

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 33

November 2009



Children

Inner stories – ourselves and each other

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 seventh in the 'Our Quaker stories' series.

May 2009 –

August 2010

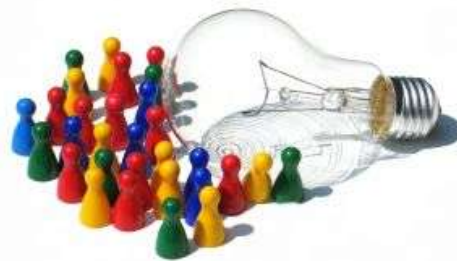
Getting ready

How do we explore the Quaker idea that there is 'that of God within'?

That of God ... inside me?

...inside you?

...inside them?



Is it inside our own self, in our body?

Can we live it physically, in reality, in our lives?

What does 'inner light' really mean?

Is it really that the answers can literally be found inside our own self?

Now go to Sheet 33.A for more Getting Ready thoughts.....

Information about this issue

This issue is written differently. Some of the layout and graphics are intended to give space to think and feel about the different words and ideas – almost to give an idea of what activities might feel or look like – in a way they are an expression of worship themselves.

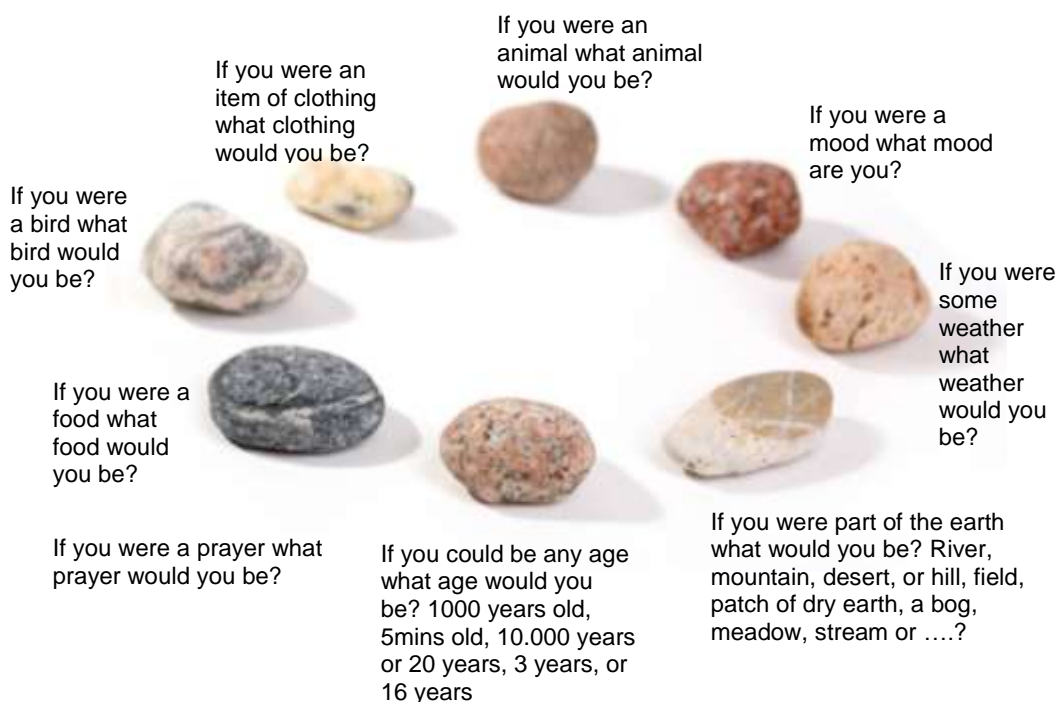
Gather

Who Are We?

There are two ways to do this gathering activity. But, first everybody sits in a circle, with paper & pencils, and settles into quiet for a moment. If children are too young to write someone else can write or draw for them.

You can either, say each of the open questions in the illustration below clearly...pause...give time for each person to write (not so long that they think too much) then move on...or you can set out a circle or spiral of stones as laid out below ...on the base of each stone is a sticker or post it (or written with a gold or silver pen) one of the 'if you were...' questions below. Each person in the group takes it in turn to pick up a stone, read out the question to everybody and replace the stone. Then people can speak or write their thought – writing is more private and less threatening. Suggest they write whatever comes into their mind first; there are no wrong answers. This exercise is good to give children courage in their own immediate response to life and to enjoy playing with ideas, difference and inner change.

See sidebar for more ideas.



Engage



The Gather activity above gives one way into the theme of inner stories – of ourselves and each other. You could now move straight to Respond 'Making little people', *Sheets 33.C and 33.D*. An alternative is to begin to tell the story of the Quaker connected 'Peace Pilgrim' – a person who brought the peace inside herself to other people. On *Sheet 33.B* there is outline information for you, a sample of a page of the children's book and a web link to the whole book. If you don't have internet access just ask a Friend in Meeting. The people making could then be done after the story.

References, other resources and ideas

Another option:

Just choose 3 of the questions, maybe these below, or something else that you know will intrigue your group.

If you were the earth what bit would you be?

If you were a mood what mood are you?

(Look at *Journeys in the Spirit Issue 32 and Sheet 32.C* for some faces and expressions you could use)

If you were a prayer what prayer would you be?

(Look at *Journeys in the Spirit Issue 16 on Prayer* for lots of ideas on prayer that may help you)

"Oh the fabulous wings unused folded in the heart".

'A Sleep of Prisoners'
Christopher Fry



'Our inner self is full of wonder.... Wonder, who, when, why, where, whom ...wonder-full!'

Maggie Squires

Respond



Our inner stories - making people – making ourselves.

Have a first look at Sheets 33.C and 33.D so that you begin to get a sense of what this activity is like.



Some things you will need for making the people - to be collected before the session.

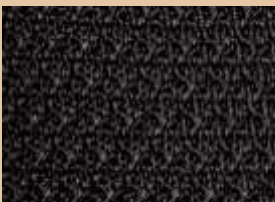
- Newspaper or pieces of colourful fabrics (recycled works well) for making people shapes.
- Some wool or thin strips of fabric ...can be torn up in advance ...or at the session some children love tearing strips. Small pieces of colourful tissue paper. These are for dressing the figure when complete with 'inner bundle'. See Sheet 33.C for some pictorial instructions on making the people.



Things to collect for making small bundles of inner self - See Sheet 33.D for pictures of what you can collect and some pictorial guidance on the process of exploring and making the small bundles of inner self.



- Small stars and sequins for dreams or being part of the vast universe
- Wool and coloured threads:
 - yellow for inner light, sunny nature sunlight feeling happy.
 - blue for the sky, the feeling of being like the sky, wind ,air or water, oceans, deep feelings, streams of ideas.
 - green for grass, for 'Go'... feeling like doing things, love of environment.
 - red for strength, boldness or love for life.
 - black for dark, warmth, feeling safe or beautiful night time dreams.....
 - or pink or purple or white or whatever colours are available, explore lots of ideas for symbolic representations to give lots of possibilities and the opportunity for children to feel able to find their own meaning to what is important to them
- Seeds to represent inner growth or potential or a garden or food or seeds of ideas.
- Earth (dry is easier) to represent that we are all people of earth and the earth feeds us food grows in earth, we walk on the earth and we are part of the planet Earth.
- Grains of rice or beans /lentils/some oats – our good fortune that we can eat.
- Glitter can be energy or excitement or party or celebration or feeling special.
- Small bits can be taken from a feather to be the feeling of wanting to fly to other places, dreams, feeling floaty or whatever.
- Sweet papers for sweet thoughts, loving others, being sweet natured.
- Some lavender for peace or calmness or that we smell nice.
- Rose petals for love, flowers, flowering of ourselves, of ideas.
- Gold thread for precious feelings or what we think is important 'our thread of gold' or gold hearted.
- Dry grass or very tiny leaves can be for the wildness inside us the desire to be outside, feelings of being part of nature.



You may think of many other ideas - only very small amounts will be used so don't worry a little will go a long way.

Have a go beforehand so you know how to do it and to have an example and because it's fun!

Reflect



When little people have been made these could be held by their maker whilst everyone sits quiet in a circle or just where they are in the room. Alternatively, when everyone is back in a circle, the people could be laid down in a matching circle in the middle. Anybody who wanted to could say what was in their inner self bundle but nobody has to – it's private. If people haven't been made and the Peace Pilgrim story has been told just lay out pictures of her and a range of pictures of colour, lovely places in nature and people – simply for gazing at. Close by saying thank you to everybody there.

Review

The review can happen at the time or later – it may be by yourself or else 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 themselves and how they might represent that without, necessarily, using words? What is there for you to learn from this session? What might you do differently another time?

Topical activity

You and me and CO2



Scientists have shown that the increasing temperatures and changes in climate that we are already experiencing are because of the actions of people producing more carbon dioxide and other gases that trap heat radiated from the Earth. Because these gases trap warmth like a greenhouse does, they are called greenhouse gases. These mainly come from fuels like coal and oil. We use these in so many of our activities, when we take a bus or car to school, or when we use plastic containers, which are made from other things made from oil. Almost everything we use or eat will have used some fossil fuels. In richer

countries like ours we make much more carbon dioxide than poorer countries, but poorer countries will be hardest hit by climate change. We have a big responsibility for taking action, and encouraging others to do so. As Quakers we have a lot to offer. There are more thoughts and activities on *Sheets 33.E and 33.F* - probably best done with children older than 6 or 7 but there is one activity that can be done with under 6's.

Links to other organisations and resources

<http://www.operationnoah.org/> - an ecumenical campaign on climate change.

http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Climate_Change_and_Children.pdf

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/copenhagen> - Quaker Resources on climate change.

www.quaker.org.uk/cyp and click on Ideas Store for children's work resources

This issue was written by Maggi Squire, the Topical Activity was by Wendy Edwards and the editing by Chris Nickolay

The next children's issue of *Journeys in the Spirit, Issue 34*, available from Dec. 2nd is about *Quakers in Bolivia*; *Issue 35*, available from Jan. 4th 2010 is about *Elizabeth Fry*; *Issue 36*, available from Feb. 1st 2010 is about *John Woolman*.

Ideas and resources

What could your Meeting do as all ages together?



The people making could be done by the whole meeting together. The Peace Pilgrim story could be wholly or partly told as an introduction. The Gather activity could be done as a whole meeting and could be followed by the drawing and painting of the answer each person had for, 'If I were.....'

Climate change:

<http://www.archbishopofcantorbury.org/2563> for text of speech by Archbishop of Canterbury at Southwark Cathedral 13/10/09.

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Journeys in the Spirit

Children



Sheet 33.A Getting ready Inner stories – ourselves & each other



For adults – some more thoughts about the theme:

How do we even begin to have the courage to live in understanding that we are internally resourced because we are literally interconnected to Everything in the universe?

Do we actually believe... that we have an abundance of 'wonder-full' (yes...wonder what, why, where, how, when, why... oh, I am full of wonder at these possibilities! how wonder-FULL to be full of inner skills). Are we our own direct resource of the reality of embodying the sacred internally? Do we actually believe we are directly in touch with God or the Divine...with a universal field of Knowing?

If as Quakers we believe this, it is something really important to gift this knowing and understanding to our children. Whether they will call themselves a Quaker or not let them live their life with some grounding into this insight (in-sight) let us resource children to find answers in the quietness of their own self, in their meeting of every person they encounter in their life, in the way they live their life.

It is quite a profound belief. It is hard to hold onto this idea when faced with difficulties within our own and other people's lives.

We also live in a time when there is so much conflicting information ideas and different influences from such a wide spectrum of cultures, religions, internet, education, politics and family that we all need to develop a sense of an inner compass to assist us through the vast array of influences. It is easy to forget that we are full of personal and shared skills of gentleness, vibrancy, appreciation, laughter, delight, curiosity and awe as well as a thousand different things. It's very important to give attention to the Quaker belief to 'seek to uplift' the good within each of us.

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Sheet 33.B

Engage

Peace Pilgrim – one persons story



(Photo by James B. Burton)

Some information: A grey haired woman calling herself “Peace Pilgrim” walked more than 25 thousand miles on a personal pilgrimage for peace. She vowed to “remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace, walking until given shelter and fasting until given food”. In the course of her 28 year pilgrimage she touched the hearts and minds and lives of thousands of individuals all across N. America. Her message was both simple and profound and continues to inspire people all over the world –

“This is the way of peace: overcome evil with good, and falsehood with truth, and hatred with love.”

Bringing the peace inside ourselves to other people:

Peace Pilgrim suggests that World Peace starts within ourselves. Peace Pilgrim had also been a member of the Wider Quaker Fellowship. After telling all or part of her story ask the following wondering questions:

I wonder, in what peaceful ways people in our Meeting, school, village, town or street can say and share that there is good in everybody.

I wonder, if you could peacefully change one thing in our world – school, Meeting, family, friends – what it would be.

I wonder, is there anything we can do now together to say and share that there is good in everybody.

The first pages of the book for children:

Once there was a woman who some people say was very special.

She walked across the United States six times. She carried no money or food and said, “I will fast until given food and walk until given shelter.”

She slept in many places, such as in barns, on haystacks or along the roadside unless she was offered a place to stay. Adults and children liked her because she was full of interesting stories about how people could have peace within themselves and among each other.



The whole children’s book can be downloaded from: <http://www.peacepilgrim.com/ccbook/cb1.htm>
The Peace Pilgrim web site can be found at: <http://www.peacepilgrim.com>

Text by Gary D. Guthrie - Drawings by Barbara Werner

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Sheet 33.C

Respond

Making little people - 1



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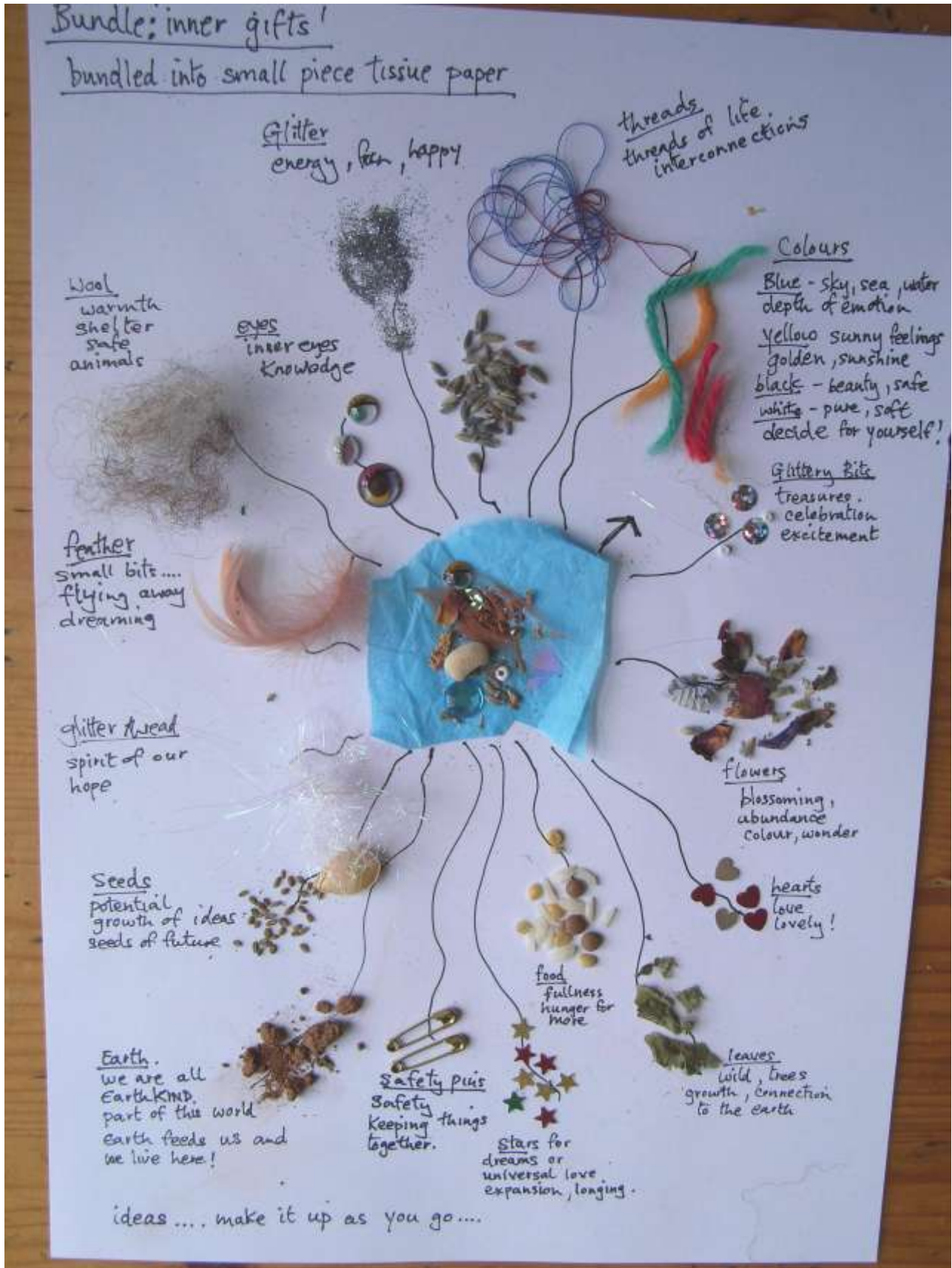
Children



Sheet 33.D

Respond

Making little people - 2



Journeys in the Spirit

Children



Sheet 33.E

Topical activity

You and me and CO2

Depending on the ages of your group say something like: "In this session we are going to think together about the ways in which everybody uses fossil fuels and how we can use less. We can think about what each of us can do as individuals, as families, and as a Meeting. Some of you may already be involved in projects like Eco – schools, or be actively involved with your family.

This session will be a chance to share ideas and support each other, because it is not always easy to change. Children can help their parents make changes – parents can help children.

Remember, we are doing this because we love and care for everybody and everything on our planet – and the planet itself. We do this because we feel good about where we live, Earth, and not because we feel bad about what is happening. "



Everybody sits quietly around a table. You could have a globe or picture of the Earth in the middle. Read from Advices and Queries 1.02.41 or 42. Then ask children to think for a few minutes about the ways in which they or their families use fossil fuels – petrol, oil. Extend their thoughts and sharing with kindly, probing questions – "that's interesting, I wonder if"

Here are some ideas for activities:

Using an energy meter to measure how much energy is consumed by common household appliances.

These can be bought for less than £20 from Electronics stores such as Maplin. Someone in Meeting may already have one they can lend. If this device is bought for the Meeting it could be loaned out to individuals afterwards to check their personal energy consumption. These devices plug into the socket of an electrical appliance and measure the amount of energy consumed in watts. Check the energy consumption of appliances already in the Meeting House, such as fridge or kettle. Bring in some extra small electrical equipment, such as a phone charger, hairdryer, curling tongs, laptop. On a large piece of paper, list appliances in order of energy consumption, from highest to lowest, to present to Meeting. *Careful adult supervision needed for younger members of the group, especially around things that get hot!*

Design and use a questionnaire which can be used in Meeting to raise awareness of energy saving.

This questionnaire could be about the Meeting House, or for individuals. This could be done as a whole group activity. Questions could be in form of simple multiple choices. E.g. How many low energy light bulbs are you currently using in your house? a) all b) some c) none. What other questions could there be? If the questionnaire is for individuals, it could be typed up and circulated amongst Meeting members the following week. If it is for the Meeting House, it could be given to the Clerk, or another appropriate person.

Write a song about saving energy, or ways in which we waste energy.

If anyone can play guitar or a musical instrument to accompany, so much the better. Use a tune that everyone knows. This could be a well-known pop song, a nursery rhyme or a traditional song such as "Three Blind Mice". Keep the ideas simple. Here is one made earlier! - to the tune of "Three Blind Mice":

*"Insulate your house. Insulate your house.
Draft proof your doors, draft proof your doors
Your house will be snug and warm this way.
Your gas bills low they will stay
And energy will be saved everyday.
Insulate your house etc"*

This could be sung to the rest of Meeting after Meeting.

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Sheet 33.F

Topical activity

You and me and CO2

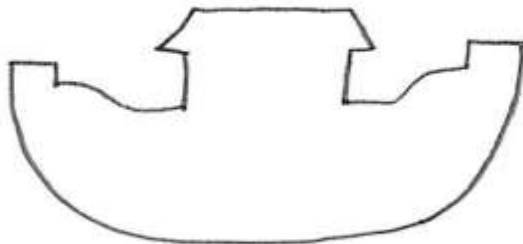


BUILD YOUR OWN CARDBOARD ARK!

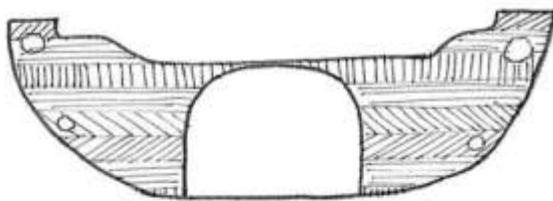
To build your own ARK, all you need is cardboard, scissors and pens.

(This activity is printed with permission of www.operationnoah.org/)

STEP 1: Draw a basic ark shape onto cardboard and cut it out.

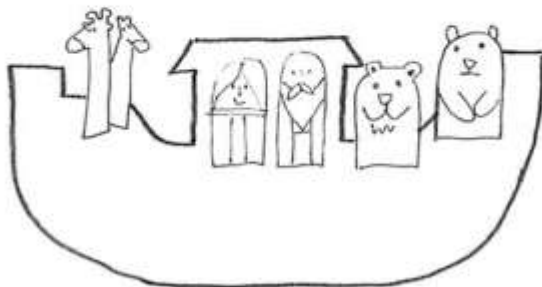


STEP 2: Using the first shape as your guide, draw around it, and cut out a second ARK shape, minus cabin section.



STEP 3: Cut out strips of corrugated card and stick onto the second shape to give an impression of

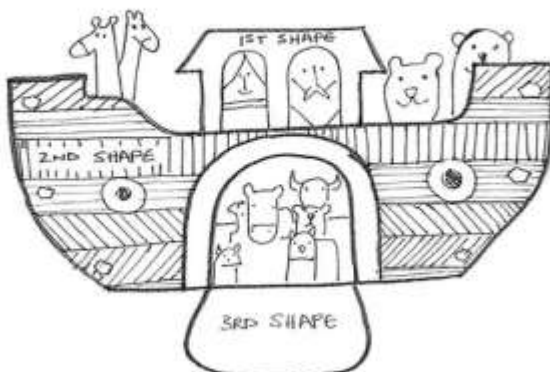
STEP 4: You can also add extra decorations. Port holes and nuts and bolts can be made out of cardboard scrap paper and stuck on to the ARK.



STEP 5: Draw and cut out animals and figures. Stick them onto the first shape along the edge.



STEP 6: Cut out shape for the ARK door and frame.



STEP 7: Stick all the parts together and add more animals into the doorway!

Other ideas and links.

You could tell a Noah's Ark story and ask some wondering questions afterwards:

I wonder which part of this story you liked the best?

I wonder which part of this story you think is most important?

I wonder if there is part of this story that is in you or you are in?

I wonder if there is part of this story that you could leave out and still have all the story that you need?

There is a Godly Play story of 'The Flood'. For information see contact details on Page 4 of this issue.

Internet resources:

www.eco-schools.org.uk/ - see Rupert the Bear ideas for younger children

<http://www.carboncontrol.org.uk> (need to register but free)
<http://www.apples4theteacher.com/coloring-pages/earth-day/save-our-planet.html>

http://abcteach.com/directory/think_green_teach_green/earth_day/

<http://www.ecofriendlykids.co.uk/fun-ways-teach-kids-about-saving-energy-home.html>