



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition December 2014 Issue 94



Exploring the Quaker business method

Getting ready

You are ready, anyway! All you need is:



Friends tall and small, young and old and start a shared journey. The Quaker business method is a way of working together using ways which we don't commonly link with business, being busy or going about our jobs.

The business method can do several things – it can slow us down, invite us to think deeply, and encourage us to look at the whole picture. It can help us see our lives and work as service to each other, as an act of worship. It can also be fun, creative and inspiring.

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

Let us get on with our business...

Introducing children to the Quaker Business Method can happen during children's meeting or, in a children's committee meeting that includes children. Do what you can to get a good group gathered with a range of all ages. This method is very much about setting out together, learning with each other and doing so with an attitude of genuine interest in each other's thoughts, problems, ideas, suggestions and development.

At the start create an atmosphere in your children's meeting of welcoming silence, a period during which everyone is asked to become still and to see who is there, who is missing and to settle down. This can be followed by a round of saying, "who we are" and saying, "whom we miss today" and "what is our news?" This is an exercise in being mindful – helping children to focus their minds and keep others in their minds to help with engaging with each other and an issue.

Underpinning references

"As Friends we commit ourselves to a way of worship, which allows God to teach and transform us."

"Are your meetings for church affairs held in a spirit of worship...?"

Quaker faith & practice
1. 01 and 1.02.14

Apostles meeting - the Bible, New Testament:
Acts 15.1-29

Engage

Resources for this session: a large blanket, a camera or a phone; a laptop, printer and cable; photo quality printer paper; copies of the pictures on Additional Resource 94.A; paper; felt pens; pencils; wax crayons; oil pastels.

Say to the children that today you are all going to be doing and finding out about something called the Quaker business method – a special way that we as Quakers have of deciding what to do and how to do things. It is a special way of sorting out problems that Quakers started when they began. This also connects to the way the first Christians met and sorted out problems. Show the picture of early Christians meeting and then the pictures of children and young people meeting today - see *Additional Resource 94.A*.

An activity to explore deciding things together

Explain that they are all going to be part of having photographs taken – photos of hands, feet and heads as examples of what we need to be able to do things together and help each other. As you begin doing the activity say that it is going to be a way of thinking about the Quaker business method. Now, as a group, arrange the large blanket on the ground; decide who is going to take pictures; think about where the photographer is going to stand; check who wants to be involved, how to include everybody.



Once everything is ready, take the pictures as suggested below. As everybody gets ready for each picture say the words after each heading:

Hands – ‘we do and make things together’ – *take a photo of everybody’s hands as suggested in the first picture.*

Feet – ‘when we are doing something together we are on a journey together’ – *take a photo of everybody’s feet as suggested in the second picture.*

Heads – ‘we help each other with our thoughts by sharing them - we also listen inside for the ‘small, gentle voice of God’ – *take a photo of everybody’s head and face as suggested in the third picture. Photos can be printed by the person not leading the following discussion.*

In the sidebar on this page there are questions to help a discussion after the photos or you could move to the next activity below. They can then be shown to the children. Talk about how they might be displayed and explained.

How do you sort out problems?

Ask the children if they’ve ever had to make a difficult decision or had a problem to sort out? Wait for any answers, if there aren’t any responses you could prompt by giving suggestions of choices or decisions that they might have had to make: Which school to go to? What to ask for their birthday? How to spend their pocket money or money they’ve been given? How to help a friend in trouble? How to help someone who is being bullied? How to stop an animal being hurt?

Ask children how they decide. Do they do it by themselves or do they sometimes need help? Again, wait for any answers. Use the following questions to help children think and talk how they decide:

What did it feel like when you had to make a difficult decision? What did you do? Did you have to think about it really hard? Who helped you to make the decision? How did they help you? Have you ever prayed or asked God for help with a decision or choice that you have to make?

Talk about these questions in small groups or ask individuals to respond to them by writing, drawing or doodling on paper, then telling or showing to everybody.

References & other resources

Additional Resource 94.A can be found at:

www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

Advices & Queries 1:14

Quaker faith & practice

3.02 to 3.06, 3.29 & 3.30, 23.73.

The Bible New Testament:

Romans: chapter 12, verses 1 & 2.

Some questions to use:

How do our hands hold and support each other?

How is doing something together like a journey?

When we are walking what do we do if someone goes faster or slower?

How do our ideas help each other and other people?

Make links between responses to the questions to what helps Quakers decide – listening to each other, to the gentle voice of God, sharing, noticing how others feel.

References & other resources



The wooden Godly Play ('people of God') figures are available from:

www.stmichaelsworkshop.co.uk/styled/rapidviewer/index.html

www.quaker.org.uk/journeys-youth-6-0 and click on *Sheets final* and read or print out 'Explaining the Quaker Business Method'

Respond

What are we good at?

Resources – a basket or bowl; a small coloured cloth or scarf to line the basket; a selection of small wooden figures (maybe from a Godly Play set – see sidebar for details) – figures could also be plastic or cut out from card.

This is good for using with young children but will suit all ages. Say something like, 'When Quakers have a problem to solve or something to decide, it helps if the people with the problem know about what they and other people helping are good at doing. To get ready for making some decisions here is a way of talking about what we are good at.'

Now, lay down the basket of figures and ask everyone to take one and for a few moments to think about something that they are really good at. In turns all place their figure back in the basket or bowl in the middle, sharing their talent. Say that as Quakers we think that what we do or decide about together are helped to grow by what we are good at.

Looking after each other when we need to decide something together

Resources – a large strong blanket.

Another good way to prepare for and think about a children's meeting for business is with a co-operative lifting game. Lay a strong blanket on the floor and ask for a child to volunteer to lie down on it – preferably somebody small to begin with. Everybody else then holds on tight all the way round the edge and lifts the person and gently swing them back and forth. Of course try to do this do this with a bigger or the biggest person too! Its fun to see if together it can be managed.

Talk about what might happen to the person if someone lets go. This leads us to see that we all matter and to make something work we are all needed.

Using the business method (See sidebar for a link to a resource to help describe the Quaker business method).

Work with children to prepare a short agenda for a children's meeting for business – do this on the morning of the meeting or the session before. The length and topics will depend on your group. Things that could be talked about with children for going on an agenda might be:

- Finding out if there is a cause and charity the children want to hold an appeal for.
- Is there something they would like to change – in Meeting, in the world, in school? Would they like to ask Meeting for help?
- Activities they would like to do.

Talk about who might Clerk the business meeting and how that is done – an adult could do it for the first time or at least to share it with a child. Talk about waiting and listening. Say that in the quiet and stillness we are waiting to maybe hear 'a very quiet voice inside us – some people talk about the voice of God, others talk about what Love is telling us to do'.

Include minute writing. If a child can do this, maybe with assistance, it is better for learning and participation but an adult might do it the first time. This depends on ages and confidence in your children's meeting. The adult could use phrases like - "If I note what we have discussed like this....do you all think this says what we meant?" Agree a short sentence for each issue. Begin with a little worship – put *Quaker Faith and Practice* in the middle of your group. The Clerk should say the first thing to talk about. Remember that a meeting for business with children may last a short while or it may last a lot longer. Decide who might tell adult meeting for business about any decisions or minutes.

Reflect

Come back together into a circle. Everybody settles, hands, feet and heads become quiet and still.

Lay down the photos of the hands, feet and head activity in the middle of your circle. Ask if anybody has anything that they want to say to the group or to tell or ask the other meeting for worship.



After a brief pause talk about making a display. The photos can be used to create a display showing children's meeting at work with hands, feet and heads. Talk in this Reflect time about what words to put along side photographs and who is going to write them. Talk about where this can be displayed in the meetinghouse to show all Friends how they have been doing business together the Quaker way.

Review

What worked for the children this time?

Is there anything that you might do differently another time?

What were you pleased with?

What have you learned about how children can participate in Quaker processes?

Is there anything that you need to share with parents and with the rest of Meeting about the possible engagement of children in the business life of the Meeting?

This issue was developed and written by Beate Dehnen and edited by Chris Nickolay and Howard Nurden. Chris Nickolay also wrote the Topical Activity.

Issue 95 is the sixth in the series about *Living as a Quaker*. It has the title *Advice and Query 1:19*. Available from 5 January 2015.

After the January issue the main *Journeys in the Spirit* moves to being published every other month – in the intervening months there will be an expanded *Journeys in the Spirit Topical Activity* resource.

Issue 96 is the seventh in the series about *Living as a Quaker* and has the title *Quakers and the Bible*. Available from 2 March 2015.

Issue 97 is the eighth in the series about *Living as a Quaker* and is about the Nobel Peace Prize and the Friends Ambulance Unit. Available from 1 May 2015

Materials available online are:

Current issue *Additional Resource* sheets

An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting

A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship

A topical activity – this time about darker nights and zebra crossing lights.

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 and choose from the range of links in the sidebar.

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Journeys in the Spirit



Children's work

Additional resources 94.A

Engage

Pictures of early Christians
Meeting and children and young people
In business meetings

