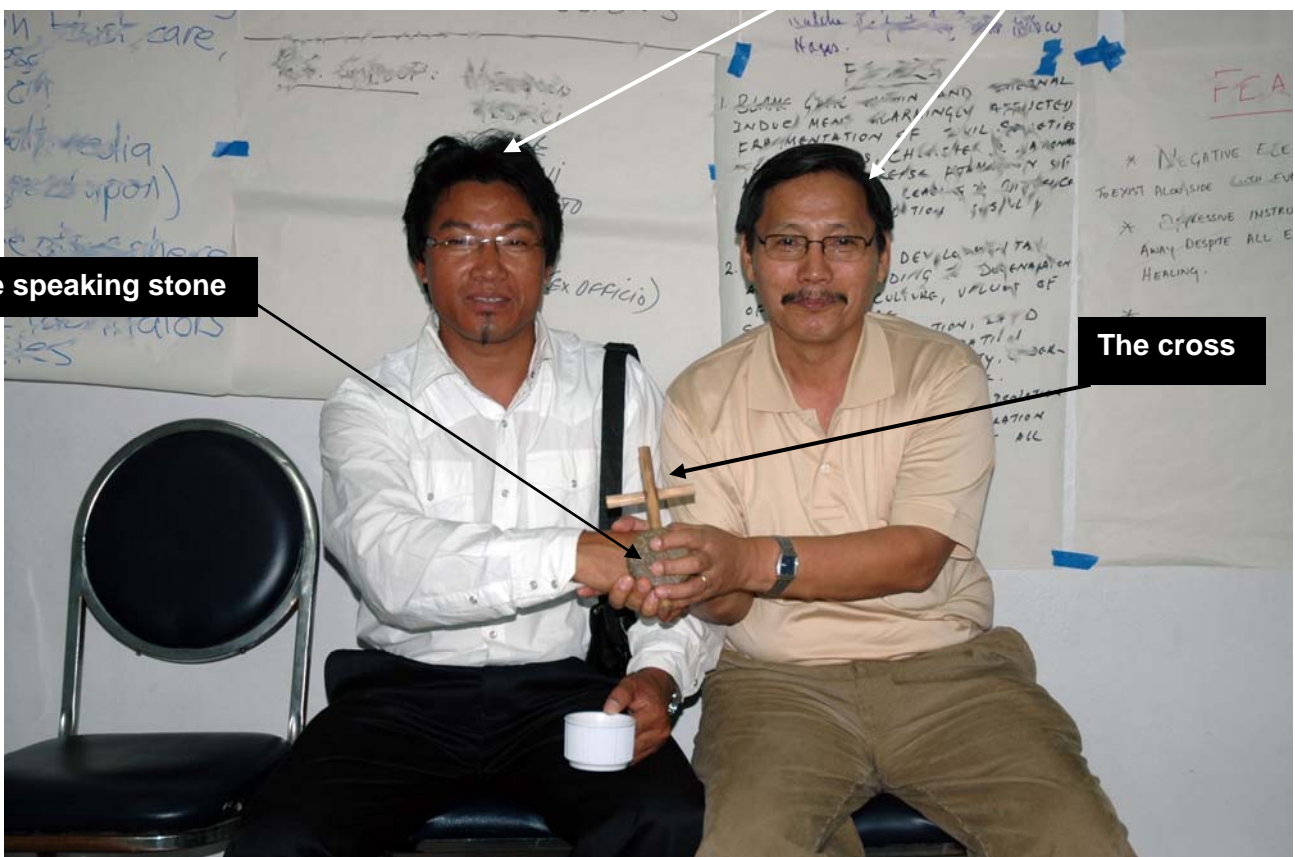
Everybody felt sad and happy at the same time.

On another day at this meeting something else very special happened. In the Bible Jesus washed the tired and dusty feet of his special friends, the disciples. This was to show that he was the same as them. He felt humble (little) and so did they. Some of the 40 people who had been listening and talking with each other washed each others feet as a sign of being peaceful with each other. (See the Bible : John Ch. 13 v 5, 14.)

Here are some questions to use to help conversation about this true story:

- I wonder which part of this story you like the most?
- I wonder which part of this story you think is the most important.
- I wonder, could you wash the feet of another person in the way they did?

Here is a picture of V.S. Atem and Wangtin Naga



The speaking stone

The cross

Journeys in the Spirit

Children



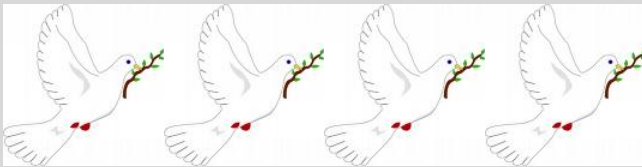
Sheet 24.E Engage and Respond

Football, peace and prayers



In the training centre where we met in Nepal we held our own ceremony for the signing of the peace agreement for Nepal. As part of our programme at the end of each day we had a spiritual exploration session led by a different participant each time. So we had Hindu, Buddhist, Moslem, Christian, Quaker - and spiritual sessions that were not rooted in any religious faith. We found this to be a powerful bonding element throughout the time we spent together.

Could your Meeting host a multi- faith worship gathering for peace?



Making a living time line of working for peace.

Get a big ball of wool, 12 dove shapes cut from A4 card - on one write 1960, on another 1999. The doves represent the eight visits to Nagaland by Friends since 1999 and the four big meetings held in Thailand to help people from Nagaland meet in a safe place. In children's or big meeting, with children or everybody, ask someone born in or near 1960 to hold the 1960 dove and the start of the wool. Ask someone born in or near 1999 to hold their card and the wool quite a way after 1960. Now ask for children born in or near subsequent years to hold a dove and the wool in order of age. Ask one or more adults or older children to stand with them. Everyone must end up standing with another person. The youngest person should hold or be helped to hold the final, the 12th dove and, almost, the end of the wool. This final dove brings you right up to date. Quakers from our Yearly Meeting are visiting Nagaland between February 20th and March 1st 2009. Ask a child, maybe with an adult or older child, to think of and say a prayer to wish Naga people and their Quaker visitors lots of strength and love to bravely keep working for peace. Our prayer is one way of helping this long journey and conversation for peace. Look back to how long it has been going on.



Here are V.S. Atem and Wangtin Naga accepting the cup after the football match that their team won. The woman making the presentation is Lynda Williams, a Quaker

Journeys in the Spirit

Children



Sheet 24.F

Respond

A mask of ourselves

