

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 37

March 2010

Children



John Woolman – more stories

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



The eleventh in the series ‘Our Quaker stories’ May 2009 – September 2010

Getting ready

John Woolman is often talked about as a ‘Quaker hero’. If we label people as heroic it reduces what they have done or been to some kind of personal magic or power that the rest of us don’t have or can’t get. It can deny the struggle and suffering they have gone through to arrive at doing the thing they did.

In John Woolman’s case the different processes he went through personally, in his family and in his Quaker communities were often intense, painful, complex and difficult. His actions will have caused suffering, pain, anxiety and fear for his wife, Sarah, and daughter Mary. Sarah talked about being quite resigned when he put himself in great danger and went, in terrible weather and in a time of conflict, to meet with and get to know Native American people – against the advice of many in his Quaker community.

He eventually died thousands of miles away from home, in York, England, engaged in ministry and witness described elsewhere in this issue.

John is a clear example of someone acting ‘*not for our or their comfort but for our and their discomfort*’. Also we mustn’t forget that John was guided by and led by his adherence to and following of the inner impact of the teaching of Jesus. He was not acting only from conscience but from the outcomes of deep examination and private and shared discernment. That his experience and thinking are still powerful today is probably because of the risk, the suffering, the discernment and the deep spiritual joy and delight that emerged in what he did. He and his wife and child still have the power today to discomfort us, of any age, and yet also show us the way to the, sometimes, deeper comfort of speaking and acting with love in the world.

Underpinning references

The place of prayer is a precious habitation; I saw this habitation to be safe, to be inwardly quiet, when there was great stirrings and commotions in the world.

John Woolman, 1770

See Journeys in the Spirit Children’s edition issue 36 for more background on John Woolman

Gather

After everybody has settled and depending on whether you have previously done things about John Woolman, say something like, 'Today we are going to hear and do things about a Quaker from a long time ago, John Woolman. He lived in America – when people from our country first went there. John often left his wife, Sarah, and daughter, Mary, to go on dangerous or scary journeys. One time he met a man called Papunehang, a chief, a leader of the Lenape people; they were, what many people call 'Indians', actually they were the first Americans – Lenape means 'original people'. Papunehang, John and lots of other people, got together for something like a big Meeting for Worship. Sometimes they couldn't really understand each other – they spoke different languages. But it didn't matter too

much. At the end of their meeting Papunehang said,

'I love to feel where the words come from'.

On *Sheet 37.A* there are some ideas and activities about how you can help children reflect on where words come from in worship and stillness.

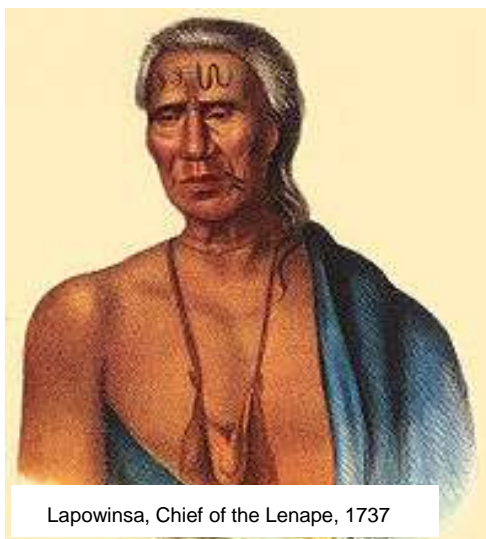


Engage

John goes to London. When John went to meet the Lenape people he wanted to "feel and understand their life, and the Spirit they live in." On *Sheets 37.C D& E* there is a Godly Play style story that will help children to feel and understand something of the life of John Woolman and the spirit he lived in. It is about John's last journey – he came to England to ask Quakers here not to buy things made by slaves. On *Sheet 37.C* there is a simple description of the Godly Play way of telling stories. It is very important to remember that this approach is about encouraging people of any age to engage with a story personally and inwardly. It is the opposite of saying that 'this is the story and this is what it means'. also on *Sheet 37.C* and *37.D* there is the story script. On *37.E* there is a picture of the story equipment or kit.

Faces and pictures give us words.

On this page is a picture of Lenape leader, a chief, around the time that John was alive. Have one or more copies of this picture available. Remind children of what the other chief said, 'he loved to feel where the words come from'. This man has a face full of expression. After children have had a few moments to look at the picture ask what they imagine or think he might have been thinking or feeling when the picture was made. What sort of person do they think he might have been? What was he like?



Lapowinsa, Chief of the Lenape, 1737

References & other resources

See *Journeys in the Spirit Children's edition issue 36* for pictures and background information about John Woolman.

'There is a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and ages hath had different names. It is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of religion nor excluded from any, where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes root and grows, of what nation soever, they become brethren.'

John Woolman

'We who declare against wars, and acknowledge our trust to be in God only, may walk in the light, and thereby examine our foundation and motives in holding great estates! May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions'.

John Woolman

Suggestions for creative equipment & other information

Pens, pencils, coloured & plain paper, crayons, pastels, scissors, a range of boxes, paints, PVA glue, brushes, paper, card and clay or plasticene, glue pens, pipe cleaners, lollipop sticks and drinks stirrers. Books or pictures that might link to the story – a Bible or two with accessible language e.g.: children's bibles or 'Good News' or 'Message' bibles.

The seal's meaning:

Lenape: An Indian

Name. English translation - common, original or real people.

Delaware: The English named the river our ancestors lived along after Lord De La Warr and called our people by a similar name.

Turtle, Wolf, Turkey:

These are the three clans of the Lenape people.

Peace Pipe: Represents our history as leaders in peace.

Cross: Represents our history in religion.

Mesing mask:

Ceremonial mask used in the Big House ceremonies, represents the spirit of all living things.

Prayer Sticks: 12 prayer sticks used on the 9th night of the Big House ceremony which lasted 12 nights.

Fire Drill: Was used in ceremonies to start fires.

Colours: Red, white and black were colours used in Aboriginal times; red from berries, white from chalk, and black from charcoal.'

Respond

John goes to London. *Sheets 37.C, D & E.* Once the story has been finished and you judge that everyone who wants to speak in response to the wondering questions has done so, then there is a time of creative response. (See sidebar for a possible list of materials.). Just say something like, 'everybody can use the materials set out, look at books or just sit for a bit until you want to do something else.' What anybody does is not necessarily for sharing in the other Meeting for Worship or in 'afterword' – it is private reflection or creation.



John always endeavoured to understand what people felt or had to say – here are two ways to think about this:

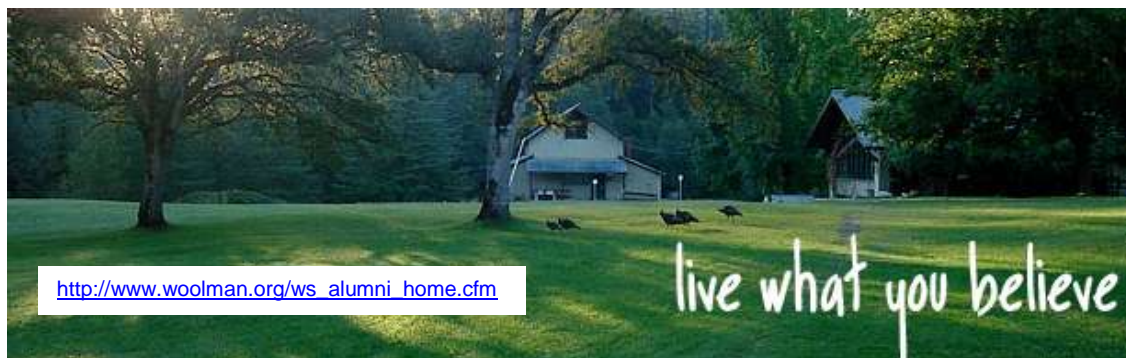
Faces and pictures give us words. On *Sheet 37.F* there is a simple set of pictures that can be used – like the Lenape people did – to carry news or tell stories. Have copies of these available for everybody. Talk about them a bit. Have a story that you have made using the pictures drawn up big on a piece of card or paper. Everybody in children's meeting can go on to make a story or tell some news using these pictures or some of their own. Younger children may need a little help.

Pictures on a badge or flag. The design here is used by the Lenape or Delaware people today on badges and flags. In the design are things that are still important to the Lenape people today. See the sidebar for a description of what they mean. Make copies of the badge available for everybody.



Have a conversation with children about pictures or symbols for things that are important to them – home, place, family, celebrations, church or Meeting, animals, pets, the world, friends for example.

Have available an array of arts materials – if you can, include fabric pens and T-shirts or plain cloth to work on – maybe ask children to bring them. Everybody can then make a badge or flag design of their own. There could be conversation about the Lenape symbols – children may want to make versions of the objects themselves.



Reflect

Have a glass or perspex bowl 2/3rds full of water. Place it on the floor. Ask everybody in children's meeting to sit around it. Have a selection of small stones, polished pebbles or coloured glass 'pebbles'. After a moment's quiet pass these around the group for each person to take one. These are then held for a little while and, when people are ready, carefully dropped into the water. As this is done each person is invited to make a private prayer or good wish for someone that they know. This echoes the 'where do words come from' picture and activity in 'Gather' on page 2. After a few more moments you can close the meeting with handshakes or move to considering the following. At this part of the Meeting the children may be readying themselves to go back into the other Meeting for Worship. What would they like to tell or share with the adults in the Meeting? Are there any messages that they would like to pass on? What would they like to ask the adults about what they have been doing?

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? How was it for you? Have the children had opportunities to think about what they might do, even in a small way, to make the world a better place to live?

Topical activity

Britain Yearly Meeting 2010

Once again we are offering activities that can help children and adults alike engage with or get ready for the work of Britain Yearly Meeting at the end of May this year. Some things you will need include: a roll of big sheet of paper and some glue and pens. Everybody draws or is helped to draw a picture of themselves on the big sheet or roll of paper. Have the following series of questions ready to talk about:

- What would you like to give to or do for Meeting?
- What would you like Meeting to give to or do for you?
- What would you like Meeting to ask you to do?
- What is the one thing that you would like to ask Meeting?

After or during conversation picture or word answers to these questions could be written or drawn on the paper.

Links to other organisations and resources

The Quaker Life Resources Centre can be contacted on: 0207 663 1030 or at quakercentre@quaker.org.uk. The Resources Centre and Quaker Life children and young people's team have a big range of resources to borrow. For example, the activity on *Sheet 37.F* came from a resources pack about William Penn produced by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting USA.

This issue was written by Martin Lightfoot and Chris Nickolay who, along with Howard Nurden, was editor.

The next children's issue of *Journeys in the Spirit*, issue 38 (available from April 1st) is about the Quaker Tapestry; issue 39 is about Lewis Cock, a Quaker and a butcher, and his struggle to be honest (available from May 3rd); issue 40 is about Pilgrimage (available from June 1st).

An idea for an all age Meeting for Worship -

The '*John goes to London story*' (see Engage and Respond) could be told to the whole Meeting. This could be followed by creative response activities.

Tell the story about Papunehang and '*where the words come from*' (see Gather). Have a Meeting for Worship with this as a theme – again have art materials to be used in the quiet.

The Topical activity is for everybody in Meeting – not only those going to Yearly Meeting – this could be done together and shared in a worship sharing setting.

Published by Children & Young People's Staff Team, Quaker Life

Available free by subscription.

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Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 37.A

Gather

'Where do words come from?'

Here are three ways to explore and wonder about where words come from. These can flow into the Engage and Respond times.

- **If you have a baby or babies in your Children's Meeting** first say something based on the introduction to Gather on page 2. Then say something like, 'for a few minutes we are all going to sit together as still as we can whilst (...say baby's name') is held by (...say parent's or other adult's name.) As everybody settles, say something like, 'whilst we are sitting all together the only person who might make a sound or sort of speak is (...say baby's name)'. If she or he does make a sound, just listen. Now move on to the highlighted part of the next activity below.

Resources - have several candles ready to light, matches, candle holders or saucers.

- **If there are no babies in your session** get everybody sitting together and then say something based on the introduction to Gather on page 2.

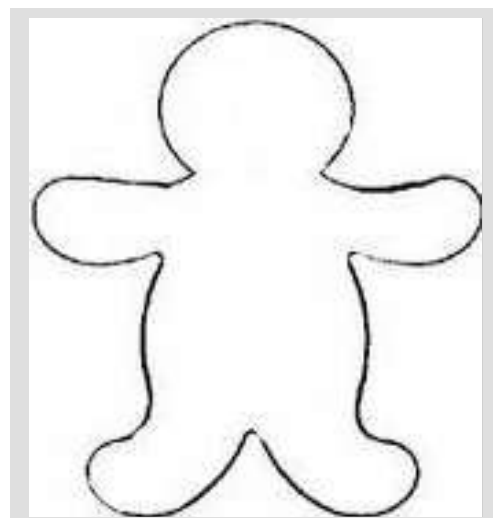
Now ask everyone to get comfortable, close their eyes and sit as still as they can. Ask everybody to think of a drop of water falling into a still pool. Wait for a few moments. Ask, 'I wonder, what pictures do you have of what might be around the pool of water?' Ask, 'I wonder, how do you feel inside – maybe happy, sad, quiet, thoughtful, funny, peaceful, watery or something else?' You could also ask, '...and I wonder, what colours can you see?' and, 'I wonder, is anybody or anything else watching the drop with you?' Ask everybody to slowly open their eyes and look around for a moment and then choose a piece of paper and colouring things to make a picture of anything that they saw or felt whilst being still and gazing inside themselves. These can be shared or kept private and personal.

Resources - lay out an array of pens, pencils, crayons and white paper or card in the centre of your group.

- **Pictures and words and feelings.** After going through the Gather introduction in your own words lay out copies, in the middle of your group, of the pictures on *Sheet 37.B*. Make sure that you have enough for everybody – you could also bring other pictures that you like. Ask each person to choose a picture they like, sit still and hold it for a few moments. Ask each person to say, out loud, what their picture is.

Now ask the question, 'I wonder, when you look at your picture, what you feel (or it makes you feel...) or if you think of any other word?' People can say their word out loud if they have one and if they want to. If younger children, under 6, have done this and they are a bit shy or uncertain, they may need a little help from an older child or an adult – she or he could quietly speak for them. This can lead to a drawing, colouring, writing or illustrating activity.

Alternatively, give out people shapes like the one here. Ask everybody to think of their picture and any words or feelings that they had and then draw or decorate on their person shape where the thought or feeling happened – if they can. If it's difficult, have a conversation about where it might have been – toe? hand? tummy? head? chest or heart? This can be serious and funny and there are no right answers.



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Children



Sheet 37.B

Gather

Where do words come from?



Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 37.C

Engage

John goes to London pt.1

If the story is being used for a multi age Meeting for Worship, in a children's Meeting or another setting the method for telling it is the same. Preparation:

- Lay out a table or tables with creative equipment (pens, pencils, coloured paper, crayons, pastels, scissors, a range of boxes, paints, PVA glue, glue pens, pipe cleaners, lollipop sticks and drinks stirrers for example).
- The storyteller should read the story through and practice when to pause and emphasise.
- The fabric and other simple props are very important although the story can be told without them. The story is not an exact historical account. It is intended to offer images, ideas and situations that encourage imagination, personal engagement, wondering and individual response. It is not meant to be easy to listen to.
- Have someone to act as doorkeeper to welcome people to the story. This could be a child with an adult.
- The storyteller should position her or himself on the floor, on a cushion or low stool in the room being used for the story with the equipment next to them.
- The storyteller does **not** have eye contact with the listeners – she or he should focus downwards as if in a centred or meditative position; in a way it is a Meeting for Worship for storytelling. When everyone is settled - begin.

DO:	SAY:
Carry the box containing the story to the group. Put it down in front of you and look at it. Sit quietly until you feel ready to tell the story. Touch the box gently	<i>'Watch where I get this story then you may want to look at it for yourself later'</i> <i>'This box contains a story. A story about a person and his life; people's stories are precious, and people are like presents. Their lives and their actions can be a gift to us.'</i>
Move the box to your side. Then open the lid just enough to take out the materials but not enough for the children to see inside. Take out the piece of blue material with wonder and spread it on the floor.	
Take out the maps of America & England & John Woolman's house.	<i>This represents the Atlantic ocean and this is America and this England and this is a simple house in Pennsylvania</i>
Take out the large house that represents Friends House. Place it on the opposite side of the sea to John Woolman's house	
Then sit back a moment and say	<i>Once there was a man who lived in America. His name was John Woolman and he was very thoughtful and kind. During his life he had travelled through America even though he had been very ill when he was 20 and was not strong. He was now 51 and thin from his illness.</i>
Take out John Woolman and place him near his house	<i>John Woolman was a Quaker. He lived a simple life because he cared about everyone and everything. He loved all animals and hated to see them hurt. He wore nothing that was dyed a colour, especially blue colours dyed with indigo because using this dye was a dangerous process and could make the children and slaves who worked dyed cloth very ill.</i>
Take out the piece of cloth as you speak	<i>John Woolman also believed no-one could own another person, no-one could be a slave. One day, John Woolman said to his wife Sarah: "Sarah, I must cross the Atlantic Ocean and visit Friends in England to tell them that it is wrong to trade in goods made by slaves." Sarah was sad. This journey would take 6 weeks and was very dangerous. John Woolman made his preparations. He asked Stephen Comfort to look after his wife and daughter whilst he was gone.</i>
Take out Sarah, John Woolman's wife as you speak	

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Children

Sheet 37.D

Engage

John goes to London pt.2

DO:	SAY:
<p>Take out the ships and choose one as you speak</p>	<p><i>He visited several ships and spent time sitting quietly on them to feel if this was the right ship to travel in. He chose a small ship called the Mary and Elizabeth.</i></p>
<p>Hide John Woolman and gently move the ship across the sea towards London</p> <p>Bring out John Woolman And place him next to the Yearly Meeting building</p> <p>Lift out the figure of the Elder and place next to the Yearly Meeting building.</p> <p>Hold your hand just above Woolman indicating tenderness</p>	<p><i>After many storms, John Woolman arrived in London. He was in time for London Yearly Meeting when Friends gathered from all over the country to meet and discuss. John Woolman hurried from the dock to the large meeting house and went in. The main hall was full of people sitting very quietly. John Woolman opened the door and came in. He stood there, all the way from America, in his hat and travel stained clothes. He laid his travelling minute from America on the table. The clerk stood and read it.</i></p> <p><i>An Elder rose and said “ I think that Friends will agree that the stranger Friend who has just presented his certificate may feel his dedication for service in this country duly noted and that without further labour he may feel free to return to America.”</i></p> <p><i>John Woolman sat in the silence and wept, tears fell down his face. Eventually he stood, he spoke to the meeting. He said he felt he had not finished the work God had set him to do, however he would not visit Friends until the meeting agreed that he could and until that time he would find work to support himself.</i></p> <p><i>The silence deepened; the Elder stood again, he admitted his mistake and welcomed John Woolman and his message.</i></p> <p><i>At the end of Yearly Meeting, John Woolman visited Friends all over England to tell them it was wrong to buy things made by slaves and by people and children who lived in terrible conditions and who were made ill by their work. He visited those in trouble and refused to ride in a coach because of the ill treatment of the post boys and the horses.</i></p> <p><i>He never returned to America but died of smallpox in York aged 52.</i></p>
<p>Pause and sit back for a moment.</p> <p>Now ask the wondering questions with plenty of time in between each question and no obligation on anyone to answer</p> <p>See Respond section on Page 3 about what to do next.</p>	<p><i>I wonder which part of this story you liked best?</i></p> <p><i>I wonder which part of this story you think is the most important?</i></p> <p><i>I wonder if you are in this story and this story is in you?</i></p> <p><i>I wonder if there is any part of this story you could leave out....and still have all the story you need?</i></p>



Here is the plaque in York to remember John Woolman.

Here is the chair in which John Woolman died – the chair is in Swarthmoor Hall, Cumbria



Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 37.E Engage John goes to London - the story kit



What is the story kit?

- A cloth for the ocean.
- Simple shapes of the United Kingdom and the U.S.A – green or brown ovals will do.
- A wooden shape or picture of a simple, small house; a wooden shape or picture of a grand building.
- 3 simple boats of different sizes – these can be made of wood as in the picture or card and straws will do.
- Plain or illustrated figures for Sarah, Mary, John and the Elder – wood is always good and they don't have to have faces or clothing – the simpler the better. Some people have used Playmobil successfully.
- A piece of plain cotton or calico – not shown in the picture.

Journeys in the Spirit

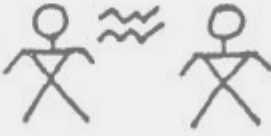






















Children
Sheet 37.F

Respond

Pictures for words

What story or news can be made using picture words? Can you make pictures to tell and share your own story?

Talk together  Much (heap) 	Autumn  Honest 	Going to a Feast  Star 	Greetings  Lightning 	
All 	Period 	Peace 	Leaf 	Fish 
Eat 	Rain 	Hunt 	Corn 	Love 
Happy 	Sad 	Dance 	Plenty of Food 