

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 21

November 2008

Children



Advices and Queries – finding treasure

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 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** towards God, the deeper mystery; **downwards** to the world we live in.



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

Getting ready

Preparing Hearts & Minds

Advices and Queries has gone through many revisions since its beginnings in 1682 as three questions seeking factual information. Now Advices & Queries "should continue to be a challenge and inspiration to friends in their personal lives and in their life as a religious community..." It is worth noting that "Advices & Queries are not a call to increased activity... but a reminder of the insights of the Society." (Advices and Queries 1.01) In hosting meetings for children's worship we may get lost in the doing, the "increased activity". Do remember our testimony to simplicity. Each advice or query can be a springboard for the focus of a meeting for children's worship. Or, in their entirety Advices & Queries can be seen as a resource to help us all – children and adults – to reflect and survive in our world, and find our 'right' way of doing so, an inspiration that may be shared in children's meetings for worship.

Equipment needed

Create a sense of sacred space: comfortable, safe and welcoming room, blanket and pillows on the floor, or chairs appropriate for little bodies, low lighting, teddy bears, and other comfort toys and natural objects, e.g. rocks, pine cones, sticks, leaves, some brought by children. View your room as if a child: posters, photos and clock at their eye level, a space that is appealing to them? Equipment for specific activities is listed within the sections and additional sheets.

Underpinning references

Advice & Queries (1994), includes a short history of advices and queries.

In and out of the silence by Elizabeth Brimelow (1989) suggests to parents and others thoughtful approaches to worshipping with children and young people, emphasising openness, questioning and experiment rather than specific teaching. Available from the Quaker Life Resources Room- see details on back page.

Go to www.quaker.org.uk, click on Children and Young People in menu on the right; click on Resources, Ideas Store then browse: Advices & Queries. Also, choose 'advance search' and use author: 'Augene Nanning' as search title to find *Belonging and making a presence*: and *Feeling of belonging*.

Gather

In this moment, as all come together, you are setting the tone for a sacred experience: meeting for children's worship. For healthy development, children require 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. Be calm, speak quietly, be sitting, invite and welcome them in. Sit quietly for a moment being an example of Quaker worship, with a lit candle and pine cones, rocks, shells set around. If children arrive at slightly different times (have arrived from outside, not come from Meeting for Worship with adults) see *Sheet 21A*.

After gathered silence, introduce Advices & Queries 3 in words (see sidebar) 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 connect closer to God and this quiet can help us be calm and find ways to deal with difficult feelings and thoughts. To help children into silence, you may want to lead a meditation. See *Sheet 21.B* for a suggestion, or you may have your own.

After the silent worship and meditation is closed, remembering worship continues, quietly and softly invite each child to say their names. See *Sheet 21.B* for tips. You might invite children to briefly share a special moment since you all last met or how they are feeling now (welcome sad, upsetting or happy moment/feeling; link to Advices & Queries 10 (see sidebar). Encourage everyone to listen, not comment, and to leave a pause between comments. See *Sheet 21.B: Active listening and More tips*.

Engage

Introducing Advices & Queries

Have Advices & Queries wrapped in a special cloth (e.g. golden or velvet, etc) signifying treasure. Place in a special closed 'treasure box'. Display on blanket among e.g. shells, conkers, shiny rocks.

With awe, ask:

For younger children: "I wonder what treasure we might find here?" and

For older children: "I wonder what treasure is?"

Encourage children to respond in a quiet worshipful way. Accept their suggestions with respect and without judgement. Leave quiet between responses. Accept silence if there are no responses.

You may also wish to ask the following, or find that the above question(s) suffice.

- "I wonder what it feels like to find treasure?"
- "I wonder what happens after we find treasure?"

Slowly, reverently, open the box and unwrap Advices & Queries.

Note that this is our Quaker booklet called Advices & Queries and within this small book there are many special words, words of wisdom and many questions. Today, we are exploring one of these gems.

Suggest to children: You have wisdom and you have questions. (Blow a few bubbles). In the quiet you have time to let wisdom and questions float in your heart, in your thoughts and maybe else where. *Resource: bubbles*

References & other resources

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....."

Advices & Queries 8:

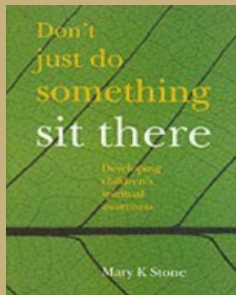
"Worship is our response to an awareness of God. We can worship alone, but when we join with others in expectant waiting we may discover a deeper sense of God's presence. We seek a gathered stillness in our meetings for worship so that all may feel the power of God's love drawing us together and leading us."

Advices & Queries 10:

"Come regularly to meeting for worship even when you are angry, fed up or sad."



References & other resources



“Don’t just do something, sit there” – by Mary Stone (available from the Quaker Life Resources Room and the Quaker Bookshop)



Stick weaving: a step by step guide: (‘God’s Eyes’ or ‘Eye of God’
<http://www.designsonline.com/2008/06/diy-project-camp-crafts.html>

Explore ‘theological reflection’ on line – just search using that title; there are all sorts of interesting ways of thinking about it. The Quaker Life Resources Room also has a range of books and pamphlets on this theme.

For other explorations of Advices and Queries see *Sheet 21.D*.

Respond

Worshipfully experiencing Advices & Queries.

This is your opportunity to take the essence of an Advice & Query and encourage children to discover that essence, in a way that is comfortable to each child where ever they are on their spiritual development. In doing this you are encouraging theological reflection. There are examples of using different Advices and Queries here and on *Sheet 21.D*. More examples would have been provided if space was not limited. Choose one that you are comfortable facilitating or use them to inspire you to develop another Children’s Meeting for Worship. Do share your ideas with Children & Young People’s staff in the Quaker Life department in Friends House. Any of the following can be done after the Engage activity:

Advices & Queries 3

Tell the children you are together going to explore one of the wisdoms. Read Advices & Queries 3 in words they can understand, e.g. *Do you try to have quietness so you may feel the calmness and good feelings in that moment*. Reverently wrap up book and return to treasure box.

Place before you two baskets: one of small balls of wool/yarn; the other, a collection of two sticks or thin canes crossed and tied together.

Explain that some of us need help to experience the quietness so that we can feel the calmness. Weaving is one way. Show a ready made ‘stick weaving’, and ask if anyone has ever made one. There might be a child who can show the others how this is done. If not, you show them (See *Sheet 21.C*: how to do ‘stick weaving’). Then have children choose their sticks and wool, encouraging quiet and calm. Encourage children to help each other but not to do it for each other. Very young children may simply enjoy playing with the wool. Some children may create their own patterns of weaving and not follow the traditional way. All forms are welcomed; it is the process, a way into the quietness, which is relevant.

While all are weaving, you may want to tell a simple story of George Fox discovering worship, see *Sheet 21.C* or you may find the weaving suffices. Leave time to tidy up and display the weaving on the blanket before moving into worshipful reflecting.

If you use a simple worded story about George Fox, try telling the story from memory; avoid reading it. You may wish to have simple symbols of key points to show at relevant times in the story (useful prompts, if you forget a detail). There may be children who wish to help you do this. Avoid disturbing the calmness of the weaving by asking children to help. Continue worship into Reflect.

Advices and Queries 18

Follow the format above. Tell the children you are all going to explore one of the wisdoms. Read Advices & Queries 18 in words they can understand, e.g. *How can we make our Meeting a place where each person feels accepted, cared for and supported*. Explain that in many places and among many people, including Jesus, food is shared to show how much you care about each other and to celebrate special occasions.

First wash hands, this can be done worshipfully using a bowl, a jug of water and a towel. Quietly and calmly make simple sandwiches to share with the adults after Meeting for Worship. Each child can have a job from washing lettuce or cucumber, spreading on the filling, cutting sandwiches, arranging on plates. Be aware of safety issues (e.g. sharp knives, allergies) and dietary restrictions. It may be easier to have it all vegetarian.

While all are making the food, you may want to talk about Jesus and food. See *Sheet 21.D*. Continue worship into Reflect.

Reflect

Ask everybody to sit quietly, with creations (stick weaving, sandwiches, etc.) lovingly displayed. Light candle. Once again, remove from treasure box and unwrap Advices & Queries. Read the Advice & Query as you read it before in words the children can understand. Reverently lay the Advices & Queries on the cloth. Sit in silence. When you are going to close this Meeting, wrap up the Advices & Queries and return to the treasure box. Then quietly go join adults, or close as is traditionally done in your meeting, e.g. shaking hands, saying Thank You.

Review

Journeys in the Spirit is not a curriculum. It is a suggested process: Getting Ready (coming to meeting with heart and mind prepared”; Gathering: settling into meeting; Engage: hearing the ministry; Respond: considering how the ministry affects you (facilitator, child) personally; Reflect: moving from Meeting for Children’s 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.

Give yourself time to reflect on your own experience, and consider what might have been the children’s experiences. The review can happen at the time or later. It is good practice to keep simple records of the meeting. You may want to keep a scrap book and include who attended, their ages and the focus of worship. You might include photos (taken after meeting, not during). You may want to keep a children’s meeting for worship journal where you consider queries and create advices which may help you and others plan future meetings, or you may simply want to consider the queries on your own or discuss with someone else.

Queries: Was the meeting worshipful and did it respect the Quaker testimonies (equality, peace, simplicity, truth)? Did facilitators and children have fun? Was it age appropriate and inclusive: were all children able to participate in their own way and did children help and respect each other? Remember: you may not know what each child gained from the meeting. What is there for you to learn from this meeting? 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.

Topical activity

It’s early we know but the activity this month is one of two linked to Christmas and Advent preparations. This month we offer a simple way to make a Jesse Tree. This is a traditional way to help people of all ages find out about and explore the way the Bible contains the whole family history of Christ. It can also be blended with thinking about a person’s family history or the history of a meeting. It is, of course, explicitly biblical but it is not saying that this is the only way to explore Quaker beliefs. It is offering a way to share and explore the big stories that can be difficult and, many of which, can raise big opportunities to think about Quakers, Jesus and all those enormous stories.

Links to other organisations and resources

www.quaker.org.uk click on Children and Young People in menu on the right; click on Resources, 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.

www.quaker.org.uk click Quaker Faith & Practice for Advices & Queries on line.

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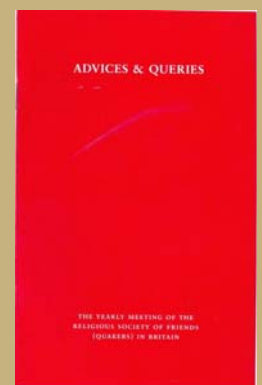
Email bevelies@quaker.org.uk

Website: www.quaker.org.uk

Other information.

What can you do together as a meeting?

The Engage activity on Advice and Query 3 – the weaving would be good to share as an all age meeting for worship.



The next Issues of Journeys in the Spirit children’s edition are:

Issue 22 Quaker work in South Asia – Dec.1st 2008.

Issue 23 Non-violence – Jan 1st.2009.

Issue 24 Quaker work in Uganda and Burundi –Feb.1st 2009.

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Children

Sheet 21.A Gather Pre-gathering ideas



If children arrive at slightly different times have a simple gathering activity:

- Each child draws a picture of themselves which can be put on the wall creating a welcoming space for children; their pictures are solid examples that the Meeting House is theirs, too, not just a space for adults. *Resources* A5 paper, crayons of various sizes appropriate for different size hands and ability. Avoid marker pens which can get onto clothes, etc. especially with young children.
- Have children create badges and labels for themselves and others in the meeting. Encourage children to print their name boldly and encourage children able to write to help those who can't. Be aware of children who may be embarrassed that they can't print clearly (may include children with literacy related disabilities). You may want to have names written on the tags already and encourage children to create a design around the name that says something about them. Encourage the child to create their own picture which maybe, e.g. a scribble with a favourite colour or something the child likes, depending on age and interest, etc. This is especially useful in children's meetings for worship which don't meet often and have changing facilitators, or are in large meetings. *Resources*: crayons, round cut out cardboard, with tie strings or looped string (be aware of age and safety issues).
- Have leaves cut out, and children draw or write about a recent happy moment. (Avoid suggesting time, e.g. yesterday, this week, as young children do not have a sense of time and this can add confusion to a simple focus). If there are children embarrassed about not being able to write or feel they can't draw, you could suggest doing it with the weaker hand, e.g. left handers use their right, and visa versa. Tie leaves onto a standing branch. *Resources*: crayons, coloured pencils, cut out leaves with short string attached, standing stick, e.g. in pot of rocks or stuck into clay.
- Over weeks: children draw a picture of themselves, family, home, a special place (real or imaginary). Invite children to leave them to hang in the meeting

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Children

Sheet 21.B Gather Suggestions for meditation & name sharing

Guided meditations:

Guided meditation: Speaking calmly, quietly, slowly with pauses say:
Lie or sit comfortably, close your eyes or focus on one comfortable spot, e.g. the candle. Take some deep breaths, in and out, in and out, in and out. Now to relax your body, tighten your toes, let them relax... tighten your legs, let them relax (etc.: bottom, back, shoulders, arms, hands, face)..



Breathe in and out, in through your nose, out through your mouth (repeat 2-3 times)
Listen to your breathing.
Feel your heart beating. Listen to your heart.
Listen to the stillness and quiet around you.
Listen to those breathing around you. Listen to (e.g. birds, name external sounds)
Now listen again to breathing, your friends, now your own

In worship, in our meeting together, we listen for the specialness inside us. We seek a stillness together so that we may feel how special we are and how special those around us are. You may wish to read Advices & Queries 8 in words the children may understand (see sidebar on Page 2).

Worshipful flower meditation

You will need plain white or coloured paper, scissors, wax crayons and a tray of water. Cut out squares of paper. These can be 4cm, 5cm or 6cm square. Think carefully about the size. Make sure that there will be enough room in the tray for everyone's flower to open – If in doubt use the 4cm size. The smallest fingers can do this or be helped. Fold the squares in half to make a rectangle; fold again to make a square. Open out the paper. Fold each corner into the middle – it will look like a square with four triangles on the edges. It is then ready to be opened out and waterproofed with wax crayon on the base – words or pictures can be put in the middle of the top side. Float on water.

Active Listening. To assist children who are not used to or skilled at listening carefully to each other and to pause between speakers, you may consider having a feather, or other simple object. When someone is holding the object, they speak. When they are finished, they return it to the centre of the circle. The next person takes it when they are ready to speak, and so on. Be aware that some children may need a little support or gentle encouragement.

Tips on sharing names. For those who know each other well, suggest they say “my name is ..., hello (person's name on their right)”, and go around the circle. With young children, it is helpful to start yourself. With older children, invite someone to start.



Tips on sharing how 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.

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Children



Sheet 21.C Respond Stick weaving and story of George Fox

Stick Weaving (God's Eyes)

Resources: sticks, yarn or wool, scissors

1. Cross two sticks and bind them together by wrapping the yarn around the centres of the sticks in an "x" pattern a few times.
2. Begin wrapping the yarn or wool in a diamond pattern by sending it over and around one stick, then over and around the next. Continue in the same pattern until you are ready to change colours.
3. To change colours, simply cut your yarn and tie the next colour to the end. Continue wrapping as before.
4. When you've finished, cut your yarn or wool, wrap it around the top of one of the stick ends and tie it off with a knot. Leave yourself enough slack so you can hang up your stick weaving.



Simple storytelling: George Fox

Characters and symbols to illustrate the story: George Fox, mother, father, cross, three siblings, person holding a shoe, shepherd's hook, sheep, three men (preachers), house, Fox and man sitting facing each other, hill.

The story

George Fox was the oldest of four children. His mother worked in the home taking care of all four boys. His father was a weaver. They all went to church every week. God was very important in their lives. Fox thought living simply was very important. When Fox was a teenager, he was a shepherd. He looked after sheep. He stayed all day and night with them. He had a lot of time to think about living simply and about God.

When he was 19 he moved near London. He went on long walks by himself in the country side. A year later he moved home again. He had long discussions with his minister who liked George very much. Still, they disagreed a lot. George wanted to know more about God. He didn't agree with what his minister told him.

George went on a long journey. He met and talked with many ministers but he did not find what they said helpful. One told him to smoke and sing. He didn't find that helpful. Another got angry with George when George stepped on some of the minister's flowers my mistake. George apologised but the minister was still angry. George didn't find that helpful. The third minister suggested George go to a doctor for help. George didn't find that helpful.

George decided to read and study his bible. He found this helped a bit, but still George was very unhappy. He travelled and spoke with many people about God and the bible and how to live your life well. One day, George felt he must walk up Pendle Hill. This is an isolated, steep and high hill in Lancashire.

George felt very special on this hill. George realised how special it could be to be together with other people and sit in silence.

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Children

Sheet 21.D Respond

Jesus, food and more Advices & Queries explorations

Advices & Queries 18.

Jesus loved being with friends. He enjoyed life. He told jokes and stories. He was evidently good company. People remembered what he did. It changed their lives. There is a story of Jesus feeding more than five thousand people with five barley loaves and two little cooked fish (John in chapter 6, 1-13 is precise about the food, the 'opsarion' fish were probably pickled). After everyone had eaten, twelve baskets of scraps were collected! Some people think Jesus 'magically' multiplied the food; some people think something much more miraculous happened. When the people saw that even a little food was going to be shared, they brought out their packed lunches that they had been hiding selfishly, and began to share too.

Alternative Advices & Queries 18.

Getting Ready: in the week before, invite children to bring a "companion", soft comfort toy.

Resources: boxes of various sizes, easy to tear fabric, wallpaper and other colourful paper, glue.

Engage as previous

Respond: Read Advices & Queries 18 in words the children can understand. Invite the children to make comfortable calm places for their companions. Read a story to help people settle or allow for the calmness of the activity to be the sole focus.

Advices & Queries 10.

Come regularly whatever your mood, and find your peace.

Resources: closed bottle with coloured water and a drop of soap; A6 card blank on both sides with hole on one side, crayons two sticks tied in a cross with loop to hang from middle, string; space to walk.

Gather: Have children walk around moment by moment have them tighten their fists, hunch shoulders, look down, cross arms, tighten face. Then, repeat but have them open up, relax hands, swing arms by side, walk straight, breath deeply and smile, even if they don't feel like smiling. Invite them to say how they felt in the different walks. Draw their attention to how we can change how we feel, and that meeting can do this for us too.

Engage as previous.

Respond: Read Advices & Queries 10 in words the children can understand.

Show them the bottle of coloured water. Explain that coming to meeting is like this bottle. You may feel calm. Or you may feel mad, sad (shake bottle). Let bubbles settle. Listening to the silence can be calming.

After a moment, give each child a card and invite them to pick the colour of crayon they least like. Ask them to scribble on one side as much as they can, return the crayon and sit and look at their creation for a moment. Then ask them to turn over the paper and to use colours they like to draw a picture of somewhere or someone special. Invite them to make four of these cards. Then invite them to tie them up into a mobile. Tie one card on each end of the two crossed sticks.

You may want to introduce and explain *Psalms*: songs written as if you are talking with God. Suggest to children that at Meeting, when you are miserable, you don't have to explain your feelings. Sometimes it helps to use ready-made words: you know you are not alone, other people have felt like you, too. Psalm 13 is a good moan! But just moaning is not enough. Psalm 15 reminds us, like the Advices, about living a good life. Psalm 150 is for a party: make noise, make music together, dance until you all feel better. And Psalm 148 is for shouting out loud when you walk beside crashing waves or over a hill on a bright windy day! You might suggest learning some lines by heart or reading one in Meeting.

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Children



Sheet 21.E Topical activity A Jesse Tree for Advent

How do you make a Jesse Tree?

- Find or write versions of the extracts and stories below that children will find accessible. Read the passages yourself and discuss them with one or more people. Older children could be encouraged to read a story (or several) for themselves and then have a conversation about it. Encourage questions. The Good News or Message Bibles might help. (see www.biblegateway.com or <http://www.bibletools.org/> for exploring a range of Bibles).
- Start with a large, bare branch fixed in a pot with earth or gravel. This is gradually covered with objects made by children, young people and adults to represent significant people or events in the Old and New testaments.
- Make 3 or 4 objects at each Children's Meeting in the four weeks before Christmas. The maximum number usually made is 16 but it can be just 12 or even 28. The simple shapes on *Sheet 21.F* can be used for drawing on or decorating.
- If you only meet once or twice a month then maybe some could be made at home or by all ages together as preparation for an all age Meeting for Worship; mixed age groups could be given different quotes and objects to work on and make together.
- The whole group could then gather to assemble their tree and meet in stillness together.
- The activity could be extended by inviting children to think and find out about their family tree and add their own story to the tree.

A list of people and events	Bible references	Possible objects to make
Adam and Eve	Genesis 3:1-24	Apple or sun
Jesse	Isaiah 11:1	Star of David; tree stump with leafy branch
Noah and the flood	Genesis 6: 9-22; 9:8-17	Ark, animal, rainbow, dove
Abraham	Genesis 15: 1-6	Star and sky scene and tent
Isaac	Genesis 21: 1-7, 22:1-12	A knife; an altar
Jacob's ladder	Genesis 28:10-22	Ladder
Joseph	Genesis 41:37-45:20	Wheat sheaf; coat of many colours
Moses	Exodus 14:10-31	A staff
Moses and 10 commandments	Exodus 20:1-17	Stone tablets
Isaiah's prophecy	Isaiah 11:1-2	Scroll
Bethlehem house	1 Samuel 16:4-13	House
King David the Harpist	1 Samuel 16:14-23	Harp
King Solomon	1 Kings 3:16-28	Crown
Joseph the Carpenter	Matthew 1:18-25	Hammer/saw
Mary, mother of Jesus	Luke 1:26-38	Rose
John the Baptist	Luke 1: 57-80	Writing board and pen; horn
Jesus	Matthew 1:25; 2:9-11	Star....

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Sheet 21.F Topical activity Shapes for Jesse Tree pictures

