



# Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition Issue 48 February 2011



## The Simple Life: Advices & Queries 41 & 42

### Getting ready

Advices and Queries is a set of reminders. Some people put stickers on the inside of their front doors saying things like – Have you got your keys? Advices and Queries are similar – they are not instructions or orders but they help Quakers to stop and remember to think about how they live their lives.

Advices and Queries 41 and 42 act as very real reminders about how we treat the world around us. You could try putting up the words of no. 41 and 42 somewhere at home or at work. Let the words play on you over a week. Do they make you feel guilty? Do they produce hope or opportunity in you? Do they make you look at things in a different way? What memories of your childhood do they conjure up?

The simple life is a core principle of Quakerism. These two Advices are also included in the *Quaker Living Witness Project's* own *Green Advices and Queries*. See the internet reference in the sidebar on page 2.

On the surface they contain something of a paradox – Advices and Queries 41 seems to encourage 'going without' for the sake of the earth, whereas Advices and Queries 42 expects us to celebrate and rejoice in the glory of the earth, the very thing for which we have to go without! This might be something to explore. Whilst it will make sense to some, it might be a difficult for others to understand or appreciate.

### Gather

Before the children gather, prepare a table (preferably circular) around which all can sit. Cut out a large paper or cloth circle in blue or green to represent the earth. Do not worry about it looking like a map. Explain that it is a symbol, not a likeness of the earth. Give each child their own piece of paper in different colours and shapes and have pens and pencils within easy reach.

When you are all settled, ask everybody to think of a beautiful place or a memory of a beautiful place that is part of the earth. It could be a wood that they have visited; it could be a window box that they have noticed on someone's house; it could be a memory from a holiday or seeing snow or the sea for the first time; it could be a bird, animal or other creature; it could be an object like a shell or a stone or even some food they have tasted. After some silence ask the children to share their thoughts. They can then write or draw something on their piece of paper and stick it onto the cloth creating a sort of garden of their world – younger ones may need help with this. If they want to keep their place or memory a secret, they can stick their piece of paper face down.

"Journeys in the Spirit" offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children and young people.

This children's work edition comes out monthly. It offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with 5 –12 year olds in a Quaker setting.

It provides opportunities for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of worship in partnership on our shared journey in the spirit.

### Underpinning references

#### Quaker Faith and Practice 25.08

This is a marvellous world, full of beauty and splendour....

#### Native American saying

Teach your children... that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves.

# Engage

Explain that you will be talking about the earth and nature today and how we fit in with it – it's a bit like we are all one very big family. Depending on the ages of your children, you can always begin by reading Advices and Queries 41 or 42 and lead a discussion about what the words mean, particularly what might be meant by 'freely chosen' in number 41. Alternatively you could also talk a little bit about how the earth is suffering because we are using up its resources too quickly. Or just dive straight in without an introduction.

## Read the following story:

*'Simon was going to be 8. He was very excited. He had been to some of his friends' birthday parties recently, some of which were amazing, and he had great plans for his own. He was very organised. He always had the right books in his bag for school and he especially liked to make lists. He made one to help his parents plan his birthday. It went like this:*

1. Please can we go to the swimming pool – we get the whole pool if we say it is for a party.
2. Afterwards we will be hungry so can we go for a pizza.
3. Aliens and space would be a good theme – there is a costume we can get from the supermarket that I have seen.
4. Can I give out party bags with alien toys in?
5. For presents I would most like the rocket we saw at the museum shop but also a new bag, a book on aeroplanes and a dog.

*Simon put the list in an envelope and gave it to his parents who were planting vegetables in the garden. He ran upstairs and waited to hear what they would say.*

*He heard his mother coming up the stairs. She came into his bedroom and sat on his bed. 'Sorry Simon,' she said. 'We can't do all of these things. You know we are trying to be kinder to the planet. We don't want to buy new things all the time and the swimming pool is so bad for the environment – there's the heating, the lighting, the chemicals.... I think we should go to the wood and have a picnic – we have lots of lovely food we have grown - and we can play games there. We could even have a sort of nature treasure hunt. What do you think?'*

*Simon said nothing. He was heartbroken. His birthday was going to the worst ever.'*



## Some initial responses:

Allow for some silence and see if anyone says anything without asking any questions – say, "What does anybody think about this story?" Other questions you could ask are:

Do you think Simon's parents are right? Do you think it is unfair on Simon?

Would you have liked Simon's ideal birthday party? If not, what would be your ideal party?

Do you think it is important to have birthday parties? Should Simon have some of the things he wants?

Could Simon have a good party but change a few things to make it kinder to the planet? Have anybody had something like this happen to them?

## References & other resources

**Elizabeth Fry:**  
*'Never indulge myself in luxuries that are not necessary.'*

## Advices and Queries 25.07

## Stories tackling the idea of less is more:

The Stonecutter (Japanese)  
[www.mythfolklore.net/andrewlang/241.htm](http://www.mythfolklore.net/andrewlang/241.htm)

## The Bible:

The Rich Young Man - Matthew 19 ('It is easier for the rich man to pass through the eye of the needle.....')

**Quaker Living Witness Project:**  
[www.livingwitness.org.uk/greenadvice/s.htm](http://www.livingwitness.org.uk/greenadvice/s.htm)

**Journeys in the Spirit children's work edition**  
[www.quaker.org.uk/journeys/archive-children](http://www.quaker.org.uk/journeys/archive-children) for:

Issue 4  
*Simplicity*

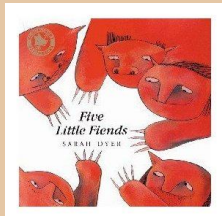
Issue 6  
*Sustainability*

Issue 30  
*Animals and Us*

## Other resources

### For younger children:

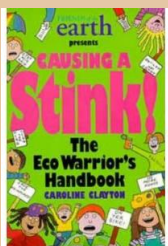
Five Little Fiends  
by Sarah Dyer.



A simple tale about five little fiends who steal five things very important to the world. They discover sharing is essential. Available from the Quaker Bookshop.

### For older children - project and action ideas:

Causing a Stink! -  
Caroline Clayton



Used copies available from  
[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

Additional Resources 48. A and 48.B available at:

[www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children](http://www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children)

## Respond

### A Recipe for a Party

In groups, individually or whatever suits the group you are working with:

Make a list or draw pictures of the 'ingredients' needed to make a good birthday party, wedding or other celebration. For example - best friends, presents decorations, food, music and place. Talk about how you could get some of these ingredients more (or less) and still have a 'happy planet' - homemade presents, food, venue using less heating or maybe outside.

You could prepare a big birthday cake shaped piece of card, or a Christmas tree or wedding cake shape etc and add ingredients on extra pieces of paper in the shape of decorations/baubles. Or you can just write a list together and talk about each ingredient that is suggested.

Talk about which are essential, nice but not necessary - probably best limited to one or two (ie a real luxury). Keep asking the important question – will making more 'happy earth' choices make the party worse, the same or better?

### More Advices.

Talk with the children about what their own advices might be – they can be more specific than 41 and 42. Remember the Quaker phrase – 'What can you say?' Three categories that work quite well include:

Advices & Queries for *you* e.g: How can you walk to school more often.

Advices & Queries for *your family, friends or the Meeting* e.g: How can you turn the heating down, only buy sustainably caught fish, use less plastic.

Advices & Queries for *the world* e.g: How can you make sure more wind turbines are built, don't allow the rainforests to be cut down.

Especially if you decide to write some advices for the Meeting, these could be written up as a sort of charter and put on the wall. Younger children can draw pictures or decorate the borders.

### Tell a story - Five Little Fiends.

Tell the story of the little fiends stealing earth, fire, sun and other important things. (See *the sidebar*.) Ask what children liked about it. Have good quality art materials for children to use to respond to the story or in any way they choose.

### Ideas for younger children – pictures of the world.

Have some books to hand that have pictures of the natural world - an animal encyclopaedia or a wildlife/gardening book. They can then draw or trace some things to either add to the globe garden you might have done at the beginning (see *Gather*) or to take home with them. Enjoy looking at the more interesting species and point out their differences. See *Additional Resources 48.A* for some pictures to copy, look at and talk about.

### Ideas for older children - transition and peak oil.

Oil is running out. Have some objects in a bag such as plastic toys, medicines, toiletries, packaging, water bottles and even food (from overseas like an apple from New Zealand). Take them out one by one and discuss how life would be affected if we didn't have them. Can we do without them now? Which should be prioritised? Are there alternatives? The Transition Town movement is all about moving away from a life that is so dependent on oil. It asks local communities to find solutions (like setting up car-share schemes and using local resources better – community apple pressing events for example). What would your Meeting be like if it became a 'Transition Meeting'? See *Additional Resources Sheet 48.B* for more information on the Transition movement. Is there a transition group locally?

## Reflect

Don't forget to celebrate. This can be a gloomy and difficult subject. If you did the globe garden (see *Gather*) then return to this. Children can add more things, point out what they like on it, have silent reflection on times they have been in nature or seen something beautiful, huge or amazing. Offer opportunities for younger children to share the pictures they might have drawn.

If there is a window in the room then actively look out in silence. Encourage one or two children point out what they can see, what it makes them think of, or where their thoughts have gone.



No one will save the planet for us. We have to do it ourselves, together. In silence think about one or two things we can personally do that will help the planet or who we can ask to help.

## Review

Have children been able to explore the idea that they are responsible for their own actions? That is what Advices and Queries is all about – looking at your own behaviour. You cannot be a lazy Quaker!



Does your Meeting have the time and resources to turn some of this into practice? Which activity or discussion could be developed or seemed unfinished?

**This issue was written by Rebecca Leek, edited by Chris Nickolay with the support of Howard Nurden. The Topical Activity is based on work being done by Michael Bartlett Quaker Parliamentary Liaison worker.**

The next children's issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* is **Issue 49** and is about Advices and Queries 30 (*helping with thinking about death and dying*) and is available on March 1<sup>st</sup>. **Issue 50** is about Advices and Queries 32 & 36 (*dealing with conflict*) and is available on April 1<sup>st</sup>. **Issue 51** is about Advices and Queries 33 (*being aware of discrimination and helping make a just, kind society*) and is available on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Materials available online for this issue are:**

Current issue additional Resources Sheets

An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting

A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship

A topical activity – teenagers in the Army

Also a 'How to use *Journeys in the Spirit*' guide; a link to special issues; an archive of previous issues; a discussion forum and a link to the *Journeys in the Spirit* Youth edition.

[www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren](http://www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren)

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# Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional Resources 48.A



Respond

Pictures of the natural world

