



# Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition August 2013 Issue 78



## Five feelings: talking about love

### Getting ready

The two previous issues in this series about feelings have offered ways to explore sadness and anger – big and complicated feelings. Now we come to love. Love is more than personal and yet it is what, in a way, wraps around everything that is personal. Also, love is what is at the heart of the Quaker way in the world – not sentimental love but a deep caring for that of God, of the possibility of love in each person. This issue offers a variety of ways to explore with children what love means.

There are lots of statements and ideas for children to talk about. Many of the ideas introduced here are quite sensitive. For example children may make references to feelings for parents; bear this in mind if there are likely to be children present who have no parent, in which case, help them to see that whoever is closest to them is, effectively, a parent.

Try to adapt any tricky words used in the text, and make sure every statement made in an activity is clarified for all those present.

It is possible that a child may try to embarrass the others over some of these topics; my advice, having done these discussions with children for 30 years, is to call their bluff and get them to state clearly what they are hinting at. This soon induces a more mature response.

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

This children's work edition comes out monthly. It offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with 5–12 year olds in a Quaker setting.

It provides opportunities for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of worship in partnership on our shared journey in the spirit.

### Gather

Make the children's meeting space really comfortable with a rug or rugs and cushions. Ask everybody to sit together in a circle. Invite anyone who has any news to share from the past week or time since they last met. Make sure that everyone knows everybody's name – especially if there are new children or those who seldom attend. Go on to say that in this session there is going to be talk and doing things about love, what it means and what it is.

- For all ages of children ask the question, 'When you hear the word 'love' what do you think of or feel? Listen to the responses – you might add thoughts of your own if that seems appropriate.
- For older children on *Additional Resource 78.A* there are some statements that relate to love in a variety of ways. Read them out and then give everybody copies of the statements. Say that the statements are all about love in some way. Children should sit in pairs or threes with one another or if there are just a few this can be done in the whole group. Ask a question like: which of these statements do they like; which one does not feel so good. Ask them to choose one they like and, say to their partner or group the reasons for their choices.

### Underpinning references

**QF&P10.01:** Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.

*Isaac Penington 1667*

# Engage

## Who do I love? Who loves me? What do I love?

These are questions for children of any age. A conversation around these questions may be quite short or take longer. Write the questions up on big pieces of paper.

Ask and extend the questions to evoke a range of answers – for example: does the world love you? What do you love in the world? For older children you might add an additional question like ‘what is love?’

Conclude this part of the session by saying something about how it seems to you that the word ‘love’ means all sorts of different things. Below is a possible list - many of them will have been talked about already but if they haven’t come up mention them now – if it feels right ask for thoughts about them. Adjust language according to the ages of children.

pleasure *being in a family* attraction towards another person  
friendship understanding and forgiving *being ready to make sacrifices for someone* longing to be with someone *feeling that someone is there to support you or to be supported* feeling that there is ‘something which we do not understand’ which is supporting all of us *the feeling that sometimes you just have to look after or protect something or someone ( like a tiny insect)* being in Quaker meeting and feeling very peaceful inside

On *Additional Resource 78.B* there are two other ways of talking about love with older children – there is a set of statements for discussion and a way to have a discussion about possible differences between humans and animals in relation to love.

### Quaker stories exploring aspects of love.

There are many stories about Quakers of all ages that can be used to talk about love. Questions that might be asked include – what kind of love does this story tell us about; what or who is being loved in this story? Is there anything or anyone in this story that is being loved less than it or they should be?

Some interesting and different stories can be found online in the *Journeys in the Spirit children’s* work edition archive. See sidebar for the web address. Have a look at the stories about the lives of:

- John Woolman *Issues 36 and 37*– he loved people, he loved all creatures and could not bear to see suffering.
- Priscilla Wakefield, Kathleen Lonsdale and Jocelyn Burnell – three Quaker scientists who loved what they looked at and loved finding out and sharing about their discoveries and observations.
- Benjamin West *Issue 27*– he loved painting but his parents tried to stop him.
- Luke Howard *Issue 40* – he loved to look at the clouds when he was a child and grew up to give them names.
- Luke Cock *Issue 38* – loved to hear what God needed him to do.



## References & other resources

### 1 Corinthians

**13:13:** Right now three things remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

### John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

*Journeys in the Spirit children’s work edition archive:*

[www.quaker.org.uk/journeys/archive-children](http://www.quaker.org.uk/journeys/archive-children)

*Additional Resource 78.B* can be found at:  
[www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children](http://www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children)

## References & other resources

Meeting for Worship is a place where love, kindness can grow between and inside people.



### Kathleen Raine – poet:

“...Because I love  
There is an invisible way  
across the sky,  
Birds travel by  
that way, the sun  
and moon  
And all the stars  
travel that path by  
night.”



*Additional Resource 78.C and 78.D can be found at:*

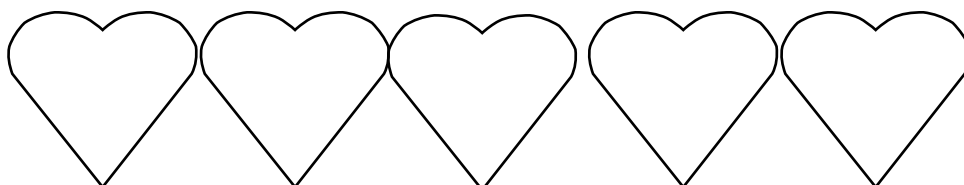
[www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children](http://www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children)

## Respond

### Who do I love? Who loves me? What do I love?

My book about love.

On *Additional Resource 78.C* there is a simple template for pages of a book. When printed and cut out, don't separate the two hearts, these can be made into booklets with as many pages as you would like to give children. Children can decorate the 'cover' of the book using with a title 'My book about love'. The inside pages can be used for pictures and writing about the things that they have said about whom and what loves them, whom and what they love. These can be private or shared depending on what each child wants to do.



Making friendship or love bracelets.

You will need a selection of embroidery threads and some scissors. Some children may be familiar with these already. See *Additional Resource 78.D*. This is a slightly different way of thinking about what is made. Remind children to think about what they have said about whom and what loves them, whom and what they love. Ask children to think of a colour for one of each of these and to choose an appropriate thread. Then everybody makes their bracelet is a reminder of who and what loves them and who and what they love. A nice thing to wear.



If love was a colour.

Ask children to think about what they have said about whom and what loves them, whom and what they love. Then ask what colours each of these things makes them think of. Set out pieces of *white A4 card, colouring pencils, oil pastels and wax crayons*. Ask children to make pictures and patterns of the colours they have thought of for the different things that are loved or love them. They may need more than one sheet of card for different colours.





## Reflect

Introduce the following ideas and allow a brief period of discussion, then close with a period of quiet reflection.

For some people the idea of God as some sort of loving 'person', with whom they can 'talk' is a great help in shaping their own behaviour, but, as we learn more and more about the world and ourselves, many struggle with this idea, because the whole idea of God is so mysterious. For many, learning about the life of Jesus, Krishna or the Buddha, for example, gives a way of thinking about the sort of person God might be if God was a person. but, for many people, God is about the whole of life, even about the whole of the universe, and many see 'God' as the energy, force, spirit, causing life and even the whole of the universe to develop in a 'good' way; for the best.

If we see God in this way then we can think of God as our very 'being', so, for example, to say, as lots of people do, that 'God is love' is a way of saying that our lives must be lives of love, and compassion, trying to imagine being the other person, sharing their joys and sorrows.

Ask children if they have any thoughts or feelings about what they have done and talked about in the session.

## Review

As soon as you can after the session:

- Think about how it all went.
- Make a note of the strengths and the weaknesses of what was offered and done. In particular make a note of statements used which did not resonate with the participants and try to make up your own substitutes, having sorted out the ideas that are being tried out.
- Were all the children able to contribute – were there any particular difficulties.

**This issue was written by Terry Wood and edited by Chris Nickolay and Howard Nurden. Chris Nickolay wrote the Topical activity.**

**Issue 79** will be about the feeling of fear and how to talk about and deal with it. Available from 2 September 2013.

**Issue 80** will offer ways to think about happiness. Available from 1 October 2013.

**Issue 81** will offer ways to think and talk about jealousy. Available from 1 November 2013.

### Materials available online are:

Current issue *Additional Resources*

An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting

A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship

A topical activity about a fun and interesting way, a 'God bag', to explore big and complicated ideas.

Also a 'How to use *Journeys in the Spirit*' guide; a link to special issues; an archive of previous issues; a discussion forum and a link to the *Journeys in the Spirit* Youth edition.

Go to:

[www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren](http://www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren) and choose from the range of links in the sidebar.

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# Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 78.A

Gather

Talking about love



Statements for working with older children.

1. I really love chocolate
2. I love my boy/girl friend but his/her hairstyle is so embarrassing
3. I really like my goldfish, but I love my dog
4. Sally is a really good friend; I love her to bits
5. Love is never having to say you are sorry
6. I can really understand why she is so upset; my brother was very ill last year
7. Love is a language spoken by everyone, but understood only in the heart
8. In true love there is no mountain too high, no river too wide. Most of all, in true love there is no end to the feeling.
9. I would do anything to make my granny well again
10. You do not love someone because they are perfect; you love them in spite of the fact that they are not.
11. I adore the feeling of cool water flowing over my toes on a hot day
12. She is a really good friend. I can tell her all my troubles.
13. Everyone says love hurts, but it is not true. Loneliness hurts. Rejection hurts. Love is what covers the pain and makes us feel good again
14. I love the Earth and everything on it



# Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 78.B



Engage

More ways to talk about love  
with older children

**Use these 5 statements as a way to talk about what love might mean.**

Ask children which of the 3 statements in each group is more about love than the others?

1. I love going to John's house: **a.** we always have a laugh **b.** he obviously likes to see me **c.** he always has lots of sweets
2. Jane is good for a laugh: **a.** she tells really funny stories **b.** she wears awful clothes **c.** she is just good fun
3. I love auntie Bessy: **a.** she always gives me great presents **b.** she is so kind to everyone **c.** we can all tell her all our troubles
4. Quaker children's meeting is great: **a.** the adults are really funny **b.** you get really good biscuits **c.** we all help one another
5. I think we should all support one another: **a.** you never know when you will need help yourself **b.** it always impresses the grown-ups **c.** I know there are some of my friends having a bad time at present.



**Supposing a gorilla took your baby.**

Is there a difference between animal and human love? Read this through to your group and then ask what children think about it.

Very often we hear people link love to God; 'God IS love'. What we understand by that is 'be loving towards other people; don't cheat on them, be unkind to them but be compassionate, trying to imagine what life is like for them at that time, and try to help

if their life is not good'. To be like that is divine; the behaviour we see as like that of God.

If we also see God as the God of all life: as the very ground of all our being, the very life of living things, this does not always easily link up with the idea of a God of love, as we understand it.

Human families are small; every child is precious and is loved and supported in a normal family. Female Cod lay nine million eggs at a time then swim away. Most of the eggs, or the baby fish, if they manage to hatch, get eaten or just die. Because there are so many, only two or three need to survive to breed themselves for the population of Cod to continue as big as it is. If all the eggs survived, the world would soon be covered in a thick layer of Cod! Cod fish do not love in any way we recognise; the male and the female do not even stay together at all.

Think about the Cuckoo. This is quite a big bird, which lays its eggs in the nest of a different bird; often a Reed Warbler, a much smaller bird. When the cuckoo egg hatches, the chick quickly pushes the Reed Warbler eggs or chicks out of the nest, where they fall to the ground and die of cold or starvation. Meantime, the Reed Warbler parents bring food and give it all to the Cuckoo chick, ignoring their own chicks as these die just below. Why? Imagine a mum going to the supermarket and leaving her child in a buggy in the shopping aisle. Along comes a Gorilla, throws the child out, and puts a baby Gorilla in its place. What would mum do? Certainly not take the Gorilla home and look after it, leaving her child on the supermarket floor!

All birds lay more eggs than can possibly survive to be grown- up birds, so it is best for that family if they feed and look after the largest, fittest chicks; no sentimental looking after the littlest one! The cuckoo parasitizes this behaviour; its chick is always the largest, most active in the nest. Since birds behave largely by instinct; behaviour they inherit rather than learn, they cannot adapt to the presence of this weird different bird, and just feed it as if it was a really big baby of their own.

Reed Warblers work very hard to rear their young and many are so exhausted at the end of the summer that they die the next winter, so, do they love their young? Not in the sense that we understand it; they cannot. Their behaviour is quite different, to fit them for a different life from ours, much shorter, and with more risks and less chance to learn. They need to inherit most of their behaviour. We have the time and the protection, given by the grown- ups around, to learn our behaviour; learn to be flexible, and recognise a gorilla from a child!



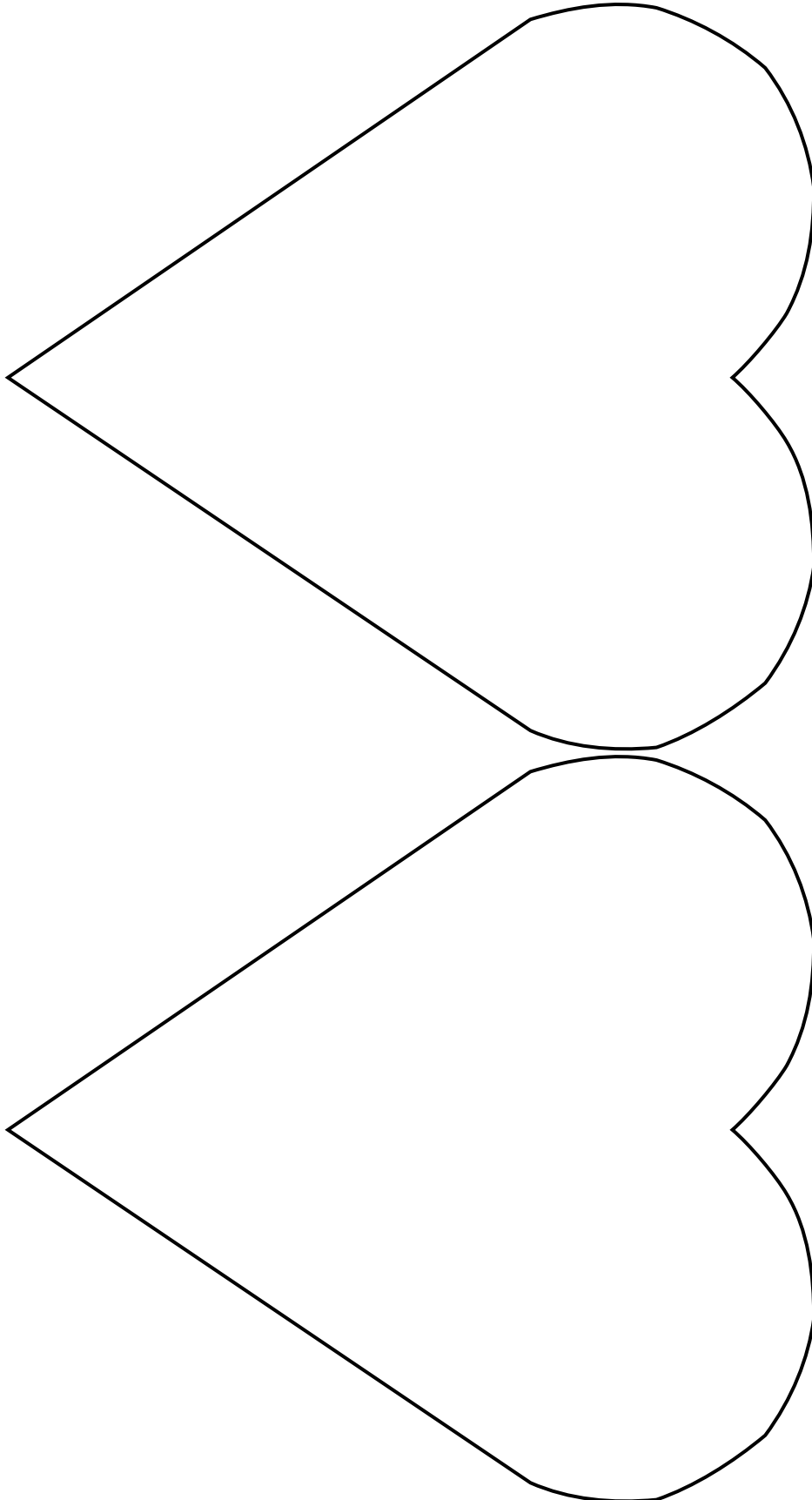
# Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 78.C

Respond

My book about love







# Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 78.D



Respond

Make your own friendship or  
love bracelet

Adapted from instructions by Kusum Chamoli, from Pitara Kids Network at [www.pitara.com](http://www.pitara.com)

You need a pair of scissors and colourful cotton or satin embroidery threads, which are commonly available in all haberdasheries or craft shops.

1. Take three colours of thread and cut three lengths of each about 18-20cm long, giving you nine threads in all.
2. Take all nine threads and tie a knot in one end, leaving 2cm open.
3. At the other end, separate the strands into their colours so you have three thick strands. Plait these three thick strands like girls plait their hair, until you nearly reach the end.
4. Now knot the other end, leaving 2cm open again. Your friendship band is ready.

The children can put their friendship bands in the middle and each take turns to pick one and put it on.

