

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 27

May 2009



Children

The story of Benjamin West

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.

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 first in the 'Our Quaker stories' series.

May 2009 – August 2010.

Getting ready

Think of a favourite childhood story that you still remember to this day. What in it moved you? What about it makes it remain in your treasure trove of memories? Quite likely, it was a transforming tale with a main character facing a task, an obstacle or challenge that you identified with in some way. Maybe there was a helper, ways of facing the challenge, a meaningful ending. These tales can speak to our life experiences and be catalysts to our own thinking and feeling.

A single story can present many themes or have different meanings for each person. As you read the story, particular memories or challenges in your own life may surface in your thoughts. Children may identify with similar or different themes. Within these pages, you are offered particular activities to build on a particular theme; you are also guided to facilitate a children's meeting for worship that encourages children to explore their own themes. The latter format works well with a few or many children of similar or different ages and abilities.

We begin this series with a story about Quaker Benjamin West as a child.

Equipment needed

To create a sense of sacred space have a comfortable, safe and welcoming room, maybe a blanket, rug or pillows on the floor - be aware of those who need chairs appropriate for little bodies. Think about having low lighting, teddy bears or comfort toys. Maybe have some natural objects - stones, pine cones, sticks or leaves - include some brought by children. Avoid clutter. Soft pastel coloured fabric can be used to cover book cases. View your room from a child's eye level. Is it appealing, comfortable and welcoming for children of all abilities?

Other resources ideas are listed within the sections and on additional sheets.

An introduction to this new series:

'Our Quaker stories'.

We are often asked for stories about Quakers.

This usually means Quaker historical figures and this series will have some of these. But there will also be other tales – Quakers in Russia; Kindertransport; Quaker concern for animals; one Quaker family; Quakers in Burundi.

We intend the different stories about Quakers past and present to be an invitation to each person hearing them to think and feel about their own story, their journey in the spirit.

Gather

One adult greets each child at the door, shakes their hand and welcomes them by name. You can invite children to take off their shoes. Say that they are entering into a special place, a place of peace, a place to be quiet, to feel the presence of love, of God. In this moment, as everyone comes together, you are setting the tone for a simple sacred experience: children's meeting for worship.

The other adult sits on a rug large enough for all to sit together. Be calm, speak quietly and greet each child by name as they sit. If they are new introduce them to the others already present. Speak with them, engage in conversation about their families, how their week was, has anything happened to make them happy, anything to make them sad. Encourage everyone to listen, not comment and to leave a pause between comments. *See sidebar on this page for some tips on listening and sharing who we are.*

When everyone is settled, light a candle and say that it is to remind us that God, Love, is present (using language with which you are comfortable). Also light a small candle for each child, saying their name as you do – do this for absent children too. Sit quietly for a moment in Quaker worship. You could have an array of natural objects - pine cones, rocks, shells - laid out on a small table to your side, or on a tray on the rug.

After a few moments introduce Advices & Queries 3 in words (see sidebar) that the children may understand, e.g: share with children that Quakers think it is good "to set aside times of quiet" even on a busy day so that we get to know a calmness in ourselves. Some Quakers say this is a way to get closer to God and this quiet can help us feel peaceful and find ways to deal with difficult feelings and thoughts, problems for us and the world.

Ask children: "I wonder what helps you to settle down quietly"; "I wonder when or where you have nice, quiet times?" Encourage quiet speaking. Use one of the suggestions offered if appropriate, or suggest it might be tried at another Meeting (and do follow through). Otherwise just end with stillness.

This process and text draws heavily on the structures for children's reflective times written by Wynn McGregor in her series of books, 'The Way of the Child'. See resources list on page 4.

Engage

Quietly say that you are going to tell a story. Say that it is about a little boy, age six, who loved to paint (pause) but his parents didn't want him to. Read the story – get familiar with it beforehand and try to tell it by heart. *See Sheets 27A & B Story of Benjamin West.* After the story, ask the children "I wonder..." questions:



Benjamin West

- I wonder what part of this story you like the best.
- I wonder what part of this story you think is the most important.
- I wonder who you might like to be in this story.
- 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.



Quaker Faith & Practice Advices & Queries 3:

Do you try to set aside times of quiet for openness to the Holy Spirit? All of us need to find a way into silence which allows us to deepen our awareness of the divine and to find the inward source of our strength. Seek to know an inward stillness, even amid the activities of daily life.

Tips on listening and sharing who we are:

When all have shared (including you) acknowledge the sharing, simply: "We know a bit more about each other, now." Try to avoid singling out particular children's comments and avoid giving judgmental comments, e.g. "how nice", "that's terrible". Respond generally, e.g. if someone has shared a painful moment or a very happy moment, "Sometimes life is difficult/sad/exciting. For some Quakers, the calm of meeting for worship can help when we have these experiences/feel this way." Issues may come up that need a conversation with a parent or Overseer.

'Children need rhythm - to know what to expect and when - and a safe and welcoming space to explore who they are, and how they live and make sense of the world.'

Quaker Faith & Practice 10.09:

We were meeting in the long sitting-room, and the floor space was as usual filled by the children. The room was pretty full. Then Sophie's father came and put her in her carry-cot on the floor. She was very young, and we hadn't expected to be greeting her so soon. I looked around the adults, wondering which of us would minister.

At the other end of the room Cathy, aged three, slipped down from her mother's knee. Slowly, carefully, and mostly upright she clambered in and out, past all the other children. She reached the carry-cot and peeped in at the baby. Then she turned and gave everyone a smile of pure delight. Still smiling, without a word, she returned to her mother.

Nobody else spoke either. Sophie had been welcomed into meeting.

Other Quaker Faith and Practice references:

22.71; 23.81; 23.73; 2.76; 10.10; 22.63.

Again, the processes and text on this page draw heavily on the structures for children's reflective times written by Wynn McGregor in 'Way of the Child'. See resource on page 4.

Respond

Worshipfully experiencing the story.

In children's meeting it can be easy to get caught up in "producing" something to 'show and tell' to everyone else in Meeting. The suggestions here and on *Sheets 27.C, D & E* offer a variety of ways for leading children to interior silence. This will involve children in reflecting on the Benjamin West story and maybe on what is happening in their lives or something about themselves. This can become a little opening to listen to that of God, to Love, to Light in themselves and each other.

For some children, this may be the only opportunity in their week to be in quiet and contemplation.

Choose an activity or activities that you are comfortable facilitating, or provide a variety from which children can choose.

Before the children move into reflective engagement, explain that everybody needs to move quietly and calmly and to leave the space tidy as they found it. If you have a number of the reflective activities or 'stations' suggested on *Sheets 27 C & D*, think about putting up clear simply worded instructions that enable children to work independently. The role of you and the other adult is to circulate calmly and quietly support children in their reflection.

Meditations and Benjamin West

On this page and on *Sheet 27.E* there are two meditations – one for outdoors and one for indoors. Benjamin West observed and appreciated what he saw in the quietness of the wilderness and nature around him. The meditations offer ways for everybody participating to think about and relate to Benjamin's experience and to have their own.

Reflecting in a garden.

Resources: one large blanket or rug, small rugs for two or three but not more children - if possible, a little woven rug for each person; white and pastel shaded paper, pencils, crayons, pastels in little baskets or containers; clip boards or stiff sheets of card – cereal boxes are good – just stick two pieces together. Have the candles from the Gather time by the large blanket.

Lie small rugs around garden. On each rug have a clip board or sheet of stiff card for the number of children, a few sheets of paper of different soft colours held down by a stone, coloured pencils, or crayons, or pastels in baskets - one of these, not all.

Sitting quietly, ask the children – from where they are sitting – to look around the garden. Ask, what do you see that interests you, which you like? Pause to receive responses.

Now everybody walks together around the garden, taking a careful look at what interests them. Settle down again. Say: "There are many ways we pray and listen to God, and we can do that as we colour, draw, trace and create."

Everybody goes to one of the rugs. Invite them to think about what they looked at, what they see as they sit, and the sounds around them. Circulate, speaking only when the need arises. Avoid judgmental comments, like "that's pretty, that's lovely". Rather, support them in their contemplation; encourage them to tell you what they want about their creations.

Give a little notice before it is time to come back together: walk round and tell the small groups of children it is time to return items to their place and soon will be time to re-gather. When all are settled together, near the candles, ask, "Would anyone like to share something of what they have felt, thought or done?" (Pause) Encourage comments.

See Sheet 27.D for two different, more communal activities, still linked to Benjamin West.

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" - see Gather and side bar 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 note book including who attended, their ages and the focus of worship? This may help the planning of future meetings.

Topical activity Yearly Meeting Gathering 2009

'**Creating community, creating connections**' – Yearly Meeting Gathering theme 2009. Connecting with or getting to know people can be a bit scary – especially if you are not sure you like them or they are very different from you or even if you just feel shy. This topical activity is the first in a series of 3 in May, June and July for linking with the preparation material on the themes produced by Woodbrooke. See side bar.

See *Sheet 27.F* for an activity suitable for linking with all ages.

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.upperroom.org/companions/wayofthechild.asp> - for Way of the Child background and Quaker Bookshop for some of Wynn McGregor's books.

<http://www.delscope.demon.co.uk/ratl/ratl01.htm> - to order polished stones for a reasonable price. Also, Rough & Tumble Lapidary, 317 Bursledon Road, Sholing, Southampton. SO19 8NE. Tel/Fax: 023 8042 2218

The following two books are available from the Resources Room, Friends House, by post if you can't visit. Contact details in sidebar.

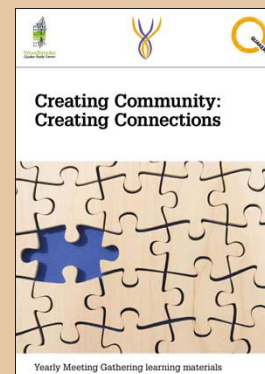
'Opening Minds - some thoughts on work with children and young people in the Religious Society of Friends' - Sue Collins.

'Spiritual Development: a first step for youth workers & young people' - John Lee.

This issue was written by **Augene Nanning** and edited by **Chris Nickolay** and **Howard Nurden**. Chris also wrote the topical activity.

The next children's issue of *Journeys in the Spirit*, no. 28, looks at the story of the Kindertransport and will be available from June 1st 2009. This will be followed by issue 29, about Quakers and Russia, available from July 1st and issue 30, about Quaker concern for animals, which will be available from August 1st.

Resources and ideas



Yearly Meeting Gathering preparation material for Meetings. Available to download at:

www.ymg.org.uk/work-pack-for-meetings/

Also look out for Youth Journeys 7 in June on the YMG theme .

Look at Sheet 27.F for a way for the whole meeting to connect across the ages – even those who find being with children difficult.

Try one of the meditations on page 3 or *Sheet 27.C* as a whole Meeting.

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Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 27.A

Engage

A story of pictures and paint brushes

Benjamin West - 10th October 1738 Springfield, Pennsylvania, America to 10 March 1820 London, England.

Long, long ago, across the sea in America, in time when there were no big cities, no tall buildings and no cars, there lived a boy named Benjamin West. Benjamin lived near a forest. He was a Quaker.

One summer day, Benjamin was sitting outside, rocking his niece, Sally, in her cradle, to and fro, to and fro. It was a lovely day. The sun was shining and birds flew among the many trees which surrounded Benjamin's home.

As Benjamin looked at his smiling niece, he thought, "I wish I could put Sally's face on a piece of paper. Then, tomorrow I could look at it and remember just how she looks right now."

Benjamin continued to rock the cradle. Suddenly, he had an idea. He ran in the house and to his father's desk. There he collected a feather quill pen and black ink. Long, long ago when Benjamin lived, there were no pens or coloured markers.

With his quill and ink, Benjamin ran back to his niece and started to draw. "I must hurry," he thought, "Mother will be back soon and she will not be pleased with me." Long, long ago, when Benjamin lived, Quakers did not paint and did not have pictures painted of themselves.

Soon, Benjamin's Mother did come home, and Benjamin was still drawing! "What does thee have behind thee, Benjamin West?" she asked. As you can tell, they talked differently then.

"Only a piece of paper," said Benjamin.

"I would see it," said Mother, holding out her hand. She took the picture. "That's our Sally. But Quakers do not have pictures. Why is it that thee must draw?"

"Oh, Mother, the smile on Sally's face will never be the same as it is today. When I see birds with all their beautiful colours, I want to save the picture for winter when I do not see a bird." Benjamin was excited. He so wanted his mother to understand. She shook her head. Still holding the picture she went inside their house.

The next day, after Benjamin had finished his chores, he wandered down the garden path to the barn.

He decided to make his own paint brush. Benjamin cut some hair off the barn yarn cat. (MEOW!) Benjamin was lucky he did not get scratched. He fastened the hair on the quill. Now he could paint.

It was a warm day. Fluffy white clouds moved slowly across the sky. Benjamin went walking through the woods near his home and saw some local people, people who had lived among the woods for many, many generations long before Benjamin was born. They call themselves First Peoples, although some people call them Indians.

Benjamin watched them. He sat on a large rock, and began to draw. One young man waved to Benjamin and said, "Welcome my little Quaker Friend." He walked over to Benjamin and looked at the drawing. "That is good, but you need colours."

He picked up some red clay dirt from the ground. Others picked blue, red and purple berries from the bushes. They mixed many colours and put them on flat rocks for Benjamin.

"Colours! I have colours," shouted Benjamin with glee. The men laughed. They were pleased.

(Continued overleaf)

Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 27.B

Engage

Pictures and paint brushes continued

But when Benjamin returned home and his father saw the coloured paintings, he was not pleased. He was troubled. He did not think their Quaker Friends would approve of Benjamin's paintings.

Benjamin's father decided to take his concern to Meeting. Just like now, long, long ago, if you had a problem you took it to Meeting.

Friends came to Benjamin West's home. They looked at his drawing and paintings. They sat in silence, long, long ago, just like we do today, here in the Meeting House.

No one said anything for a long time. Then, finally, one Friend stood and spoke, "That squirrel looks so real, I thought it was going to run off the page." That Friend sat down again. A little later, another Friend stood and said, "God has given Benjamin a great gift. We cannot take away that gift."

Soon it was apparent that all the Friends had been moved with similar thoughts. They all agreed that Benjamin West should keep on painting and drawing.

Time passed. As Benjamin grew up he painted a lot of pictures.

Long, long ago when Benjamin lived, there was a King of England. Benjamin painted for that King. Benjamin painted many pictures. Some were hung in galleries for lots of people to see. The King thought Benjamin was a very special person. The King wanted to call Benjamin "Sir".

Benjamin thanked the King, but said, "I only want to be called Friend."

[Story amended by Eugene Nanning from *Pictures & Paint brushes* in My Book of Friends by Joyce Mardock Holden, illustrated by Susanna Combs. (Friends Faith & Life Curriculum: Richmond, Indiana. 1985)]

A picture painted by Benjamin of the signing of a peace treaty with First American people. William Penn helped make this peace agreement happen – see Journeys in the Spirit children's issue no.8 October 2008.



Journeys in the Spirit

Children



Sheet 27.C

Respond

Worshipfully experiencing the story

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

There are seven suggested reflective focuses or stations listed here. Set up your room with all or some of these focuses or stations with space to move between them. If you are setting up focus areas or stations, have simple, clear instructions and the resources ready.

Say that for the next 30 minutes the children will have time to do something that relates to the story of the young Benjamin West. Walk everybody round and show them each area. Ask that people don't crowd the different areas – if one place is crowded move to another one. When you have shown each area invite everyone to sit quietly. Tell them it is time to choose a focus area or station. Remind them to move 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 the blanket, to move into Reflect.

1. Stories

Resources: sheets of blank paper with a 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 (what 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 or...?), ending (how does your story end).

Instructions: write or draw a story using the table as a guide.

2. Painting

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

Instructions: Let your thoughts from the Benjamin West story flow using the materials here.

3. Craft art

Resources: scissors, regular and coloured pencils, glue, symbols for tracing and cutting out e.g. cross, heart, dove, butterfly, feathers; 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. Instructions: Let your thoughts and feelings from the Benjamin West story flow using the materials here.

4. Self portraits or paintings of friends or family.

Benjamin West painted many people. Invite children to paint or draw a self portrait that shows something they like about themselves or the person or people chosen. Some children may need encouragement to express a talent. If so, an adult can quietly prompt the child to think about what they are good at or what they like.

Show children pictures of a painting frame or frames so they can make or draw their own, or have coloured paper cut as frames to fit.

5. Self portrait puppet

Invite children to make a puppet of themselves that tells other people something they are good at or like to do. Puppets can be made from socks, buttons and glued on cloths; paper bags drawn on or with cut outs glued on; paper plates (usually just a face, but a body cut out and coloured could be added): cut one plate in half, glue a half to a whole plate with plates facing each other. Now you have a place to slide a hand into.

Have the relevant resources in baskets. Only provide what is needed for the children present.

Give time for puppets to introduce themselves and what they are good at or like to do; if people don't want to speak they don't have to. This could be done during Reflect.

(Continued overleaf on Sheet 27.D)

Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 27.D Respond Worshipfully experiencing the story continued

6. Journaling

Resources: attractive note books and if possible with both lined and unlined paper, pencils, Bibles, Quaker Faith and Practice. George Fox's Journal. Benjamin West story.

Instructions: Choose a note book, write your name on it. Use the materials provided. Write or draw your thoughts on your journal.

7. Gazing

Resources: small woven, cotton rugs rolled and placed in a basket; basket of icons and symbols (small crosses, peace symbols, hearts, colourful stones, crystal prisms, etc) small candle in glass holders and candle snuffers.

Instructions: 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. Listen to God.



Two ideas for different, more communal activities – still linked to Benjamin West:

Sharing dreams – a collaborative mural

Prepare a large paper (e.g. 4ft X 4ft) as your mural back drop. Cut out large rain drops from light blue paper and collect in a basket. Cut out long, wide yellow rays (enough for one per child) and collect in a basket. Cut one round yellow circle and glue onto mural back drop to be the sun from which the rays radiate. Coloured pencils or markers in baskets.

Talk about what Benjamin dreamed: to be an artist. Ask wondering questions: I wonder what dreams you have? I wonder if anything or anyone is stopping you from following your dreams? When the moment is right, invite children to each take a sun ray and each take a rain drop. On the sun ray they draw or write a dream. On the raindrop, they can draw an obstacle, something or someone stopping them from reaching their dreams. Paste onto mural back drop. Children who finish quickly may wish to add other pictures to the mural. Give time for children to share their dream and rain drop. (This could be done worshipfully during Reflect).

Contemplative Walking

Walk around the garden slowly. Walk quietly and slowly, placing your heel on the ground and rolling your foot onto the pad of your foot, then your toes. Focus on each step, allowing your senses to tell you what you feel, see, hear, and smell. Allow yourself to be in this moment in this space; letting other thoughts drift away.

Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 27.E

Respond

Meditation

The following Leaf meditation helps children appreciate beauty and calmness.

A meditation; an introduction to sitting quietly

Sit up straight, and place your hands on your knees, take a deep breath through your nose and blow it out very slowly through your mouths. (Repeat this deep breathing two more times.) Sit very still. Hold your head very still. Relax your shoulders. Listen for what is going on inside your body. Take one hand and place it on your heart. Feel your heart beating. Listen.

Appreciation of and entering into the Natural World: a guided meditation from the book 'Don't just do something, sit there'. By Mary K. Stone. Available in the Quaker Bookshop and from Quaker Life Resources Room.

"I'm going to give each of you one tiny part of a tree. It's unique; there's not another one exactly the same in the whole world" - show a leaf. "Yes it's a leaf, and here are some more." (Distribute them).

I would like you to quietly examine your leaf...

Get to know it... Look at its shape ... its size... Feel its weight... first in one hand, then the other...

Notice the kind of edge the leaf has... it might be smooth, or jagged, or torn... Notice the veins...

Examine both sides of the leaf... gently feel each surface... You might like to feel it against your cheek.

Notice how many colours there are, or different shades of one colour... Notice the patterns on your leaf...

There may be patterns in the colours or patterns in the veins...

This leaf – given to you by a tree – is unique... There has never been one exactly like it and there never will be.

Do you know your leaf well enough to recognise it if it was placed with everyone else's leaves? Okay, put it on the table in front of you.

We are now going to use a powerful gift – our imagination. Check and see that you're sitting comfortably and in a relaxed position.... Gently close your eyes ... and be aware of your slow steady breathing.

Imagine you are that leaf... Feel what it is to be that shape... that weight... those colours...

You are a leaf on top of a tall tree... You're firmly attached to the end of a twig... and you're surrounded by thousands of other leaves... all slightly different from yourself ... Feel the gentle wind on both sides of you ... enjoy the feeling... Is it a warm wind ... or a cool one?

Now feel the refreshing rain... washing you... making you shine... Listen to the splash of the raindrops as they hit you... and listen to the droplets splash off you onto other leaves. Feel the rain... refreshing... gentle... cooling...cleansing.

Now we're going to leave our imaginary life as a leaf and return to the Meeting Room... When we're ready we'll open our eyes and have a good stretch.

After the meditation, ask wondering questions:

- I wonder what noises you heard here and in your leaf journey.
- I wonder what smells you smelt here and in your leaf journey.
- I wonder what the leaf felt like to you.
- I wonder , if the leaf could speak, what it would say about Love, about God.



Now use those thoughts to make a poem in words or pictures – be aware of those who need help; younger children might simply draw or paint their leaf.

Resources - pencils – dried or fresh leaves, plain and coloured, brushes. paper, paints – thickened with PVA glue.

Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 27.F

Topical activity Yearly Meeting Gathering

Firstly, for ways to talk about Yearly Meeting Gathering as a big Quaker Meeting see the ongoing activity in Journeys in the Spirit children's edition issue nos.11,12,13 & 14. These are available at www.quaker.org.uk/cyp ; click on Resources in the left hand menu and then scroll down the page until you get to Archive under the Journeys in the Spirit heading.

- To set up your children's meeting room or space for this activity you will need a white or cream cloth, sheet or rug.
- Lay the cloth, sheet or rug in the centre of your room or space where everyone can sit around it. Have a big selection of coloured ribbons and embroidery silks in a closed box or basket ready to bring out.
- To begin with, if you can, sit with your group of whatever size, outside of the usual children's meeting space. Talk about lots of Quakers – children, young people and adults (some from your meeting?) who are going to be part of a huge Quaker meeting in the summer called Yearly Meeting Gathering. Say that the Quakers who are helping with the big Quaker meeting, Yearly Meeting Gathering, have asked Quakers to do things together that help Meetings, and the Friends in them, feel more joined up and connected. Say that in a moment everybody is going to go into the children's meeting room or space but first say,... "Everybody.....be still.....know that God, deep Love is here with us and in us....be still, breathe slowly for a few moments." Now everybody moves into the children's meeting space or room.
- As everybody goes into the space quietly ask them to settle around the cloth, sheet or rug. Light a candle in the centre of the rug – say that this is to represent the light of God, of Love in each of us. Now say something like: "Each of us is different, each of us is special but when we sit together in Meeting for Worship as children or all ages together we start to feel connected – something of God, of Love starts to join us up in a funny, hard to talk about sort of way." Say that, in a moment you are going to bring out a basket or box. In the basket or box are lots of colours. Each person is to choose a colour that they really like, that somehow is like them or is the colour of something they love. The colour is to be held for a little bit and then everybody stands up and lays their ribbon or thread on the cloth, rug or sheet. The only rules are that it is done in the quiet and each end of each ribbon must be touching somebody else's piece.
- Once everybody has done it, all walk around for a little while looking at all the colours and seeing how they connect in different ways to different colours that might not normally be put together. End with quiet and looking again at how everybody has been connecting and sharing. The colours can be turned into a single strand for draping around Meeting with a description.