

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 35

January 2010

Children



Betsy Gurney grew up to be Elizabeth Fry

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 ninth in the
**'Our Quaker
stories' series**
May 2009 –
August 2010

Getting ready

In stories about Quakers, we can often become lost in their accomplishments and no longer see the individual with personal strengths and weaknesses, joys and sorrows, doing their best to live their faith in action.

In children's meeting for worship, we often become focused on the activity and what the children have made so they can show and tell the adults what they did in Meeting. Yet, we don't ask the adults to tell children what they have "done".

Elizabeth Fry is a Quaker whose accomplishments in prison reform go before her. Admired on a five-pound note, her shyness, fear of the dark and poor spelling is often forgotten, if this was even ever known.

In this issue children will be encouraged to experience worship and explore how "they may let their life speak" (George Fox). Elizabeth Fry's childhood and young adulthood illustrates how trying to live a good moral life is not easy and the challenge is often with one's self even before it might become a challenge to family and friends.

Equipment needed

Create a sense of sacred space: a comfortable, safe and welcoming room. Avoid clutter. Use soft, pastel-coloured fabric to cover distracting bookcases. Rug and pillows on the floor, but be aware of those who need chairs appropriate for little bodies. Low or natural lighting. Comfort toys like a teddy bear. Natural objects, e.g. rocks, pinecones, sticks, leaves, some brought by children. View your room as if a child: clock at their eye level, a space that is appealing to them? Is it comfortable and welcoming for children of all abilities? Resources are required for specific focuses as listed within the sections and on additional sheets.

Underpinning references

Advices & Queries 19

Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting... Seek for them as for yourself a full development of God's gifts... How do you share your deepest beliefs with them, while leaving them free to develop as the spirit of God may lead them?

Advices & Queries 11

Be honest with yourself. What unpalatable truths might you be evading? When you recognise your shortcomings, do not let that discourage you. In worship together we can find assurance of God's love and the strength to go on with renewed courage.

Gather

One adult greets each child at the door, shaking their hand and welcoming them by name. You may want to invite children to take off shoes and explain they are entering into a special place, a place of peace, a place to be quiet, a place to feel the presence of God. In this moment, as all come together, you are setting the tone for a sacred experience: meeting for children's worship.

The other adult sits on a rug large enough for all to gather. Be calm, speak quietly and greet each child by name as they sit. Introduce them to the children already present. Speak with them, engage in conversation about their families, how their week was, had anything happened to make them happy, anything to make them sad. Encourage everyone to listen, not comment, and to leave a pause after someone has spoken.

When all are gathered, light a candle to remind everyone that God is present (using language with which you are comfortable). Light a small candle for each child. As you do say their name and welcome them; do so for absent children, too. Sit quietly for a moment in worship, with lit candles and pinecones, rocks, shells laid out reverently on a small table to your side, or on a tray on the rug.

After gathered silence, introduce Advices & Queries 3 in words that the children may understand, e.g. share with children that Quakers think it is important "to set aside times of quiet" even within the busyness of the day so that we may know a calmness within ourselves. Some Quakers say this is a way to get closer to God and this quiet can help us be calm and find ways to deal with difficult feelings and thoughts. Pause for gathered silence. Move into 'Engage' or, before that, ask children: "I wonder what helps you to settle down quietly?"; "I wonder when or where you have calm, quiet times?"

Engage

Quietly say that you are going to tell a story. Say that it is about a young girl who was not happy when she was little. Suggest they listen closely and note what made the girl unhappy and lonely.

Read the story – get familiar with it beforehand and try to tell it in your own words rather than reading it. See *sheets 35 A & B: Betsy Gurney grew up to be Elizabeth Fry*.

After the story, ask the children "I wonder..." questions. Just listen to and accept whatever answers or silence greets your wondering:

I wonder, what part of this story you like the best.

I wonder, what part of the story you think is the most important.

I wonder, if there is any part of this story that might be in you or that you are in.

I wonder, if there is any part of this story that you would like to leave out and still have all the story you need.

I wonder, if you have a very special person in your life.



References & other resources

Children respond well to rhythm – knowing what to expect and when. Children respond well to having a safe and welcoming space to explore who they are, and how they live and make sense of the world.

Augene Nanning

Advices & Queries 7

Be aware of the spirit of God at work in the ordinary activities and experience of your daily life... There is inspiration to be found all around us, in the natural world, in the sciences and arts, in our work and friendships, in our sorrows as well as in our joys. Are you open to new light, from whatever source it may come?

Elizabeth Fry: A Biography

by June Rose
(London: Quaker Home Service, 1994)
ISBN 0 85245 260 8

The Heroine of Newgate: The story of Elizabeth Fry

by John Milsome
(Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1987)
ISBN 0 7188 2677 9

Respond

Worshipfully experiencing Betsy Gurney's story

In children's meeting for worship it can be easy to get caught up in "producing" something to "show and tell" to everyone else in Meeting. The variety of activities on *Sheets 35 C, D, E and F* are intended to provide children with a range of opportunities for reflecting on the Betsy Gurney story and, maybe, on what is happening in their lives or on something about themselves.

On *Sheet 35 C* there are seven suggested reflective focuses or stations listed that offer a variety of ways for leading children to interior silence. Set up your room with all or some of these with space to move between them. Alternatively, be inspired to develop suitable activities yourself remembering this is worship, not a classroom where facts need to be learned.

This time can become a little opening for children to listen to that of God in themselves and each other. For some children this may be the only opportunity in their week to be in quiet and contemplation. At the different focus areas or stations consider displaying clear, simply worded instructions with pictures for pre-literate children that enable them to work independently. The role of you and the other adult is to circulate calmly and quietly, supporting children in their worshipful reflection.

Tell the children that for the next 30 minutes they will have quiet activities to help them reflect on feelings and thoughts in their own life or those raised by the story. Indicate they can visit one or more station, as they choose. Guide everyone round and show them each area. Remind them to respect others who will use the space and to tidy up before they leave a station to move elsewhere or gather together at the end of the meeting. Ask that they don't crowd the different areas – if one place is crowded move to another. When you have shown each area invite everyone to sit quietly together. Signal when it is time to move to a station. Remind them to do so quietly.

When it is nearly time to come back together, quietly go to each focus area and let the children know it is time to return the materials to their proper place and to put their creations in their folder. If they are not finished, hopefully you will have these focus areas again in future meetings for children's worship so the children can return to their creations. Invite everybody back to sit together before moving to the closing, Reflect activity.

On *Sheets 35.D, E and F* there is a variety of activities about making a journal and writing in it or decorating it. There is an extract from Betsy's journal – this and others written by Betsy and later when she became Elizabeth Fry, are kept in the Quaker Library in Friends House, London.

A Set of Values

A set of values posted in the children's meeting for worship room can be a reminder of how to be in this space. Here is a suggestion written by Wynn McGregor in her series of books, '**The Way of the Child**'. (See resources on page 4)

We seek to be attentive to God's presence.

We seek peace and quiet so all can worship.

We learn about each other and seek to become friends.

We respect one another's differences. We treat one another as we want to be treated.

We respect one another's space.

We may disagree sometimes, and that's okay.

We use our materials as they are meant to be used.



A picture of a Quaker meeting house of the type that Betsy would have gone to – this one was called Gracechurch Meeting.

What do you notice about where people are sitting?

Reflect

Remind children: "You sat quietly at the beginning of the meeting. Silence helps us to think and to listen to ourselves as well as to each other. Let us practice this again." Looking at the group candle, say "This candle reminds us that God is present with us. As you sit in silence, look into the light of our candle and listen as I read from our Quaker Advices & Queries" – read Advice 7 (in the sidebar on page 2). Reverently lay the Advices & Queries down. Sit in silence. When you are going to close this meeting, take a basket of small prepared stones and give one to each child, saying, "Take this with you as a reminder that you are loved." When all have a stone, extinguish the candle. Stand at the door and say goodbye to each child as they leave.

Review

First, remember: you may not know what each child gained from the meeting. Do you think the meeting was worshipful? Did it respect the Quaker testimonies – equality, peace, simplicity, truth? Were children able to participate in their own way, helping and respecting each other? Did facilitators and children have fun? What went really well and what might you do differently another time? Would you facilitate another children's meeting for worship? If not, you may wish to discuss this with an overseer. Reviewing can happen at the time or later. Do you keep simple records of the meeting, e.g. a notebook including who attended, their ages and the focus of worship and some helpful points from your review? This may help the planning of future children's meetings for worship.

Topical activity

Fires and friendship



It's January. It's dark in the evenings. It's the middle of winter. The light from a bonfire is strong. Have a shared meal and a bonfire. The fire, the shared food and the company of all ages will warm everybody. Have a short time of standing in stillness around the flames to give thanks for warmth, company and food.

(This is a photo from the Pilgrimage for 12–15-year-old Quakers in 2009)

Links to other organisations and resources

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

<http://www.tear.org.au/target/articles/elizabeth-fry/>

http://www.korthalsaltes.com/model.php?name_en=square%20pyramids

<http://www.makingbooks.com/freeprojects.shtml>

www.companionsinchrist.org/leaders – sets of values and 'The Way of the Child'

This issue was written by Augene Nanning and edited by Chris Nickolay.

The next children's issue of *Journeys in the Spirit*, 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; issue 38 (available from April 1st) is about the Quaker Tapestry.

Journeys in the Spirit **and meeting for** **worship**

Journeys in the Spirit is not a curriculum. It offers a suggested process:

Getting Ready "coming to meeting with heart and mind prepared";
Gather: settling into meeting; **Engage:** hearing the ministry; **Respond:** considering how the ministry affects you personally (facilitator, child, adult);
Reflect: moving from meeting for worship to beyond, to daily life.

The ideas are simply suggestions. We hope they will help you discover your own gems which will suit children who attend your meeting. Use these headings when thinking about and preparing all-age meeting for worship. Use Betsy Gurney's story as a reading into meeting for worship – have some of the focuses available for everybody.

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Journeys in the Spirit

Children



Sheet 35.A Engage – Betsy Gurney grew up to be Elizabeth Fry

Lonely, frightened and not always liked

There once was a little girl who was a poor speller and couldn't write sentences well. She was afraid of the dark, loud noises and the sea, and she was frequently ill and grumpy as a child. Her many sisters made fun of her and she was very lonely. Who would have ever thought that this Quaker some day would have the honour of her face appearing on a five-pound note.

Elizabeth Fry, known as Betsy as a child, lived a long, long time ago when the world was a very different place. She was born 21 May 1780, three centuries ago. Yet is still remembered today for what she did as an adult. When people do important things, it is easy to forget all the challenges they faced and that maybe, they were sometimes sad, mad or lonely, too.

Betsy was all these things, and very shy, too. She was born in Norwich into the Gurneys family which had been Quakers for generations. Back in her time, many Quakers wore grey, simple clothes without lace or other decorations, and they did not sing or listen to music.

Betsy's parents were different. They were well known where they lived in Norwich by many people, not just Quakers. They and their children wore bright, expensive clothing, had parties, danced and sang. Although they only went to Meeting once a week, unlike their friends who went three times a week, they did live by the important values of being a Quaker: not fighting, being honest and helping and caring for those who were poor or ill. Betsy's mother was a warm, kind housewife. She divided her time caring for her husband and 12 children, and poor neighbours. She began the morning reading from the Bible to her children and did so again in the afternoon.

Betsy adored her mother. Her happiest childhood memories were summers spent at a simple house on the Common at Bramerton, four miles outside Norwich. There Betsy held her mother's hand as she was lead about the garden and told the names of the shrubs, trees and wild flowers. There were also fruit trees and a cherry orchard. To Betsy, it was a Garden of Eden. Betsy also accompanied her mother to poor neighbours, bringing chicken or other delicious treats.

When Betsy was born she had two older sisters, Kitty aged four and Rachel aged two. A baby brother had died. Betsy was a delightful girl with fair hair and downcast blue eyes, always near her mother. Her paternal grandmother and house keeper lived in the same sprawling house and spoiled the girls, frequently bringing them presents of sugar-plums and finger cakes. After Betsy was born and until she was six, a new brother or sister was born every year. They were lively, energetic healthy children, demanding their mother's attention and love. Betsy soon became painfully shy and was frequently weak and sickly. She grew into a stubborn little girl, grumpy and withdrawn. At the sea she would cry at the first sight of the waves and wept bitterly when she was dunked into the cold water. Loud sounds and bangs terrified her. She was frightened of the dark and at night would frequently cry herself to sleep.

She was not good at her school work and even as an adult was a poor speller and could not write a proper sentence. While her sisters and brothers listened well, Betsy could not concentrate, fidgeted and dozed off into daydreams. She was often called stupid and wrote in her diary, "having the name of being stupid, really tended to make me so and discouraged my efforts to learn."

When she was only 12 years old, her mother died. Betsy had been very close to her mother, and the death plunged her into a great, dark depression. She felt utterly isolated. She became more difficult, not doing what she was told and being rude. She grew even more moody, more prone to mysterious aches, pains and illnesses. She regularly slept in late, missing lessons. She was not fun to be with and her sisters began to avoid her. Betsy became even more lonely.

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Sheet 35.B

Engage – the story continued from Sheet 35.A

All through her life she kept a journal. She was extremely critical of herself, highlighting her faults and being angry at herself for losing her temper, contradicting others, exaggerating and telling lies. She complained to herself that she was not kind or helpful enough, and so she tried to be more so. When, aged 18, she attended a Quaker meeting (wearing “purple boots with scarlet laces”) and heard an American Quaker, William Savery, talk about God in a way that came alive for her. She wrote: “I have felt there is a God.”

Betsy now found herself in a quandary. She wanted to be ‘pious’ but she didn’t want to become a ‘plain’ Quaker. One day, when she was attending a Quaker meeting in London, an old woman called Deborah Darby rose to her feet, pointed at Betsy, and said: “Thou shalt be a light to the blind, speech to the dumb, and feet to the lame.” Betsy took this as a direct word from God. She went home, vowing to set aside ‘her gay apparel’ and dedicate herself solely to God’s call to serve others. Betsy began her work by starting a Sunday School in the family home for poor children who worked in local factories. Her sisters called them ‘Betsy’s imps’. In the laundry room Betsy read them bible stories and taught them numbers and how to read and write. She desperately wanted to please her family but instead her own sisters laughed and made fun of her. Betsy Gurney was a lonely fearful child, whose own anxiety of not being good enough distressed her. Yet, she grew up to be Elizabeth Fry and respected so much for what she did as an adult that her face now appears on the five-pound note.



A picture of what Betsy and her parents might have dressed like. This is Ackworth Quaker School.

Journeys in the Spirit

Children



Sheet 35.C

Respond – experiencing the story

Some activities, focus areas or stations for reflection for you to prepare for children's meeting.

1. Gazing

Resources: small woven cotton rugs rolled and placed in a basket; basket of icons and symbols (small cross, peace symbol, heart, colourful stones, crystal prisms, etc.); small candles in safe holders and candle snuffers. Have a few more symbols than rugs and same number of candles as rugs.

Guide: choose a rug. Unroll it and place it on the floor. Choose an item from the basket and place it on the rug. Place the candle on the rug and ask an adult to light it for you. Sit and make your body silent. Breathe slowly; rest. Let your thoughts float away. Listen to God.

2. Sand

Resources: large plastic container (cat litter-tray works) holding sanitised sand with a child-sized short-handled rake (wooden or bamboo back-scratchers work). Place three good-sized rocks in one basket and small, smooth stones in another. Provide a small dustpan and brush for clean up.

Children generally like the tactile character of this station and it is a popular station.

Guide: Rake the sand and arrange the stones. Breathe, rest. Let your thoughts float away. Listen to God.

3. Painting

Resources: box sets of watercolour paints with a brush; sturdy container with water; watercolour paper of different sizes, each in their own basket.

Guide: let your thoughts and feelings from the story or your own life flow using the materials here.

4. Craft art

Resources: scissors; regular and coloured pencils; glue; symbols for tracing and cutting out (e.g. cross, heart, dove, butterfly); a variety of paper (tracing paper, card and white paper cut into various straight-edge sizes) all neatly laid out – maybe in baskets or boxes. Keep the number of sheets of paper to a minimum, less is better.

Guide: let your thoughts and feelings from the story flow using the materials here.

5. Mobiles

Resources: shells with a hole for hanging; feathers; pinecones; small card (4"x4"); yarn; hole punch; sticks (about 1') tied in a cross or leave for older children to do themselves. Creative children may want to weave a 'god's eye' (see *Journeys in the Spirit Children's edition, Issue 21, Sheet 21.C*) in the centre. Children may want to hang this over their bed. They may gaze at it during troubled times.

Guide: create a mobile. Let your thoughts and feelings from the story or your own life flow using the materials here.

6. Stories

Resources: pencils, sheets of paper, table containing six boxes. Put the following headings in the boxes, one per box: main character & where she or he lives; task (what does your character do), obstacle (who or what – feeling, place etc. – stops your character doing this); helper (who or what helps your character to overcome the obstacle); ways of coping (is it easy, difficult, are they happy, frustrated etc.); ending (how does your story end).

Guide: write or draw a story using what's on the table as a guide.

7. Journaling

Resources: attractive notebooks and if possible with both lined and unlined paper; pencils; Bibles; *Quaker Faith and Practice*; *George Fox's Journal*; Elizabeth Fry (Betsy Gurney) story.

Guide: choose a notebook, write your name on it. Use the materials provided. Write or draw your thoughts and feelings in your very own journal. Know that many Quakers – living and dead – keep or kept a journal.

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Sheet 35.D

Respond – making a journal

Quakers and journals

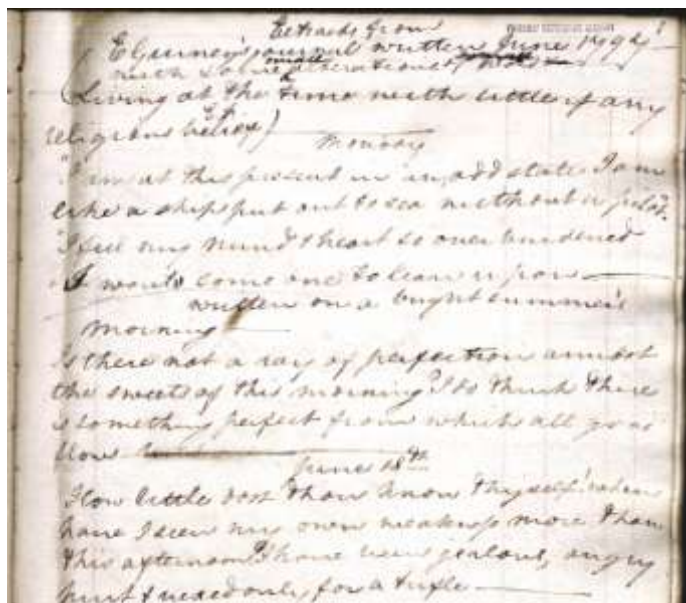
We know so much about Quakers from the past because they kept journals: diaries which have survived to this day. As you read books about Elizabeth Fry you will frequently come upon the same stories. They are known because they appeared in her or her sister's journals. See below for a picture of a page from one of Betsy's journals.

Simple journals: Making a book may not appear to be a worshipful activity, although it can be done quietly and calmly. Say to the children now they have the opportunity to make a personalised book of their own. A simple version which can be made during one meeting for worship is hard card as front and back cover, with lined or blank pages between, hole punched and woven with yarn through the holes to hold it together. Provide markers, sequins, fabric, ribbons and glue for children to create their personalised journals.

Bound book: This book requires more than one meeting for worship as it needs to dry before it can be decorated. You will need scissors; cardboard or matte board; a sheet of construction paper; non-stretch fabric (at least 14"x9"); up to eight sheets plain white paper; a paintbrush; a sewing machine or needle and thread; white glue thinned with water; wax paper; craft knife and several heavy books.

Directions

1. Cut the construction paper to 8½"x11". Stack up to eight sheets of plain paper on top of the construction paper. Fold the whole stack in half, with the construction paper on the outside. Stitch along the fold with a sewing machine or needle and thread.
2. Use a craft knife or scissors to cut two pieces of cardboard or matte board each measuring 5½"x 6¾". Lay the two pieces side by side about ¼" apart on the reverse of a piece of non-stretch fabric. Trim the fabric, leaving a 1" border on all sides of the cardboard or matte board.
3. Paint a layer of watery white glue on one side of each piece of cardboard or matte board. Place the pieces of cardboard or matte board back in position (glue side down) on the fabric and press on them to glue them onto the fabric.
4. Brush glue on the 1" fabric border, then fold the fabric over onto the cardboard. Smooth out the edges of the fabric as best you can, but don't worry about them too much, as they will be covered up in the next step.
5. Open the paper booklet you made in step 1. Paint the entire outside surface of the construction paper cover with glue. Press the gluey construction paper onto the inside of the fabric-covered cardboard cover.
6. Place wax paper inside the front and back covers. Close the book and place more wax paper around the outside of the book. Then place it under a stack of heavy books so it will dry flat.



This is an extract from Betsy Gurney's journal. It reads: (Extracts from E. Gurney's journal written June 1797 with some made alterations. Living at the time with little if any religious belief.)

Monday

"I am at this present in an odd state. I am like a ship put out to sea without a pilot."

"I feel my mind and heart so over burdened.

"I want someone to learn from _____
...written on a bright summers morning _____

Is there not a ray of perfection amongst the sweets of this morning? I do think there is something perfect from which all good flows _____

June 18th

How little dost thou know thyself! When have I seen my own weaknesses more than this afternoon. I have been jealous, angry.....& vexed only for a trifle _____

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Sheet 35.E

Respond – a different type of journal

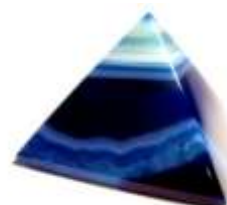
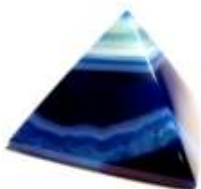
Creating a personal pyramid – a different type of journal about yourself.
See *Sheet 35.F* for a pyramid template.

By decorating the outside of the pyramid children are able to share something of themselves with others. This can help personal confidence, good listening and kindness. The inside of the pyramid is reserved for expressing what they want to say to themselves or find difficult to say about themselves.

- Outside of the pyramid. Use “I wonder...” questions to prompt conversation. “I wonder what you like... I wonder what you are good at... I wonder if you dream about the future... I wonder if there is a shape or symbol or something you have that helps you to be calm and feel safe...”
- Inside the pyramid. I wonder if there is anything that you find difficult... I wonder if anything makes you upset... I wonder if there is anything you wish you could do better...
- Or use the outside of the pyramid to express what they found important or moving in the story and the inside for how the story affected them personally.
- Or the pyramid can be used by older children to express their spiritual journey. See the shaded box before ‘Getting ready’ on page 1 of the main part of this issue of *Journeys in the Spirit*: how can they express their inward – to self; outward to others; upward or further in to the Mystery, to G-d and downward to the world we live in and share. What is public (outside of the pyramid), what is private (inside of the pyramid)?

Be clear which of the above your focus is. Give clear, simple instructions.

Resources: pyramid templates copied onto card, pre-cut to save time with a hole to hang it; glue sticks, pens, pencils, felt pens; wax and oil pastels, glitter, ribbon etc.



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Sheet 35.F

Respond – a pyramid journal template

