



# Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition March 2017 Issue 108



## Quaker faith & practice Chapter 25 Unity of Creation

### Getting ready

This issue is the fifth in a series of issues which focus on *Quaker faith & practice*, the book of discipline of the Religious Society of Friends. Local meetings are engaged in a programme of reading *Quaker faith & practice*, so that they are familiar with each chapter and can contribute to the decision of Britain Yearly Meeting about when the book should be revised. It is not possible to consider all of the chapters or to cover them in the same order as the Yearly Meeting calendar, but it is hoped that the issues will give children and the adults meeting with them an opportunity to become more familiar with the rich contents of the book.

This issue looks at chapter 25 of *Quaker faith & practice*, which considers the Unity of Creation.

In preparation for children's meeting, you might find it helpful to read the whole of chapter 25 of *Quaker faith & practice*. You might also find it helpful to read *The Creation was open to me* (see the sidebar on p.2).

*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

Welcome everyone in your usual way and ensure that everyone knows each other's names. You might like to have a short time of silence with a lighted candle or have an opportunity to share news about the week.

Explain that today we are going to look at chapter 25 of *Quaker faith & practice*, which contains passages written by Quakers which have been chosen and included in the book to help us to think about the world that we live in and our care of the Earth.

Quakers have been thinking about this topic for a long time. For example, John Woolman wrote about it in 1772. You might like to read the quote from John Woolman in section 25 of *Quaker faith & practice* (see *Additional Resource 108.A*). John Woolman saw the Earth as a gift from God, who created or made the universe. He saw a connection between what we own, our care of the environment and justice, both for those living now and for generations to come. He also felt that we have a responsibility to care for the Earth and think about what it will be like in the future if we don't. Would you agree with John Woolman? What might the Earth be like in the future if we don't care for it?

### Underpinning references

*Quaker faith & practice* chapter 25: Unity of Creation

*Advices & queries 41 and 42*

*Additional resource 108.A* can be found at [www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren](http://www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren)

# Engage

## Audry Urry

Tell the children the about Audry Urry (see *Additional Resource 108.B*) and how she came to join the Quakers and eventually got involved in Quaker Green concern. Quakers have always believed that what we do, our practice, should follow from our faith. More and more Quakers now think, like Audrey, that caring about the Earth and all who live on it means we should treat all of it with respect and with kindness.



So they try to live this way, choosing to eat food that has not harmed animals or damaged the soil, buying items that have been fairly traded. They try to save and not waste energy, putting solar panels on their roofs, for example, recycling and making compost. More and more people, not only Quakers, are now seeing that if we hurt the planet we live on we shall soon be hurting ourselves. Wonder with the children about this. Do their families already do things like this? Can they think of any other ways to help take care of our home, the Earth?

### 10 principles for simplicity

Another passage in chapter 25 of *Quaker faith & practice*, written by Richard J Foster, gives 10 suggestions for living more simply (see *Additional Resource 108.C* for an edited version). Share some or all of these suggestions with the children. After sharing talk about: -

- How often do we buy something because everyone else has one, rather than it being something we really need?
- What sort of things can we enjoy without owning? Examples might include the countryside, library books or the company of friends.
- How would following these suggestions help us care for the earth?
- Which of the suggestions would the children or their families find most difficult to carry out and why?



## References & other resources

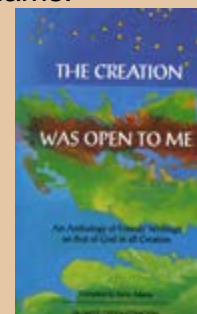
Issue 3 of *Journeys in the Spirit* explores the downwards aspect of our spiritual journey, thinking about our connection to the earth and the world we live in.

Issue 6 of *Journeys in the Spirit* looks at sustainability, how the earth provides for our needs, how observing nature can make us feel and how we can live 'sustainably'.

Issue 48 of *Journeys in the Spirit* considers living simply, exploring advices & queries 41 and 42.

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

*The Creation was open to me* was published in 1996, edited by Anne Adams.



*Additional resource 108.B & C* can be found at [www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren](http://www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren)

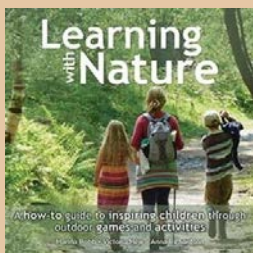


## Other resources

<http://www.plasticoceans.org/>



*Hey! Get Off Our Train* by John Burningham is a story that introduces the ideas of endangered animals and a polluted earth and is a good starting point for a conversation about taking action.



*Learning with Nature* by Marina Robb contains lots of ideas for outdoor activities.

These books are available from the Quaker bookshop.

Email:

[quakercentre@quaker.org.uk](mailto:quakercentre@quaker.org.uk)

Tel: 020 7663 1030/1031

A simple plan for all age worship can be found at:

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

## Respond

### Take action on plastic

Plastic has become a big part of our lives. Every year, millions of tonnes of plastic are dumped into the oceans, polluting the water and harming wildlife. Have a look at the website of Plastic Oceans, a UK charity which is seeking to change this (see sidebar). You might like to watch together the trailer of the film that the charity has made. Afterwards, talk about the harm that the plastic is causing and what we can all do to stop this, such as: -

- Not using plastic drinking straws.
- Drinking tap water in a reusable bottle.
- Taking a bag to the shops.
- Not celebrating with balloons, which can choke seabirds, turtles and marine mammals.
- Recycling as much plastic as possible when we cannot reuse it.



### Create a nature mandala



Mandala made by Emily, Alison and Moira of Bewdley Meeting.

In Indian religion, the Mandala represents the universe. We can design our own Mandalas to represent our personal or communal world, as it is for us at the moment of drawing or making it. Collect some leaves, sticks, stones and other natural objects.

Remind everyone to take care to avoid damaging plants or harming any creatures that they come across. Take turns arranging these on a large sheet of paper or cloth, listening to each other and giving gentle suggestions.

Afterwards, return the natural objects outdoors where you found them (taking a photo first might facilitate this letting go).

## Reflect

Have enough time to come together and share as a group before the end of children's meeting.

Questions to think about:-

- Is it important to have a chapter about the Unity of Creation in *Quaker faith & practice*?
- What could the adults in the meeting learn from hearing about chapter 25 of *Quaker faith & practice*?
- Would you like to share a passage or something that you have made with the adults in the meeting?

Encourage the children to share their thoughts and make firm plans to share with others if the children would like to do this.

## Review

It can be very helpful to take time afterwards to reflect on the session.

How did the children (and adults) respond to this topic? Were they able to identify with the idea of the Unity of Creation?

Are there any issues which some children might like to have the opportunity to explore further or talk about again at a later date?

Are there any issues that need to be followed up with parents/carers?

How can the children's responses to chapter 25 of *Quaker faith & practice* be shared with the adults in the meeting and with Britain Yearly Meeting as a whole?

## Materials available online are:

Current issue and additional resource 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.

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* 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 April 2017: **Topical Activity** Earth Day

Available from 2 May 2017: **Relationships** *Qf&p* 22



# Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional Resource 108.A

Gather

John Woolman Quote



The produce of the Earth is a gift from our gracious Creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the Earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age.

**John Woolman, 1772, in *Quaker faith & practice 25.01***





# Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional Resource 108.B

Engage

Audrey Urry



Audrey is 91. As a teenager during the 2nd world war she saw so much suffering; she felt that it was wrong to do dreadful things to people. She thought that we should care for everyone however nasty they seemed to be. She found that Quakers also thought this, so she joined them. She is still a Quaker and a member of Bridport Meeting.

Years later, Audrey found that books about caring for the Earth were being written and groups of people were meeting together to encourage everyone to think seriously about looking after all Creation: the land, the air and the water, all plants and animals, not just people. A group of Quakers, including Audrey, made a group, calling themselves Quaker Green Concern. They met together for weekends at Meeting Houses, where they made their own meals and slept on the floor - some Meeting Houses have more comfortable floors than others they found. They talked about how to be 'green' and discussed with the local Friends what Quakers could do. By 1988 enough Friends had been thinking seriously about

looking after Creation to mean that a session, led by Quaker Green Concern (QGC) was included at Yearly Meeting. Here is the minute from that meeting:

Our planet is seriously ill and we can feel the pain. We have been reminded of the many ways in which the future health of the earth is under threat as a result of our selfishness, ignorance and greed. Our Earth needs attention, respect, love, care and prayer. In comfortable Britain we are largely insulated from the effects of the environmental crisis. It is the poor of the world who suffer first.

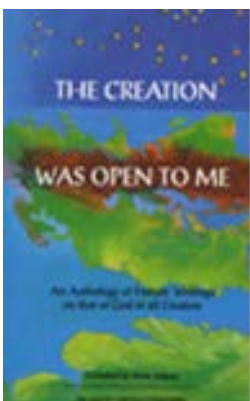
As a Religious Society of Friends we see the stewardship of God's Creation as a major concern. The environmental crisis is at root a spiritual and religious crisis; we are called to look again at the real purpose of being on this earth, which is to till it and keep it so as to reveal the glory of God for generations to come.

It is a stony road ahead but our faith will uphold us; the power to act is God's power which is mediated through each of us as we give and receive support one from another. We can all listen if we will to the sounds of the earth, tuning into it with joy.

## London Yearly Meeting, 1988 in *Quaker faith & practice* 25.02

When a new edition of *Qf&p* came out in 1995 there was, for the first time, a chapter about the Unity of Creation (25). Some of the quotations were from QGC members, including one from a letter Audrey had written:

All species and the Earth itself have interdependent roles within Creation. Humankind is not the species to whom all others are subservient, but one among many. All parts, all issues, are inextricably intertwined. Indeed the web of Creation could be described as of three-ply thread: wherever we touch it we affect justice and peace and the health of all everywhere. So all our testimonies, all our Quaker work, all our Quaker lives are part of one process, of striving towards a flourishing, just and peaceful Creation – the Kingdom of God.



## Audrey Urry, 1994 in *Quaker faith & practice* 25.04

Green Quakers were very pleased. But they thought the chapter was too short; there was lot more that could have been added. So they decided to collect some more Quaker quotations and make an extra chapter, just like the usual *Qf&p* ones. It was called *The Creation was open to me*. There might still be a copy in your Meeting House library which you could show to the children.



# Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional Resource 108.C

Engage

10 Principles for Simplicity



## 10 principles for simplicity: -

1. Buy things because they are useful, not because everyone else has one.
2. Reject anything that produces an addiction in you.
3. Develop a habit of giving things away.
4. Don't assume that you need the latest new thing or gadget.
5. Learn to enjoy things without owning them.
6. Try to appreciate the Creation more.
7. Be suspicious about 'buy now, pay later' offers.
8. Try to speak plainly and honestly.
9. Avoid things that harm other people.
10. Focus on your main goal.

Adapted from a passage by Richard J. Foster (1979) in *Quaker faith & practice* 25.09