



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition June 2014 Issue 88



Yearly Meeting Gathering - Quakers get together

Getting ready

This issue explores something of how we are all part of the world family of Friends – especially when we have an opportunity of meeting or gathering together and growing in the spirit.

One way that this happens is the residential Yearly Meeting Gathering (happening in Bath 2 – 9 August this year) but it might equally be meeting for worship on a Sunday, a residential event or even area meeting.

Some Friends have never been to YMG, so can wonder what all the excitement is about. If you've never had the opportunity to go, then before you embark on using this issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* find a Friend or Friends who have. Ask them what it was like, was anything special. Did it deepen their spiritual life? What was the most uplifting part of their week – if any? This could be useful to do as you start to plan your session.

If you have been to YMG please remember to share it. For children and young people there is often the joy of getting together again with old friends or making new friendships that they will remember.

Friends of all ages, gather in a vibrant community. A bit like a huge party! Some Friends have been planning and working for 2 years for this to happen. This is their ministry. Many Friends have been upholding them during this time. Finally the day dawns when the first Friends start arriving. Some know what to expect. Others may be apprehensive – it's their first time at YMG and there are a lot of people here. Even if children and families in your meeting are not going everyone can stop and think about the people who are.

Gather

Open with short silence. Welcome each child into the circle. Ask them, and any adult, to say their names if there are people who do not know each other. Ask each of them to say something about their week, something that made them happy or was exciting. Go on to say that you are all going to be talking and doing things about something that Quakers get very excited about.

This exciting event is Yearly Meeting Gathering, also known as YMG. It happens every 3 years. Friends come from lots of Yearly Meeting's or countries in the world and many Local Quaker Meetings in the UK. Over 2,000 Friends are coming to YMG at Bath University 2 – 9 August; nearly 300 of these will be children and young people.

So what is Yearly Meeting Gathering all about? In the year 1668 early Quakers felt they had to see each other to share their experiences. They gathered together to get closer to God when they sat in worship. They would learn from and help each other. See sidebar for *Quaker faith & practice* quotation. This has continued every year since then with Quakers coming together to worship and share news, problems and to have fun. Our own meetings on a Sunday can be like this too.

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

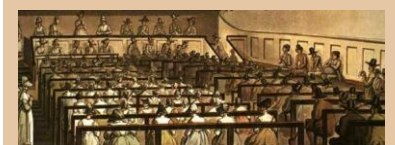
This children's work edition comes out monthly. It offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with 5–12 year olds in a Quaker setting.

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

Underpinning references

Quaker faith & practice 6.02

"We did conclude among ourselves to settle a meeting, to see one another's faces, and open our hearts one to another in the Truth of God once a year" Yearly Meeting in London 1668



Engage

Tell this opening section like a story. Begin with:

'A long, long time ago when Quakers first started, they would travel many miles to Gatherings. Sometimes there would be 1,000's of Quakers (or *Children of the Light* – see Qf&p 11.01, 18.20), as they were sometimes called.

They would travel on horseback, in carts and coaches, by boat, or they would walk. These were the days before bicycles and buses, cars and trains, or aeroplanes.

Some of them would have travelled for days along muddy tracks and dirt lanes. When it got dark they would have to stop – there were no street lights then! They would stay in the welcoming homes of Friends on their way. And the reason for their Gathering? This is one way they talked about why they met together:

They came... *“to see one another's faces, and open our hearts to one another in the Truth of God (each year)”* Qf&p 6.02.

They also came to give thanks that they had come through another year in a country that hurt people just for being Quakers – meeting houses would be knocked down, farm animals would be taken and people would go to prison.'

On *Additional Resource 88.A* there are two pictures of Quakers in Meeting for Worship. Show these to the children and ask them about any differences that they notice – sitting in a circle and not rows or women separate from men for example.

At these Quaker gatherings, Friends waited in the silence, in the stillness. Waiting for answers as they thought about things they wanted to do as Quakers, listening for God in huge great meetings for worship. Food would be shared, with everyone eating together. It was a joy meeting old friends and making new ones.

Finally, some days later, they would have their last meeting for worship before travelling back, their lives deeper and enriched. They would be ready to share their experience of the Gathering with all their Friends at home.

Today, in many ways, Yearly Meeting Gathering (YMG) isn't so very different. People still wait in the silence, in the stillness waiting for answers as they think about things they want to do as Quakers, listening for God in big meetings for worship. Children do this too. They still *'meet to see one another's faces'*, to celebrate, and sometimes share sadnesses. Friends still eat together, play (sing & dance) together, make new friends and have fun.



Ask the children and helpers, once more, to look at each other, to *'see each other's faces'* and tell each other something that they have done since last coming to meeting and also something they really like to do or that they love.

Finally, say that what is now different about Yearly Meeting Gathering, all Quaker meetings and other times that Quakers of all different ages

get together is what happens and how people get there. Say something like – let's find out more about getting to this big meeting or coming to our meeting or going to other Quaker gatherings.



References & other resources

One of very first Quaker Gatherings was held in the May of 1668.

Since 1668 there have been annual gatherings of some sort or another held in May in London.

Residentials first began in the 1970's. Later came Summer Gatherings. Finally the Yearly Meeting and Summer Gathering joined to become Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2009.

Related issues of *Journeys in the Spirit*:

Issue 9 - *Quakers a people of God*;

Issue 25 -

Belonging & joining; Issue 33

- *Inner stories - ourselves & each other*; Issue 41- *Pilgrimage*.

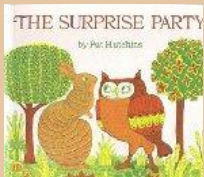
These can be found at:

www.quaker.org.uk/journeys/archives-children

Additional Resource 88.A can be found at:

www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

References & other resources



ISBN: 0613371933

- available online

Also go to:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIGbljPr5JI>

for an animated version of the story.



ISBN

9781405266581.

Available online.

www.flatstanleyproject.com

for some resources. Go to:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBuXT-3AXOM

for a story being told.

Music for dancing together:

Playing for

Change:

<http://vimeo.com/2539741>

Afro Celt Sound Systems - Vol 1:

available to buy online. Listen at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYr_iMkdC14

Additional

Resources 88.B,

88.C and 88.D can

be found at:

www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

Respond

Maps, mind maps and travel. Talk with children about thinking about and making their own map or mind maps of how people get to YMG – or to any other Quaker event – Sunday Meeting, gatherings, Quaker parties. See *Additional Resource 88.B* for a range of activities and details of resources and equipment.

Why do we come? Ask children why they think early Quakers gathered together. What do children think it would have been like? Ask children why they think early Quakers went a long way to meet up? Ask children if going to meeting or to other types of Quaker get togethers helps them feel closer to God or to the spirit? Is it serious or is it fun? Or can it be both?

Ask children what they would do if they were planning a Quaker Gathering now? What ideas have they got? Who would they invite? How would they invite people? Ask them to think about ways to go about it – what to do! They might actually come up with an event or a party that they want to really arrange.

Talking about parties. *Resources: big sheets of paper; colouring pencils, pens, crayons; glue sticks; scissors; magazines to cut out; laptop if needed.*

Read 'The Surprise Party' (Pat Hutchins) – see side bar for details and a link. Play a *word whispers* game as played in 'The Surprise Party'. Write a few simple phrases to get started. Let the children make up their own! If you haven't got the book look online at the *youtube* version of the story – a link is in the sidebar.

Say to the children that, for some people, going to a Quaker meeting – big or small – can, in a way, be a bit like going to a special party. Ask children what sort of parties they know about:

Birthday parties. Welcoming parties & leaving parties. Beach parties. Weddings (and even funerals perhaps). Pretend parties for toys.

Can they think of any others? What was their very best party? Ask what happens when Quakers get together – what sort of parties do we have?

What would a party for God be like? Ask children to make a picture of what a party for God might look like. Alternatively everybody could make a big picture all together with cut-outs and their own drawings & words.

What about if people can't meet? *Resources: card, drawing and colouring pens, pencils and crayons.*

Ask children what are the ways people can tell each other how they are - without seeing other people's faces, e.g: (Just in case no one has any ideas):

Telephone, letters, emails, twitter, Facebook, tin cans & string, messages in bottles, semaphore, post cards, blogs, and airmail letters with special paper.

Read the book *Flat Stanley* – see sidebar for information and links to resources. Stanley wakes up very flat one morning – so flat he can be posted to his friends and relations. Ask children, if they were flat, where they would like to be posted to meet and give a message to Quakers. Ask children to make a *Flat Stanley* self-figure. Look online at how people have taken photos of their *Flat Stanley* figures in different places and sent them to people. Have a look at the FWCC map on *Additional Resource 88.C* for ideas of where to send pictures – FWCC contact and information details are at:

www.fwccworld.org/fwccworld. Some people may not have email so post can be used. Are there children's meetings in your Area Meeting that could be contacted? *Australia Yearly Meeting* is talking about pen friend links. If you, on behalf of children in your meeting, are interested in this then email Jenny at: quakersaustraliacyf@gmail.com

Dance & movement. On *Additional Resource 88.D* there are ideas for music and activities for your group to unwind after sitting, talking or doing activities that involve a lot of thinking. This is another way of being Quakers together.

Reflect

Talk about some of the things you've done together – did anything surprise them?

Invite children to share what they've done. Assure them they only have to if they want to, and when they're ready.

Ask if there were any parts they really enjoyed doing – what they're excited to tell their Mum or Dad about!

Are there some other ideas or activities they would like to try out another time?

Give everyone a chance to speak!

Close with some moments of silence in the way the early Quakers might have ended their Meetings. Imagine there would be no sound of cars or buses. No planes flying overhead – just the sound of birdsong and the wind blowing in the trees.

Here is a picture of an early Quaker Meeting House



Review

Do this as soon as possible. Discuss with other volunteers in the children's group.

Make simple evaluation sheets with questions, like those below, in them for yourself and other volunteers to fill in immediately after your session. These can be very useful to refer to when planning future Children's Meetings.

What worked really well for the children?

Which part or parts did they get most engaged with?

In what ways did you support the children in their spiritual growth and understanding?

What could do with some fine tuning?

What could we use again or adapt?

This issue was written by Jude Whitby (with inspired support from *Kate Hale, Sue Finch and Rosie Baines*) and edited by **Chris Nickolay and Howard Nurden**. **Chris Nickolay wrote the Topical activity.**

Issue 89 is the third in the YMG series. It has the title '*I matter – I change the world*'. Available from 1 July 2014.

Issue 90 is the first in a new series about *Living as a Quaker*. It has the title, '*Living a transformed and transforming life*'. Available from 1 August 2014.

Issue 91 is the second in the series about *Living as a Quaker*. It has the title '*Equipping children for ministry*'. Available from 2 September 2014.

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 some playground games to play together.

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 88.A



Engage

Some pictures of Quakers in Meeting





Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 88.B

Respond

Maps, mind maps and travel



Maps and travel.

Resources for this session depending on which activity you choose to do – white paper; coloured pencils and pens; drawing pencils; black felt pens; wax crayons; post-it notes; white tak; string or wool; copies of the FWCC world Quaker map on Additional Resource 88.C; a Peters projection world map(available to buy online); a simple local map of the area from which children come to meeting; large sheets of paper; copies of the 'where do you come from' circle drawing lower down this page.

This *Additional Resource* suggests ways to talk with children about, and make maps and mind maps, of how people, themselves, might be going to YMG or to any Quaker event – Sunday Meeting, family events, camps or other residential meetings to meet up with other Quakers.

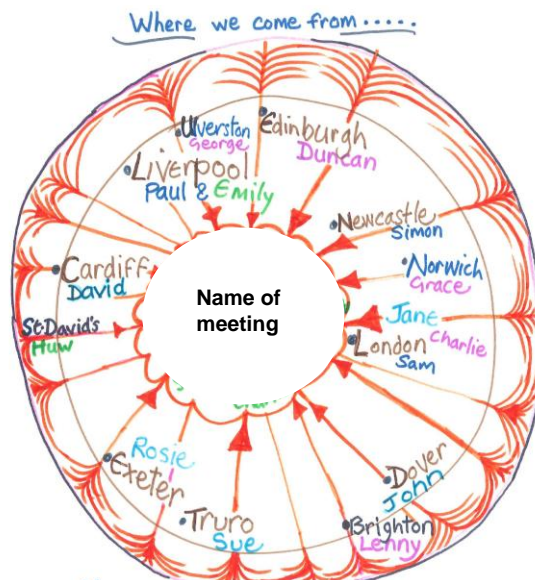
Maps.

- Getting to YMG. Make a simple map of how people get to YMG from around the world. Use a world map – ('Peter's Projection' world map is good because it tries to portray countries the size they are rather than the size according to status or power in the world. They can be bought easily online. Another world map will do as well). Lay the map on the floor or a table. Talk about the countries that people are coming from – the list is below – (use the FWCC map below to say a little about the Quakers in the different countries) and then using wool or string and white-tak make lines between the countries and roughly where Bath is on the map. Find where people live and join them up to the YMG venue (Bath) this year. Use post-its to write where Friends are coming from to Yearly Meeting Gathering:

Belgium, France, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Japan (Tokyo), USA, Africa

Children could fix drawings on the strings with pictures of how people might be travelling to Yearly Meeting Gathering - boat, trains, planes, cars, walking or bike; people might use different types of transport depending on which part of the journey they are on.

- Getting to meeting. Use a local map to talk about and find out where children come from – you may need to check with parents first. Locate on the map where children come from and then use string or wool and white tak to join up places with the meeting house destination. Again, children could make drawings of how they travel to meeting and also cut-out drawings of the Meeting, their houses, city, town, and village. They could go on to draw a more detailed map - what roads did we go on; what did we go passed?
- A 'where we come from doodle map'. See the example below. Cut your large sheets of paper into big circles – one for each child. Ask the children to draw a big circle pattern like the one just here. Ask them to write the name of their Quaker meeting in the middle of their drawing. Then, using different colours, they could write the name of each person in their meeting with an arrow leading to the meeting name.



A mind map.

Resources for this session include: white paper; coloured pencils and pens; drawing pencils; black felt pens; wax crayons; a copy or copies of the mind map lower down this page.

Ask children to decide what destination they are going to draw a mind map about – say that it has to be a Quaker thing. Show or give out copies of the example below. Give out sheets of paper – have the writing and drawing things in baskets ready for children to use. Ask children to write or draw the place or event in the middle of their sheet of paper.

Ask children to choose colouring and drawing things. Tell the children to look at the example you have given them. Say that you want them to make a mind or thought map or a picture of their journey to a Quaker meeting, place or event. Read out all or some of these questions and say anymore that occur to you. Ask children to think about their answers – pause between each question:

Why did you or are you going to this place/event/gathering? What did you or do you have or need to take? Are there any special things that have to go with you?

What about any pets whilst you were or are out or away? Who looked after or will look after your pet?

How did you or will you get there?

Who did you or will you go with?

What was it or will it be like when you get there? What will it be like meeting your friends again or maybe making new friends?

What food was there or will there be? What did or might you need to take?

What did you or will you do?

Will there be meeting for worship? What will you tell your friends who don't or didn't go about what happened and what you did?

What was or might be the most special bit for you? Maybe there were quite a few special moments.

The mind map can have words, pictures, arrows and lines – how ever children want to do it.





Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

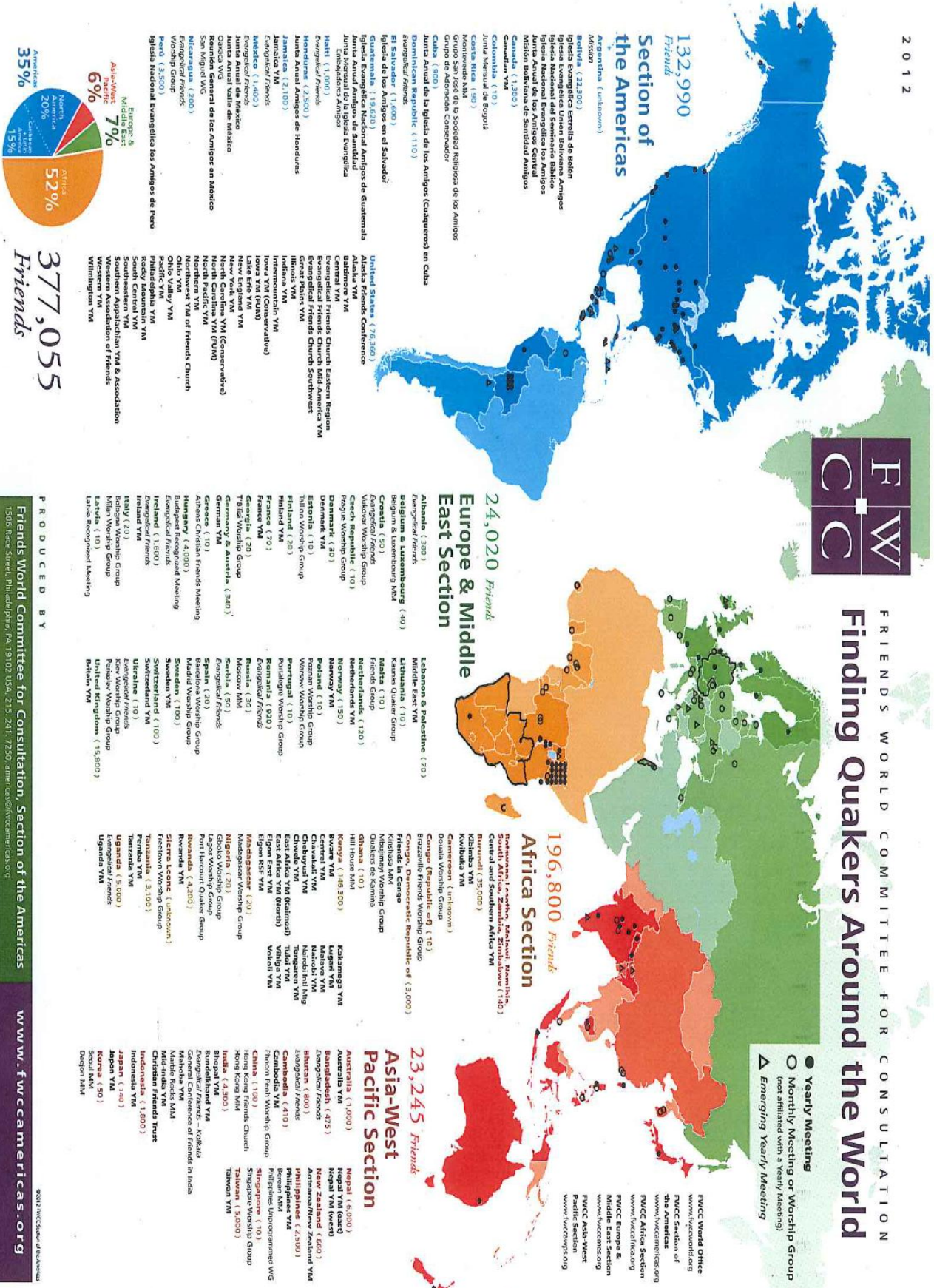
Additional resources 88.C

Respond

What about if people can't meet?



Friends World Consultation Committee (FWCC) map





Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 88.D

Respond

Dance and movement



Resources for this session: a music player and some music.

Say something like, 'we've been sitting around for quite a long time now. So how about we do a few stretches?' Select some good rhythmic music. Move about gently. Get children to 'copy' you to start. Stretch here, now there, down to the ground, up in the air. Gradually increase volume and start dancing to rhythm of the music. Encourage everyone to join in. After a while you may be dancing together like Friends did every morning at the World Gathering of Friends in Kenya.

Gradually turn the volume down and ask everyone to sit down again

If you've ever watched 'My Friend speaks my mind' - you'll understand this! "Dance Party Erupts During Quaker Meeting for Worship Jon Watts".

www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XIMkK4_kTg

Other links to music:

- *Orchestra Baobab 'Specialists in all styles'* – Track 4 *jiin Ma jiin Ma*. From Senegal – enter the title in website search box.
- *'Party for God' Be-Attitude 5 Rhythms* – enter the title in a website search box.
- Also see links in the sidebar of page 3 of the main pages of this issue of *Journeys in the Spirit*.

