



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition

July 2017

Issue 110



Qf&p chapter 2 - Approaches to God, worship and prayer

Getting ready

This edition of Journeys in the Spirit looks at chapter two of *Quaker faith & practice* – Approaches to God, worship and prayer. It continues this series reflecting on *Quaker faith & Practice* as adults have been doing in their meetings.

God and prayer are not always concepts that Quakers are comfortable with. Prayers often conjure up text that is overly pious and uses language that is meaningless.

So it was with some trepidation I embarked on reading this chapter. I quickly realised that understanding God, worship and prayer is very individual and experiential. However what came over very strongly for me is that prayer alone is not the Quaker way. Prayer must be followed by intent or some action. For example if we pray for someone who is ill or in need we must follow it up with a visit, a letter or offer of help.

Resources needed: enough per child of the cut out flags/ people depending on which Respond activity you might do, coloured pens/pencils/crayons, newspaper, yarn, hole punch, sticky tape, paper and paint.

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 by setting out the chairs or cushions in a circle to start with and have any resources ready you need for the activities you have chosen.

Place a copy of *Quaker faith & practice* in the centre of the circle along with some pictures of a meeting for worship. (See *Additional Resource 110.A in sidebar*)

Begin by everyone saying their names, especially if there are people in the group who do not know each other. Ask everyone to say their name and something they like about children's meeting. Have a few minutes of quiet and then read Qf&p 2.76 followed by a minute or two of quiet to absorb what has been read.

Then ask the children the following questions: I wonder what you were thinking about when you were quiet? I wonder how you felt – calm, peaceful, sad, happy, thoughtful? Encourage the children to speak in the manner of worship sharing. Have space between contributions, accept what the children say without comment, and finish by saying their words are ministry.

Underpinning reference

Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts, and then thou wilt feel the principle of God to turn the mind to the lord God, whereby thou wilt receive his strength and power from whence life comes, to allay all tempests, against blusterings and storms. George Fox – 1658 Qf&p 2.18

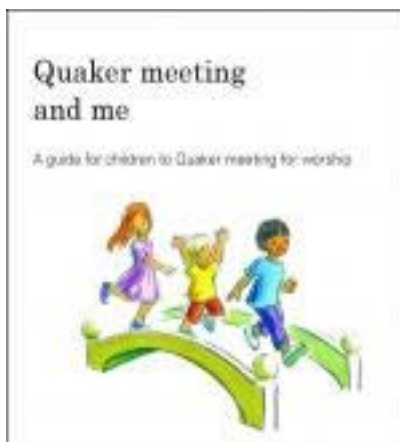
Additional Resources 109.A accessible at www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren by selecting 'resources for current issue'.

Engage

Explain to the children that adults are looking at *Quaker faith & practice* by reading it, thinking about what is in the book, what they like and whether there are things that need to be changed. We are going to look at a bit of the book called 'Approaches to God – worship and prayer'. This is about Quaker worship and what Quakers think about God and prayer.

What happens in Meeting for Worship?

Meeting for Worship can be a mystery for children. We have a duty to share our thoughts about this. Talk with the children about what happens when we sit down in Meeting for Worship? Can we be completely honest with our children? Ask the children what questions they might like to ask the adults about what they do in Meeting for Worship. What do they think about?



Read *Quaker meeting and me* with the children (see sidebar). This book is intended to help children find a way into Quaker meeting for worship. After reading it, wonder with the children about what helps them in meeting for worship? In the book the children are in a garden. Is there something like the garden that helps them when they are in meeting? If they are happy to share then have a time of sharing about this now.

The book encourages us to be still and listen. Sometimes our minds are busy and we are aware of all the sounds around us but sometimes all we can hear is silence. Silence is not exclusive to Meeting for Worship. There will be other times in our lives when there are times of quiet. Wonder with the children what these times are. This might help the children to understand silence and not be put off by it.

What is prayer?

Wonder with the children what is in our prayers? Who do we pray to? It seems prayers are nothing without action. This is indeed the very essence of Quakerism – a call to action. Wonder with the children what that might mean.

What do Quakers think about God?



Wonder about who/what is God? Tell the children that Quakers also talk about the Divine or the Light within. It is important to share with them what you feel about God. Read *Qf&p* 2.03 for yourself then share your thoughts with the children. George Gorman is very good at painting a picture of his experience of God.

References & other resources

Prayer is not an occasional nod given in passing to God.

It's more like marriage – a closeness of living, A constant receiving and giving.

Louie Horne, 1987
Qf&p 2.25

Ministry is what is on one's soul, and it can be in direct contradiction to what is on one's mind. It's what the Inner Light gently pushes you toward or suddenly dumps in your lap. It is rooted in the eternity, divinity, and selflessness of the Inner Light: not in the worldly, egoistic functions of the conscious mind.

Marrienne McMullen 1987
Qf&p 2.66

Quaker meeting and me is available free to order from cypadmin@quaker.org.uk

References & other resources



The Quiet Book by
Deborah Underwood

Illustrated by Renata
Liwaska

ISBN 978 0 547 21567-9

Available from the
Quaker Bookshop

020 7663 1030

quakercentre@quaker.org.uk



For more information on prayer flags go to <https://gb.education.com/activity/article/tibetan-prayer-flag/>

Additional Resource 110.B, 110.C and 110.D and Simple plan for all age worship can be found at:

www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren

Respond

What happens in Meeting for Worship?

Do this after the corresponding exercise in Engage. Read Qf&p 2.51 in language the children can relate to. Ask the children what they do when they go into Meeting? Do they think about some of the things Dorothy thinks about? Include your own responses, as it will be important for children to hear what you feel.

Next read the story “The Quiet Book” (see sidebar).

Talk about the story. There are many different kinds of quiet in our lives. Meeting for Worship is another kind of quiet. Then say you are going to have short meeting for worship. Ask the children to think about the images that come into their heads while sitting in worship. They might find it helpful to close their eyes. After meeting has finished suggest the children draw or paint their images. Allow a little time at the end for the children to share what they have done.

What is Prayer?

Do this after the corresponding exercise in Engage. Read two passages from Qf&p– 2.27 and 2.29. You might need to explain what the passages mean depending on the age of the children. Ask the children if they agree with either of these passages. If so what do they think prayer is – perhaps they do not think prayer is relevant and that is fine.

Follow the guided meditation on the *Additional Resource 110.B* (see sidebar) After you have finished explain about prayer flags (see sidebar) and suggest the children write or draw their prayers on their flag.

There is a Buddhist tradition of prayer flags. People write their prayers on flags (*Additional Resource 110.C see sidebar*) that blow in the wind and blow the prayers to those that need it. So we too will write our prayers on these flags and tie them onto the string and let them blow in the wind.

What do Quakers think about God?

Do this after the corresponding exercise in Engage. Having read Qf&p 2.03 consider this further.

George Gorman does not use the word God much, but talks about love. George refers to the love he felt deep inside and that he discovered that this is what Quaker worship is all about. Ask the children what they think. Is this deep feeling of love inside perhaps God? How is it different from the love we feel for friends and family?

There are many names for God such as comforter, maker of peace, father, friend, creator of light. Do they have a name for God? Ask them to think about this quietly and then together make a small doll (*Additional resource 110.D - see sidebar*) with their name for God in the middle.

All age worship

See sidebar for a simple plan for all age worship.

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 clarification if there are things they have not understood.

Childhood is a time for exploration and children may decide there are things they do not accept or believe in. They may say, for example that they do not believe in God or prayer. This is fine, but ensure you are prepared for this, and gently accept their thoughts and contributions. You may find this challenging but it is important not to be judgemental or put forward your beliefs too strongly.

Remember that the adults too are reviewing *Quaker faith and practice* so finding a way for the children to share their thoughts on chapter two with the adults will be very helpful for all. The meeting might like to know in advance what the children are doing, especially as this edition of *Journeys in the Spirit* is one of a series looking at *Quaker faith & practice*.

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. Perhaps their overseer can do this.

There may be fundamental issues around belief that arise out of this session in which case it might be helpful to let the adults know the theme of the session. Think about how the outcomes of the session can be fed into what the adults are doing to review *Quaker faith and practice*.

For yourself reflect on how you feel the sessions went. Did the children participate well and learn more about chapter two of *Qf&p*? Are there things you might have done differently? It is worth discussing these things with other volunteers and at Children's Committee.

This issue was written by Madeleine Harding and edited by Mel Cook and Howard Nurden.

Journeys in the Spirit is published in two formats on alternate months. One month the issue is on a theme with an easy to use structure set out in a four page booklet with additional online resources. The alternate month is a topical activity – something about the news or of seasonal interest.

Available from 1 August 2017: **Topical Activity Hope**

Available from 1 September 2017: **Developing spiritual practices** – this begins our new series.

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](#)

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

All these are available at: 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 110.A



Gather

Pictures





Journeys in the Spirit

Children's Work

Additional Resources 110.B



Respond

What is prayer? A meditation

Guided meditation for the activity on prayer

In the passage from *Qf&p* 2.29 the author is clear that when we pray for someone there maybe an answer that we should do something practical to help that person. Some people think this answer comes from God but Quakers are more likely to say the answer comes from within us. What does this feel like? We are going to go on an imaginary journey that might help with understanding this.

Encourage children to sit comfortably – on a chair or cushion on the floor – and if it helps close their eyes. Take in a deep breath and breathe out slowly and begin to feel calm and relaxed. Take a few minutes to do this.

Now think about the part of you that loves and cares about other people. This is probably in your heart area. Imagine it as a space full of soft light. Anyone who comes into that light will feel calm and good. Quakers call this **holding someone in the Light**.

Now think of someone you care about, maybe a friend, or family or someone who lives in your street. Picture them with that soft light shining on them. As you continue to think about this person you may find that there is something you can do for this person that would help them. It maybe something quite simple like sending them a nice card, giving them a hug, or speaking to them at school or when you next see them. Just note this in your mind to do this sometime soon.

When you are ready quietly leave that place in your heart remembering the person you were thinking about.

Give time to come back into the room and then allow the children an opportunity to talk about their experience. They may not want to and that is fine as well.

Move on to the prayer flag exercise as outlined on page 3 of the main sheet of this issue.



Journeys in the Spirit

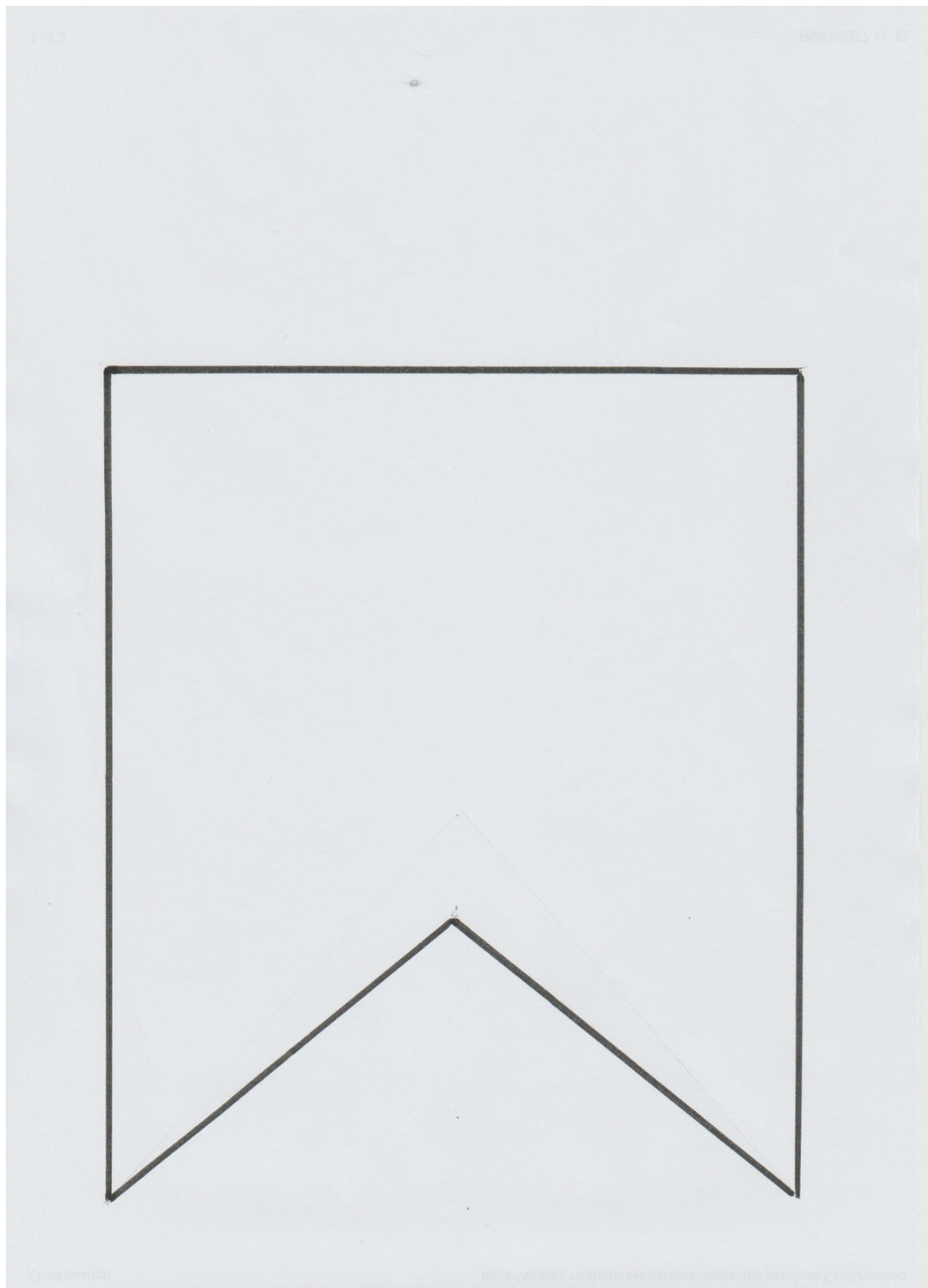


Children's Work

Additional Resources 110.C

Respond

What is prayer? - flags





Journeys in the Spirit

Children's Work

Additional Resources 110.D



Respond

What do Quakers think about God?

Instructions for making small dolls

These dolls are very simple to make. You will need newspaper cut into 12cm x 12cm squares for the body and 6cm x 6cm squares for the arms.

Scrunch up a piece for the body and one for the arms. Arrange them in a cross and secure by winding wool around arms and body (see picture)

Decorate with scraps of material

Ask children to write their name for God on a small piece of paper and wrap that inside the doll around the chest area with another piece of wool

