

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 13 March 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.



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

Yearly Meeting peace work in the UK – part 1. Getting ready.

Preparing Hearts & Minds

Disagreement, conflict, exploitation and violence can be part of personal, national and international relationships. Quakers in Britain, through Britain Yearly Meeting, sponsor 3 or 4 peace worker placements a year in organisations working across this spectrum of needs and issues. Marigold Bentley of Quaker Peace and Social Witness staff team writes of the national and international reality:

"We cannot escape the brutal fact that the UK is part of the war machine that Quakers for centuries have sought to challenge. The UK has a heavily subsidised arms trade. This subsidy comes from taxation which all adult citizens are required to pay – though some resist. In addition to the arms trade, the UK is a major industrial power. This means that we have complex needs for oil and raw materials, many of which have to be bought from other countries. With many material requirements to support the standard of living which so many of us enjoy, along with the ever pressing need to make money, our economy at times depends on war to ensure access to goods. Making money as a driving force in the economy rather than the well being of people and communities, can be a most destructive force. War destroys but it also makes money for those supplying the arms. The UK also has nuclear weapons that it has agreed to renew. We are all part of this many-layered problem and there are lots of ways in which we can be called to work for non-violent change – prayer, helping and doing. Quakers have been struggling with this core issue since our beginning. From our spiritual struggle comes action."

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 we may need to be aware of in this session? Am I confident of the health and safety arrangements? Have I reflected on the theme? Do we have enough resources and equipment for everybody?

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 references

QF+P 24.01

Advice & Query 31

Gather

Gather in a circle. Have a ball of wool. Explain that the ball of wool is going to be passed or carefully thrown from one person to another across the circle. This will join everybody together. Pass the wool to one person – hold onto an end before you pass it. She or he then passes it to another person in the group. Each person that passes the wool holds onto part of the thread before passing it. Once everybody has been passed the wool there should be a web joining everybody together. Carefully, pull the web taut. Sit still for a short while. Say that we are all joined together - each helping the other. The web can then be laid down and rewound or gently rolled up.

Engage

Corporate Watch zone.

Everyone sit in a circle. Say that you are going to talk about a woman who works for Quakers. Read the Activity instructions below before telling Jessica's story. She says, "My name is Jessica. This year I am working in Oxford for 'Corporate Watch'. What's that? We find out all sorts of things about big shops and companies like Tesco and Gap, banks like Barclays and HSBC, and big brand names like Coca Cola and Mars – these are all called companies or corporations. Our job is to keep an eye on what they do. Some of these companies and the people in them have a lot of power, and sometimes they get away with doing bad things to people and the environment – a bit like a bully at school. They think they are very strong and nobody can stop them. What I do is find out about all these bad things, and write about them on our website and in our magazine, so that other people can find out about them. People can then do things to try and stop these bad things happening - they might decide not to buy things these companies make or sell."

Activity.

As you talk about Jessica and Corporate Watch lay down a simple cut out figure that represents her – stick one of the Corporate Watch T- shirts on *Sheet 13.A* on to card; draw a face and stick your figure on to a garden cane or lolly stick. Next lay down the pictures of factories, shopping trolleys and a big office from *Sheet 13.A*. Also lay down magazine pictures of some brand names and trademarks and use the names as you talk – for example, Coca Cola, Mars, GAP, ASDA, Tesco. Find and cut these out in advance. This will help everybody get an idea of what a company or corporation is.

Confronting conflict zone.

Everyone sit in a circle. Say that you are going to talk about a woman who works for Quakers. Her name is Tanya, a Quaker from North Wales. She says, "I am employed by the Quakers to work for peace. Whilst there are big wars between countries and groups in other parts of the world, there are also many problems within the UK. Children and young people sometimes have arguments in their families, in their schools, on their streets or with their friends. The charity I work for believes that everyone can change the way they react to situations that make them angry, sad or hurt, and that this country and the rest of the world would be a better place if we all tried to do that. The charity comes from Quaker roots and works to bring out the goodness and love that is at the centre of every human being."

Activity

Use the range of facial expressions on *Sheet 13.B*. Cut them out and stick them on big sheets on the walls or hand out sheets to individuals. Everybody walks around the room to the posters or sits in silence and then writes or draws something on the poster or a copy of *Sheet 13.B* about one time they felt like that. Get everybody together again. Ask everybody to think about their angry feeling for a moment. Give out small pieces of paper and card and pencils. Say that everybody can draw their face when they were angry – if they want to. People can share about their picture if they want to. End by folding up pictures put them in pockets or bags.

References & other resources

Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say "I am strong." - **The Bible: Joel 3:10**

They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore - **The Bible: Isaiah 2:4 & Micah 4:3**

Corporate Watch website:

www.corporatewatch.org.uk

LEAP confronting conflict website:

www.leaplinx.com

Quaker Peace and Social Witness

web address:

www.quaker.org.uk

and follow the links on the front page to Peace & Social Witness.

Look for the Journal letters of Jessica and Tanya; these can be sent to your Meeting. Does anybody get them already? This is a way to keep in touch over the next year.

References & other resources

Fairtrade website:
www.fairtrade.org.uk

Online ethical shopping guide:
www.gooshing.co.uk



Oxfam's website for children:
www.globalgang.org.uk

The Bible:
Matthew ch.5.
v.1-10

Look back at 'Journeys in the Spirit' issue 12 – February 2008 on stilling, centering and listening for other thoughts and activities about listening.

Respond

Corporate Watch zone.

Adjust these words for different age groups (*remember to encourage questions in case anybody has them.*)

Having a big corporation work in your country can bring in lots of money and create lots of jobs. Many countries around the world, in Africa, and Asia, and Latin America especially, are very poor, and their people desperately need money and jobs. In our country, we have laws that protect workers and the environment from the power of big corporations. However, because poor countries are so desperate, they get rid of these protecting laws so that the corporations will come to their country. It is good for the corporations because it means that they spend less money on paying people, and making sure that they are safe, and on tidying up after themselves, and so they make more money. However, it is hard and dangerous for the people that work for them, and for the people who live in the communities near the factories, because their environment can be destroyed.

Making children work long hours in bad conditions is just one of the things corporations do which hurts people around the world. Across the world, 217 million children aged 5 – 17 go to work instead of going to school. See *Sheet 13.C* for an activity to help understand this. They often spend up to 16 hours a day working very hard for almost no money. They work in factories, or in mines, or sometimes in fields, picking fruit and vegetables, or cotton. The corporations use children because they are cheap, and that means that they can make more money when they sell their products. Ask everybody for names of shops and companies or trade names and see what you, or they, can find out by the next meeting. See *Sheets 13.C & 13.D* for linked activities.

Confronting conflict zone.

Explain that arguments or conflict often happens between people because we don't communicate clearly with each other – especially when we are angry. Communicating clearly is one really important way to work towards a more peaceful world. If we communicated clearly with our friends and parents we would have a better idea of what each other were thinking and feeling; if countries communicated clearly, there would be less wars and happier, peaceful world.

A communicating exercise – how we tell each other things: (*For this you will need a piece of blank paper or card, pencils or felt pens and a selection of magazine pictures, photos or pictures of paintings or sculptures. Sheet 13.E for a frame to try and draw the picture in.*)

Part 1. Everybody works in pairs. Younger ones may need help but not necessarily. One of them has a blank piece of paper and sits on one side of the room with their back to the centre; the other needs to run between a picture stuck to the other side of the room and their partner, describing exactly what is on the picture as accurately as they can (have a different picture for every pair). They have 2 minutes to succeed (depending on the age) and you can make this a competition between pairs - expect noise! The aim is for them to experience how challenging it is to clearly communicate under pressure. At the end of the time everyone shows their pictures to the group and decides how accurately they reproduced the pictures.

Part 2. Ask everybody to think about what skills they used with their partner to recreate the picture. Still in their pairs, Ask, 'I wonder what helped you get your message across the best?' - (proper listening, openness, mutual respect, clear speaking etc.). Can any of the pairs stand in a shape or statue to show what they did to get their message across? Invite people to try. Offer advice and clues. When everybody has had a go that wants to, ask everyone how it might feel in the world if this was how people behaved towards each other all the time

Reflect

Come back together into a circle around a candle. Light the candle. Have a simple basket with broken pieces of fairly traded dried fruit and chocolate in it. Give the basket to the youngest person in the group. Ask them to hold it still. Ask everybody to close their eyes. Say, 'just like when we were joined by the wool web so, when we eat we are joined together with all the people who have helped make our food. Together we say thank you for our food to all these people even though they are not right here – ask everybody to say thank you; we hope that everybody who makes our food, clothing and toys are looked after and paid enough – ask everybody to say, 'we hope so'. The youngest offers the food round the group.

Ongoing activity. Yearly Meeting 2008.

The Ongoing Activity until the May issue of 'Journeys in the Spirit' is focussing on Britain Yearly Meeting, the annual gathering of Quakers from Scotland, Wales and England. The January and February issues explored what Yearly Meeting is and its place in the lives of Quakers. This issue, and those for April and May, will offer ways to explore three main Yearly Meeting sessions and themes. This time we offer a simple activity as a way into the theme: 'Deeper and wider – united in the spirit'.

The Agenda Section of the Documents in Advance for Yearly Meeting describes Session 3 in this way: *"In this session of Yearly Meeting 2008 we explore how, as individuals and together, we connect deeply with the spirit and with creation and how that connectedness transforms us, leading and sometimes propelling us to wider witness and service. This balance between action and being brings a wholeness to our lives. The session will be worship, starting with a time when Friends will be offered various ways of recognizing and expressing the spirituality of our lives. We have tried to look beyond language to search for the unity within, that all may feel valued and come to a deepening sense of worship. It is our experience of the spirit that is more important than the words we may use to describe it. We hope this will bring our whole selves into worship – the creative, the emotional and the rational aspects of our being."* See Sheet 13.F for a linked activity.

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 God, the Divine, the big questions? What is there for you to learn from this session? What might you do differently another time?

Links to other organisations and resources

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.waronwant.org.uk - another charity challenging the power of corporations.

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References & other resources

"The end of words is to bring men to the knowledge of things beyond what words can utter."

Isaac Pennington, Quaker faith & practice 27.27

Quaker faith & practice Chapters 2 and 29

Arrange all Age Worship.

Everybody in the Meeting could take part in the Ongoing Activity. The question could be read at the beginning of a special Meeting for Worship; the materials could be laid out around the room and there could be a time of sharing in pairs or in the whole group after a period of time agreed by Elders.

The next children's work issue of

'Journeys in the spirit', number 14, April 2008, will be on 'What is worship?'; Issue number 15, May 2008, will be on Britain Yearly Meeting peace work in South Africa; Issue no.16, June 2008 will be on 'Prayer'.

Journeys in the Spirit

Children

Sheet 13.A Engage Corporate Watch Zone

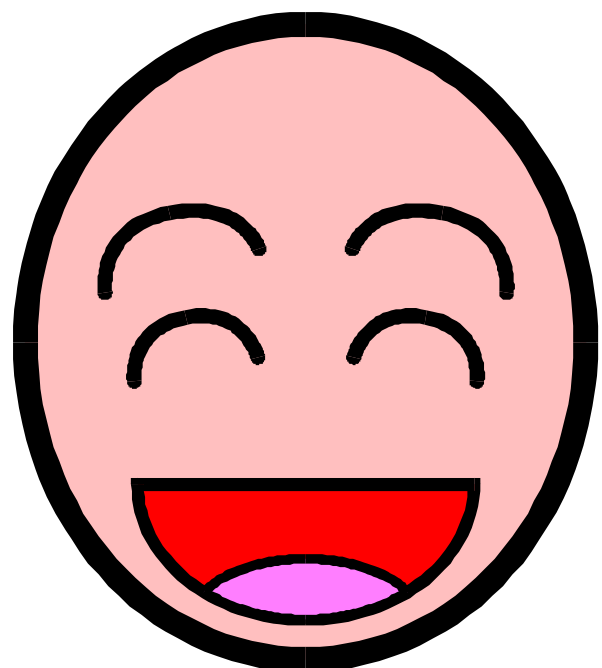
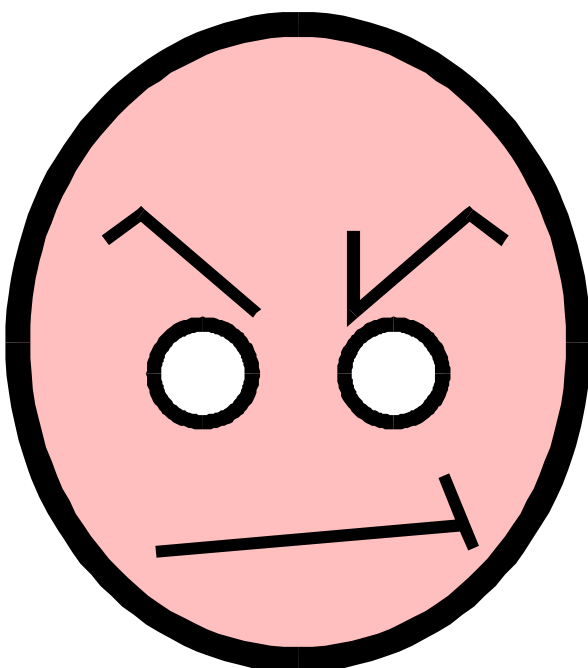
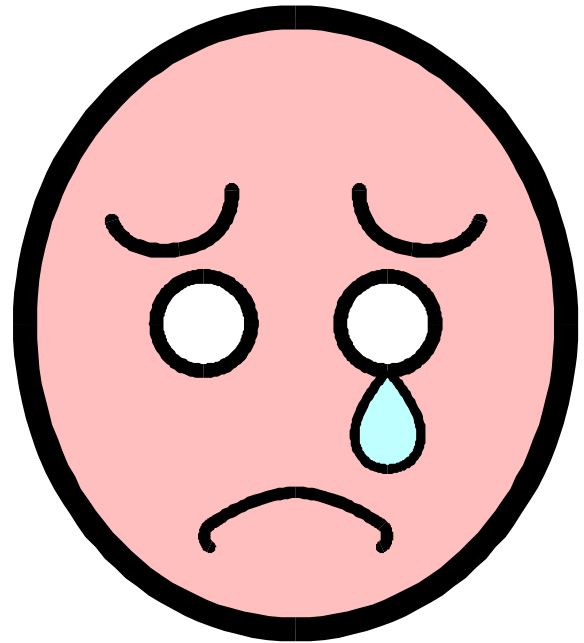
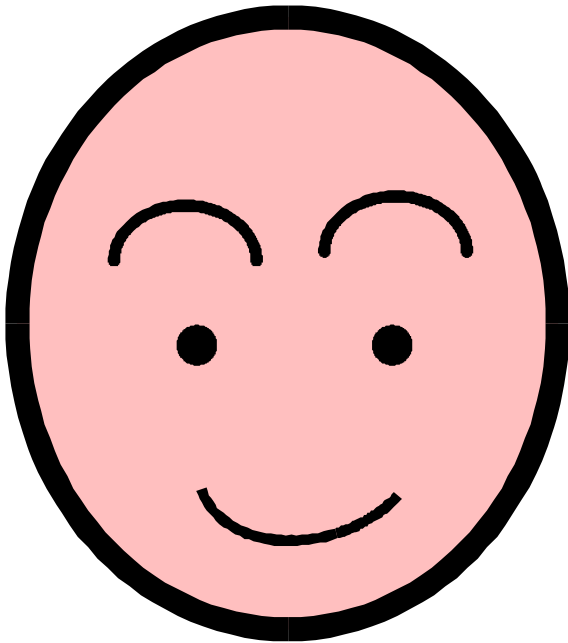


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Sheet 13.B Engage Confronting conflict zone



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Sheet 13.C Respond Corporate Watch zone Compare and contrast:



The idea of this activity is for the children to identify with a child labourer, to understand that their lives are linked, and to compare an average 'day-in-the-life-of'. Show the group the photo below (ideally print a copy for everyone). Prompt them to answer questions about the child in the photo (call him Alex):

- How old do you think Alex is?
- What country do you think he is from? (*he is from Uzbekistan*)
- What is he doing? (he is picking cotton)
- What do you think the cotton could be used for?
- Are any members of the group wearing clothes made out of cotton? Do you think that some of the clothes you are wearing today could have been made in places like these?

Then chose a volunteer from the group. Get them to stand in front of the group. Get the group to compare a 'day-in-the-life-of' the volunteer and the child in the photo. This could be through getting the group to guess (and the volunteer to confirm) the answer to questions such as:

- What time do you normally get up?
- What do you do when you get up (eg have breakfast, get dressed, brush your teeth etc)
- What do you do then? (ie go to school). How do you get there?
- What do you do at school? (try and include all the best bits, like playtime, and seeing your friends)
- What do you do after school?
- Why is it important that children go to school?
- How do you spend your time at the weekend? (eg sports, parties etc)

You can then get the group to guess what a day in the life of the child in the photo would be. Some facts to prompt from the group could be:

- Alex has to get up at 5 am. Before going to work he has walk 3 miles to go and fetch water for his family
- He then has to walk another 2 miles to get to the cotton fields. Alex works for twelve hours a day, and gets only a half an hour break.
- Alex doesn't have any friends who work in the cotton fields. He works for six days a week.
- When Alex is picking cotton he is always bending over – at the end of the day his back is very sore.
- He often gets cuts on his fingers. He is paid about £1 a day for his work, but he has to give this money to his family, so that they can buy food. Because he is always working, Alex will never get a chance to go to school, so he will never have the skills he needs to get a better job.

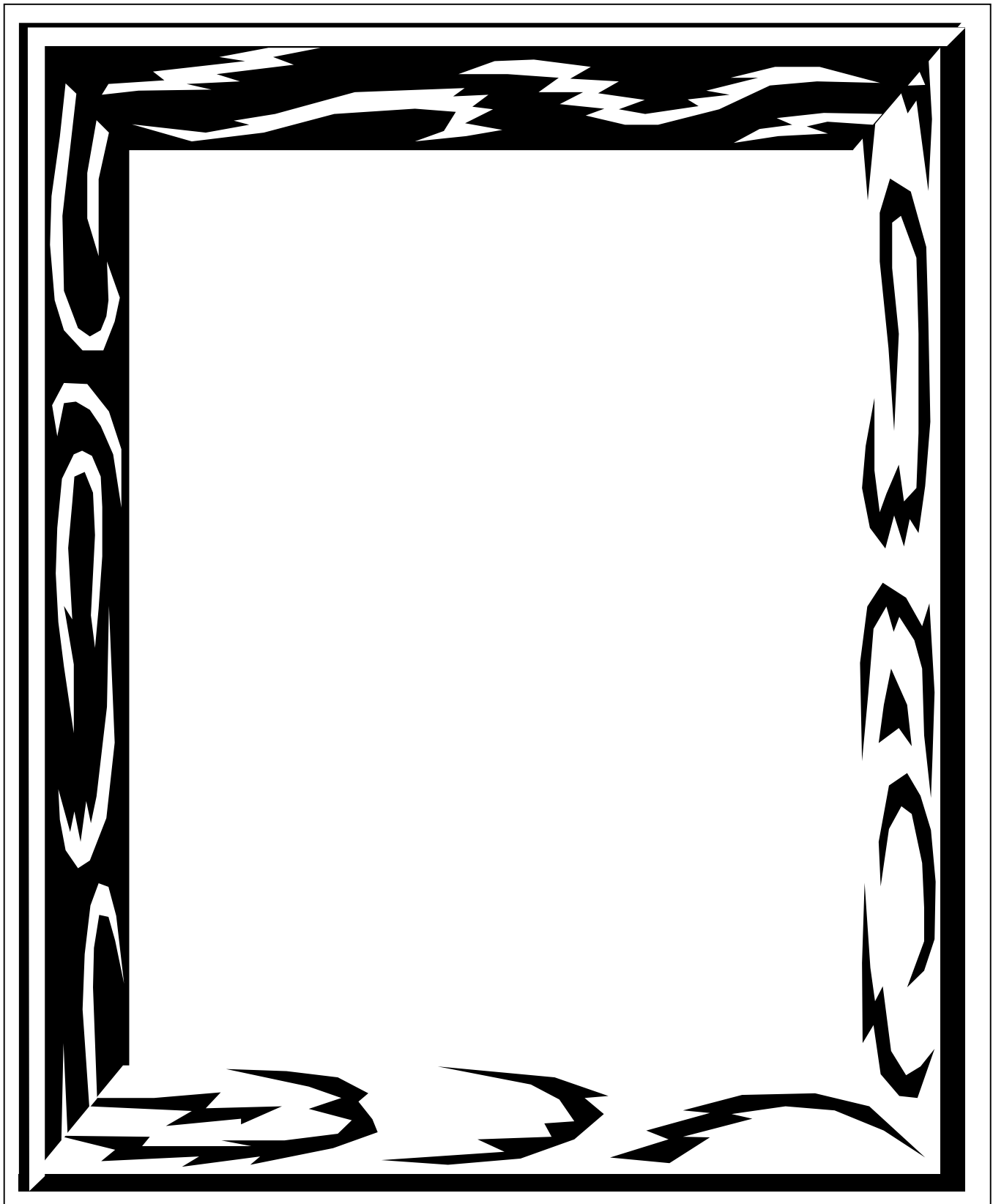


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13.E Respond Confronting conflict zone Picture frame



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Sheet 13.F Ongoing Activity Yearly Meeting 2008

Deeper and wider – united in the spirit

- Ask everybody to be still and sitting. Wait a moment.
- Say that you are going to ask a question and that people can answer with words if they want to or, they can wait a little bit while people speak. They can then use all the art materials laid out to make a picture of their answer. People who speak can do this too.
- You could speak a simplified version of the quotation at the bottom of this page.
- Ask the question, 'I wonder where you find God or where you think God is?'
- Have a big selection of pens, pencils, crayons, oil pastels and good quality drawing paper arranged around your room. When people are ready they can choose materials for themselves.
- When you end people can share if they want to.

Quaker Faith & Practice 2.11

True worship may be experienced at any time; in any place – alone on the hills or in the busy daily life – we may find God, in whom we live and move and have our being. But this individual experience is not sufficient, and in a meeting held in the Spirit there is a giving and receiving between its members, one helping another with or without words. So there may come a wider vision and a deeper experience.