



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition Issue 53 July 2011



The life and teachings of George Fox

Getting ready

This edition of *Journeys in the Spirit* looks at the life and teachings of George Fox. Much of the story of George Fox is very familiar to many of us, and there is a great deal of information that could be included. However, this issue tries to encapsulate the story of George's life, the essence of what he believed, and how his beliefs became the foundation of Quakerism.

It is easy to tell the story of George Fox's life, less easy to get inside him and understand his life and work in a very different time to ours. Although, of course, it is important to see some of the similarities in the world today.

This is an opportunity to explore the beginnings of Quakerism with children in an imaginative way that will inspire them to learn through experiential activities.

George Fox from a very young age felt different. He was very determined to travel around and tell others of his feelings and beliefs. There may be children who feel they have different views or ideas from their peers.

George wrote lots of letters to try and change people's thinking. There is an opportunity here to think about how writing letters can change things.

George Fox wrote a journal – an important record of his teachings and personal feelings about himself and life at that time. In our busy lives today children may benefit from writing down their feelings in a journal.

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

Prepare the room, setting out the chairs and having ready any resources you need for the chosen activities.

Have some flowers in the room and a copy of *Quaker faith & practice* on a table. Place the chairs in a circle. Begin by asking children and adults to say their names especially if there are people in the group who do not know each other.

Start with a quiet exercise. Place a variety of picture postcards in the centre of the circle (at least as many as there are children and adults in the room but a few more is a good idea). Ask everyone to look at the cards in silence and then to choose one they like. When everyone has done this, go round, and encourage people to say why he or she has chosen their card.

Underpinning references

"Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone."

George Fox 1656
Advice & queries 42

Engage

Read the story of George Fox.

See *Additional Resource 53.A* – there are 8 pictures to use. The story is illustrated with relevant panels for the Quaker Tapestry. In each panel there is quite a lot to look at and talk about. This in itself might take up the whole time. The Respond activities require the story to be read first so you may need to spread this over more than one week or session.

Interview with George Fox

As preparation for the Respond activity, 'Interview with George Fox', open a conversation about what it is like to be asked questions or interviewed by someone who might be bigger or more powerful than they are or who might just seem scary. This could be a teacher or headteacher in school, a policeman or it might be someone in Meeting. You can start a conversation by saying, 'I wonder what it is like to be asked questions by someone who is

You could also ask if anybody has seen an interview on the television or heard one on the radio? What was it like?

Ask for any thoughts or feelings about what it might be or has been like to be questioned or interviewed?

Writing letters

Remind children of the story of George Fox. Ask them what they remember from this and share it with any children who were not at that children's meeting

Focus on panel F1 when George Fox was in prison and writing letters. George felt he could change things by writing to people in Parliament or even to the king. See *Additional Resource 53.A*.

Is it still possible today to do the same? What issues are important to us today that writing to our M.P. might help to change things?

Journals

Remind children of the story of George Fox. Ask them what they remember from this and share it with any children who were not at that children's meeting.

George wrote his journal or diary very regularly. He wrote of things that were happening to him, what was going on at the time and his feelings. He wrote about what he said to the people who gathered to listen to him.

Ask if any of the children have a diary and what things do they put in theirs (they only do this if they feel they want to). If they do not keep a diary or journal, talk about what they might put in a diary today.



All age worship

The all age worship plan for this issue that is online (see sidebar) is based on the advice and query "be patterns be examples...". It helps children (and adults) to become familiar with the advices and queries and what they mean.

References & other resources

Amnesty International and Oxfam websites have information about letter writing, who to write to and what to say:

www.oxfam.org.uk
www.amnesty.org.uk

Quaker faith & practice - 19.06
from the diary of George Fox 1652

'As we went I spied a great hill called Pendle Hill, and I went on the top of it with much ado, it was so steep; But I was moved of the Lord to go atop of it; and when I came atop of it I saw Lancashire sea; and there atop of the hill I was moved to sound the day of the Lord; and the Lord let me see atop of the hill in what places he had a great people to be gathered.'

Quaker faith & Practice 19.04 -
useful quote from George's Fox 1648

Additional Resource 53.A and Simple plan for all age worship can be found at:

www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

References & other resources

*George Fox
Journal 1647*

“I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. And in that also I saw the infinite love of God; and I had great openings.”

Quaker faith & practice – 19.03

‘Friend – The story of George Fox and the Quakers.’

Jane Yolen

www.fgcquaker.org

ISBN 978-1-

888305-41-8

Quaker Bookshop:

www.quaker.org.uk

[/shop](http://www.quaker.org.uk/shop)

Tel: 0207 663 1030

Additional Resources 53.B and 53.C can be found at:

www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

Additional Resources 43.D and 43.E can be found at

www.quaker.org.uk/childrens-work-edition-series-4

and click on *Issue 43 sheets*

Respond

These activities all follow on from the Engage activities on page 2 which should be undertaken first.

The story of George Fox

The children might spend quite a bit of time asking questions and talking about the tapestry panels.

Children can make their own tapestry by using scraps of felt to make a picture - older children might like to cut out and sew pieces of material or stitch wool onto a large piece of material to make a picture. See *Additional Resource 53.C* for an example of a picture made by children.

Interview with George Fox

Remind children of the story of George Fox. Ask them what they remember from hearing the story of George Fox and, if necessary, share this with any children who were not present for the story.

Explain that they are going to do an interview with George Fox. See *Additional Resource 53.C*. There are parts for two main characters and everyone else can be the audience for the interview – some Quaker, some not. There will need to be a practice because the scene could be filmed and, or performed, for the adults later on.

Encourage the children to read through the interview to become familiar with the words. Different children can do this as hearing the words helps them to become familiar with the script. A few props will help (see picture on the interview sheet). E.g. the children in Edinburgh insisted on having a “microphone” and used a paintbrush for this purpose!

Have a rehearsal and then perform to be filmed or to be acted for others in meeting. Involve others in the meeting who know about filming and have the technology.

Writing letters

Having talked about George Fox and his letter writing, focus on what might move the children to write letters and to whom they might write. You can either encourage the children to concentrate on one issue or encourage the children to write a letter on whatever or to whomever they choose. Younger children can also do this and can dictate their letters and then illustrate them with their own drawings.

It is important to take this session seriously and ensure the letters get to the person they are intended for.

Children might want to write to their M.P. about recycling, the treatment of asylum seekers, peace issues. Never underestimate how well informed children are. Younger children might want to write about the playground in the park – some new equipment or clearing up the rubbish.

Journals

Children can have fun making a journal or diary and decorating it. It can be very simple – some coloured paper fixed together with wool or staples. You can start by asking the children to write or draw in their journal something about George Fox and then about what they did yesterday or a recent event or feeling they want to record. Encourage them to take the journal home and continue using it. Remember it might be important to find time another week to ask the children how they are getting on. See *Journeys in the Spirit Children’s Work Edition Issue 43 Additional Resources 43.D and 43.E* for details of how to make and use journals. See sidebar for details.

Reflect

At the end of the session have some time for the children to ask any questions. There may be issues that have arisen as a result of the subject and children may need some clarification if there are things they have not understood.

There may be specific things that come out of keeping a journal or letter writing. Encourage children to take time to reflect on these activities as well as any others.

Ask the children if they would like to share with the adults what you have been doing in the Children's Meeting. Decide what everyone wants to share with the rest of meeting and how best to do this.

Perhaps finish with a few moments of quiet.



Review

The review can happen at the time or later but volunteers may well feel they need to speak to someone immediately after the session, especially if there have been issues around keeping a journal or letter writing.

It may be a good idea to let parents know the theme of this Children's Meeting in case there are questions they want to come back to ask the volunteer. These may be questions that have come out of discussions with their children after the session.

If you decide to do the activity about journals it might be important to let parents or guardians know so that they can follow up at home. Sometimes children can use the journal to record private or sensitive issues. Parents might want to gently enquire about the journal. But don't alarm parents!

For yourself reflect on how you feel the session went. Did the children participate well and did they learn something about George Fox and Quakers? Are there things you might have done differently? It is worth discussing these things with other volunteers and Children's Committee.

This issue was written by Madeleine Harding and edited by Chris Nickolay and Howard Nurden. The Topical activity was written by Chris Nickolay.

The next children's issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* is **Issue 54** and is about Quaker Benjamin Lay, an eccentric campaigner against slavery, and will be available on August 1st. **Issue 55** is about Waldo Williams a Welsh Quaker, poet and pacifist and will be available on September 1st. **Issue 56** is about Lucretia Mott an American Quaker, 1793-1880, committed to living her faith in action and will be available on October 3rd. These are all part of Series 6, 'More Quaker stories'.

Materials available online are:

Current issue additional resources sheets

An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting

A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship

A topical activity about making your own newspaper

There is 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



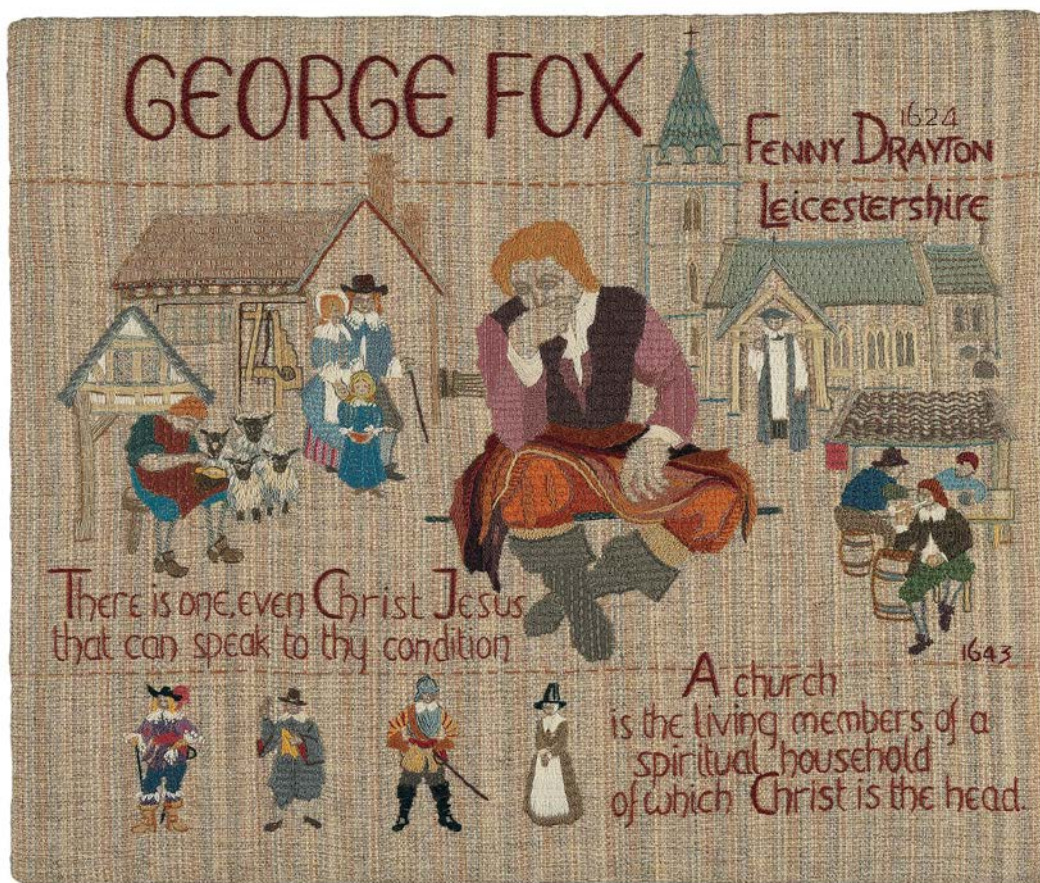
Children's work

Additional Resource 53.A

Engage

The story of George Fox using
Quaker tapestry panels

Panel A1



Quaker Tapestry Scheme ©

George Fox was born in 1624 and died in 1691. He grew up in Fenny Drayton, Leicestershire. He worked for a shoemaker and looked after sheep.

George Fox developed very strong views on religion. He felt people in the Church of England did not live up to their Christian standards.

George left home at the age of nineteen on a spiritual journey. He believed each person has a personal relationship with God and therefore there is no need for ministers or priests. He travelled all over the country and met many people who felt the same as he did. He would speak to these people and tell them what he believed. However people in the churches and parliament did not like what George said and put him in prison many times.

Once George wrote in his diary: "...when all my hopes in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, oh then, I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even in Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition', and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy." This means that George discovered that many people did not understand the way he thought about things but a voice inside him said that Jesus would understand him and that was all that mattered. George was very young when he left home and perhaps quite anxious about what lay ahead. But he was so sure this was the right path that he did not hesitate to go out into the world.

Panel B1



Quaker Tapestry Scheme ©

George Fox travelled to many places and came one day to Firbank Fell in Yorkshire. He talked to people outside the church and then the following Sunday he talked to lots of people, as many as a thousand, from the top of the hill. People thought it strange that he talked to people on a hill and not in the church.

George told the people that the stories in the Bible were as true for everyone today as when they were written. He said the spirit of God was in their hearts and to listen to the voice within that would guide them in the right way to live. Many people wanted to follow George Fox's way and these were the first Quakers.

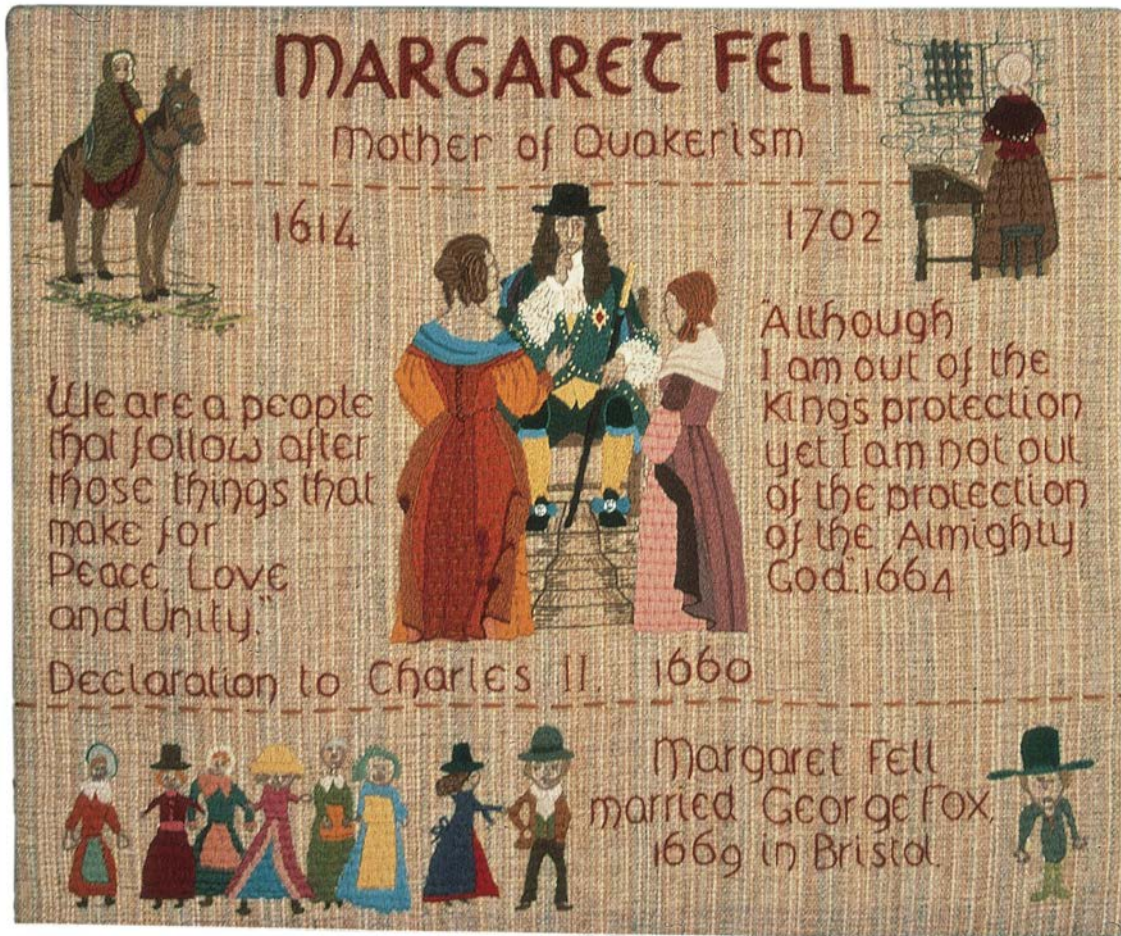
Panel C1



Quaker Tapestry Scheme ©

In the summer of 1652 George Fox and his two friends arrived at Swarthmoor Hall in Ulverston. This was the home of Margaret and Thomas Fell. They were wealthy people and sympathetic to George Fox's beliefs. Thomas and Margaret allowed Friends to meet in their house to worship. The Hall became a centre for Quakers and they travelled far and wide with the Quaker message.

Panel C2



Quaker Tapestry Scheme ©

Margaret Fell was a great friend and helped George a lot. She visited London 10 times, a journey of 500 miles, and helped to get George out of prison in 1660.

Margaret's seven daughters all married Quakers but her son George was never sympathetic and tried to take Swarthmoor Hall from his mother. He was also involved in the events that led to her being in prison. However she was released four years later.

Eleven years after her husband died she married George Fox. George, her son (pictured on the bottom right) did not come to the wedding. He was grumpy and did not show he was happy like the daughters and their husbands.

Panel C3



Quaker Tapestry Scheme ©

As George Fox talked to more and more people Quakers began to gather together for silent worship. Powerful politicians didn't like this happening and made a law that said that no more than five Quakers could gather together to worship and if they did they would be punished. Many were imprisoned. On one occasion the King's surveyor, Christopher Wren, was told to pull down a Quaker meeting house at Horsleydown, but people still met amongst the rubble to worship. In Reading and Bristol the children kept the meeting going when the adults were in prison.

Panel D1



Quaker Tapestry Scheme ©

In 1650 George Fox arrived in a place called Lichfield. He had recently been freed from prison where he had been for a year. He was feeling very weak and run down, and upset by the horrors he had seen in the prison. People were put to death for crimes like stealing.

While he was in prison he read the Bible a lot. He also knew that in the past people who were Christians were burnt at the stake in Lichfield. He sensed these terrible things and cried out "Woe unto the bloody city of Lichfield"

The other part of this picture is of Pendle Hill. George Fox came here in 1652 where lots of people had gathered to hear George speak. George had a vision of this before it happened and talked of "a great people to be gathered".

He talked of the light within us all, which is that of God within everyone. He said "... the infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness"

Panel E1

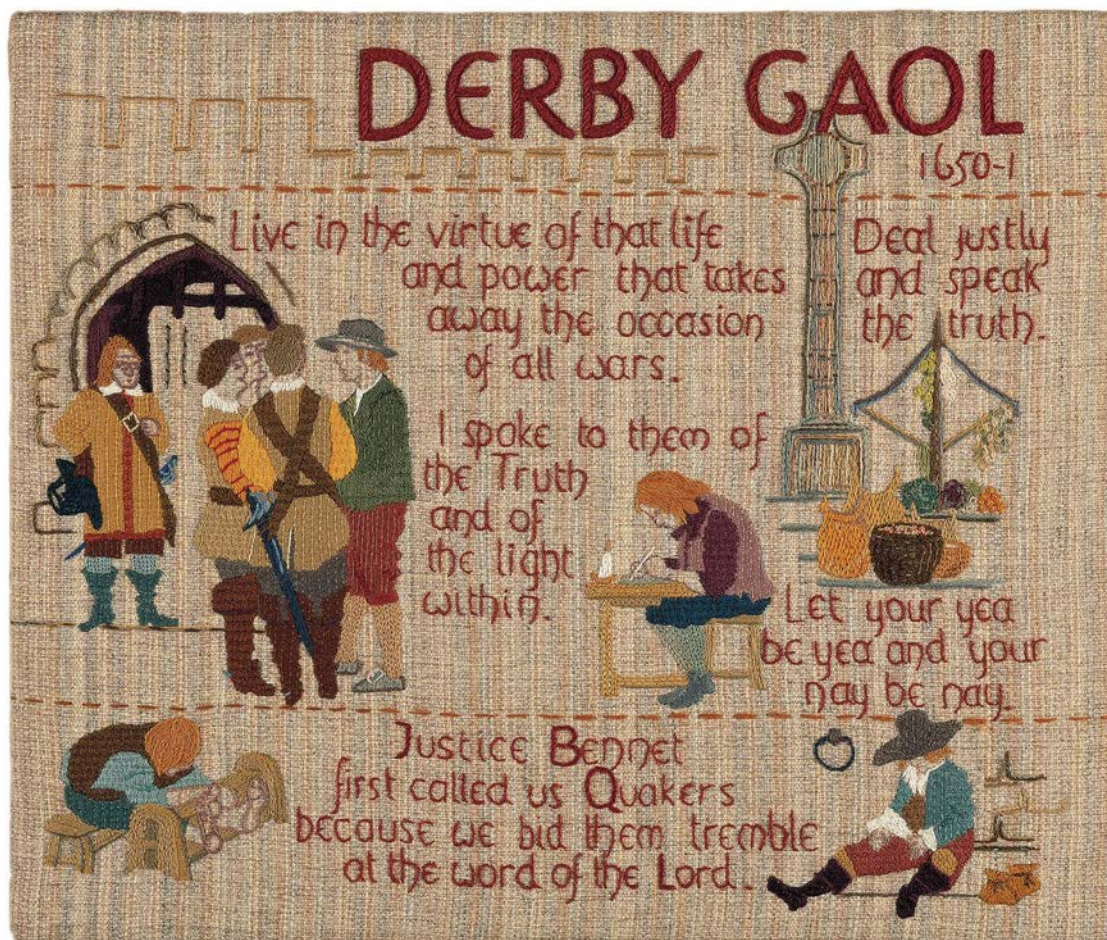


Quaker Tapestry Scheme ©

George Fox was a large man with a very strong personality. He had very piercing eyes that some people found rather frightening when he looked at them. Sometimes he could tell what would happen in the future. There are also stories of George making people better – a bit like Jesus.

Once when George Fox was visiting Ulverston people set on him and beat him unconscious and hurt his hand so badly that he could not use it. When he came to he looked at his hand and said “I looked at it (his hand) in the love of God, for I was in the love of God to them all that had persecuted me, and after a while the Lord’s power sprang through me again, and through my hand and arm...” George believed that the love of God within him had made his hand better and knowing this helped him forgive the people who hurt him and to try to love and understand them.

Panel F1



Quaker Tapestry Scheme ©

Derby Gaol was where George was imprisoned for nearly a year for speaking about “the day of the Lord and the light within them”. He was charged with blasphemy which means that he spoke out against the Church. When he refused to go into the army because he was against all wars and fighting and the result of war he was thrown into a horrid dirty dungeon with no bed.

George wrote lots of letters and kept a detailed diary in prison. This kept him very busy. On another occasion George was arrested at Swarthmoor and put in prison in Lancaster. While he was here he wrote a letter to the new king Charles II saying:
“We..... utterly deny..... all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence whatsoever... and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world”.

To this day this is the basis of the Quaker peace testimony.



Journeys in the Spirit



Children's work

Additional Resource 53.B

Respond

An example of a George Fox story picture from Edinburgh Central Local Meeting





Journeys in the Spirit



Children's work

Additional Resource 53.C

Engage

An interview with George Fox

In preparation for this activity read the story of George Fox, either a story you have or the one with this Journeys in the Spirit. This could be done in an earlier session or week. Talk to the children about the interview and decide who is going to be the interviewer and George Fox. It may be necessary to do it more than once so that those who want to can have a turn at doing the interview. Of course the audience is important too – a part of “a great people gathered”. They need to ask questions at the end of the interview. Some props may be fun such as hats or scarves as cloaks. Even better, record the interview, film it, whatever technology you can lay your hands on. Children love seeing and hearing themselves on screen. There may be someone else in the meeting who is good at this, and can be involved. The interview could also be done with invited adults in the audience.

Interviewer: We welcome George Fox here amongst us. Good morning George and welcome to this gathering of people

George Fox: Good morning

Interviewer: I want to ask you about this new movement of yours. What is it about?

George Fox: We are a group of people who seek that of God within us all. We are called Quakers.

Interviewer: Why are you called Quakers?

George Fox: One of the judges I appeared before called us that because we are known to tremble or quake at the word of the Lord. It has been used previously for other people who quaked at the word of the Lord.

Interviewer: Do you have priests or ministers?

George Fox: No, we are all equal in the eyes of God and know that we can find God in our hearts. Therefore we have no need of a priesthood.

Interviewer: That must go against the Anglican and Catholic Churches.

George Fox: We seek a more simple way. By waiting in the silence we believe God will speak to us in our hearts.

Interviewer: Do you mean you have no hymns, prayers or sermons?

George Fox: During meeting for worship no, we don't have hymns, prayers or sermons. People can speak from their hearts if they feel led to do so. I do speak to the people so that they understand what Quakers are about. Then they can decide for themselves which way to follow.

Interviewer: Do you have some beliefs?

George Fox: *Yes we believe our everyday actions must show what we believe. In other words we live simple lives and try not to burden ourselves with unnecessary material goods, we treat each other as equals, we strive to live in peace and harmony, and we speak and behave truthfully and honestly.*

Interviewer: *You have had some hard times George. Tell us about the times you were in prison.*

George Fox: *Yes it was hard being in prison. I became weak and unwell. The food was very poor and not very nourishing. I was very distressed by seeing how other prisoners were treated. Many were hung for small crimes such as stealing food to feed their families because they were very poor.*

Interviewer: *What helped to keep you going?*

George Fox: *I read the Bible every day and get great comfort from this. It convinces me that the way I have chosen is the right way.*

Interviewer: *And lastly on a happier note I understand you are to marry your great friend Margaret Fell.*

George Fox: *Yes I am very happy about this. I hope too that we can help all those who choose to follow the Quaker way of life.*

Interviewer: *Now would any of you people gathered here like to ask George any questions?*

The Interviewer then takes questions from those who have been watching. Younger children may need some help from adults. It may be an idea to prepare some questions before doing this exercise.



Children in Edinburgh Central meeting during the interview with George Fox



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's Work

July 2011

Issue 53



A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship

Footsteps

Preparation: You will need A4 sheets of paper in a variety of colours, pencils, coloured pens and crayons, glue, glue brushes, some other bits such as tissue paper and sequins to decorate the feet. You will also need a large sheet of paper to stick the finished feet on.

Involve others from the meeting, perhaps Elders, to read the passages from Quaker faith & practice

Begin by welcoming everyone to this all age meeting for worship. Start with a few moments of quiet.

Read *Q F & P advices and queries 42* starting at "Be patterns, be examples...."

Acknowledge that this is probably a very familiar passage, but what does it mean? Wherever we go we must try to set a good example, living out our Quaker testimonies. If we can do this we will feel good about ourselves and can walk cheerfully as George Fox says and can walk with a spring in our step. And today we are going to think about footsteps

Read *Q F & P 19.06*

George Fox will have had to take quite a lot of steps to climb up the hill wouldn't he? And he wasn't sure what he would find at the top of the hill. He probably knew there would be a lovely view but he didn't expect to see all those people waiting for him and wanting him to speak to them. Perhaps he was a bit taken aback.

Like George we take steps all the time to get to places. We walk, run, hop and skip. We may walk fast or slowly and sometimes we need help to walk. Some people use a walking stick.

We also talk about taking a big step meaning we do something important in life. A big step on our journey through life, like George meeting all those people who had come to see him.

This might be:

- Starting school or moving into a new class
- Starting a new job
- Being asked to do something important like talking to the class about your project or giving a lecture
- Moving house
- Retiring from working

Sometimes when we take a big step like this we feel nervous, a bit scared, or excited, wondering what it will be like, or impatient – wanting it to happen soon.

Can you think of some important footsteps you have taken, or footsteps you hope or would like to take?

Have a few minutes of quiet to think about this.

Now you are going to draw round your foot, either with your shoes on or you can take your shoes and socks off to do this. Cut out your foot shape and then write or draw a picture of your important footstep. Use the materials here to decorate your foot.

Place the feet on the large sheet on the floor (the feet can be stuck on later) and invite people to look at them in silence. They may need to walk round the sheet.

Ask people to return to their seat and finish with some quiet.





Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

July 2011

Issue 53



An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting on the George Fox story

Make sure you have a little time of worship for yourself and other volunteers before the session – even a couple minutes are good.

This outline is based on a 45-minute children's meeting. Have ready copies of the *Journeys in the Spirit Children's Work edition Issue 53 Additional Resource 53.A* for the story and pictures or a copy of *The Quaker Tapestry Guide in colour* (available from the Quaker Bookshop on 0207 663 1030 or at www.quaker.org.uk/shop).

Set the room out as suggested in **Gather** on page 1 of *Journeys in the Spirit Children's Work edition Issue 53*.

Materials: large sheet of paper or A4 paper; pieces of felt and material, wool and other threads, fabric glue, glue brushes, scissors

Gather After the group has settled, however many or few, ask everybody to say their names. Then do the centering and getting to know you exercise on page 1 of the *Journeys in the Spirit Children's Work edition Issue 53* using a variety of postcards (more than the number of people in the group to allow plenty of choice) ⌚ **5 mins**

Engage Read the George Fox story showing the relevant panels of the Quaker Tapestry as you go from *Journeys in the Spirit Children's Work edition Issue 53 Additional Resource 53.A*. Have a little time for children to ask questions and discuss each picture. ⌚ **15 mins**

Respond Talk about how the Tapestry is made of a woolen material with pictures embroidered on this in wool and other threads. They take a long time to make but perhaps today we can make a picture out of felt, wool and scraps of material. Either, make a large communal picture (see picture in issue 53 to go with the story), or make individual pictures. ⌚ **20 mins**

Reflect Gather quietly to look at finished picture(s) and talk about what has been made. Decide if children would like to tell the adults in meeting what they have been doing and if they would like to show everyone their picture(s). ⌚ **5 mins**



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Children's work

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Issue 53

Topical Activity

What would your newspaper say?



Talk with children about making their own newspaper. Ask questions like:

- If you could write your own newspaper or news web page what would it look like?
- What would you call it?
- What would you put in it?
- What would you want to say?
- What do you want to tell the world, your Meeting, your neighbourhood, your school?
- What pictures would you put in? These could be cut from magazines and papers or drawn.

The final newspapers or news web pages could be shared with Meeting, put on display in the Meeting House, taken home to talk about or maybe shared with a local paper.

Here is a simple template for children to use to make their paper or web page. Copy enough for everybody.
