



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition May 2016 Issue 103



Root and Fruit

Getting ready

This issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* looks at the link between how we live out our faith in the world – the fruit of our Quakerism – and what nourishes and inspires it – the root of our Quakerism. It can be too easy sometimes to focus either on our worship or our witness, without seeing the two as deeply and inextricably linked. Our worship and prayer nourishes and inspires the way we live and the way we live out our faith strengthens and deepens our worship.

As well as reflecting briefly on the ways in which Quakers live out their faith in the world, we will explore how worship, stillness and waiting on God strengthens and inspires us in our lives.

We look at the image of the tree; deeply rooted in the ground in a way that is often unseen, and growing and flourishing in the world, living out our values in our daily lives.

Resources needed: a large, simple outline of a tree, showing its roots beneath the ground and its branches reaching out. This should be large enough for the children to write on and decorate. Cut out apple/pear or leaf shapes (see additional resource 103.B) Felt tip pens/coloured pencils/crayons. Notebooks or journals to collect stories in.

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

Coming together and thinking about the theme of this issue

As you gather, welcome everyone and make sure that everyone knows each other's names. It is helpful to begin with a time of stillness; you might want to use a lit candle as a way of focusing. You might also want to have a plant in a pot in the centre of the room. This should be a plant rather than cut flowers, as you will be able to talk about its roots and its leaves and the connection between the two. If it isn't practical or possible to have a plant or small tree, you might want to have some pictures of different trees and plants laid out in the centre.

It can be helpful as you begin, to share any news from the past week(s) that children or other adults might want to share. Hold this quietly for a few moments.

Begin by talking to the children about the plant or pictures in the middle. Ask them if they know what the roots of a plant do? Explore the idea that they draw up goodness to feed the plant; this is what makes the plant grow.

Underpinning References

Advices and Queries 3.

Do you try to set aside times of quiet for openness to the Holy Spirit? All of us need to find a way into silence which allows us to deepen our awareness of the divine and to find the inward source of our strength.

Engage

Tell the story

As always, the most effective way of explaining and exploring what it means to live as a Quaker is by telling stories. The story of Toby, as he listens to an older friend in meeting sharing something about his past, can be found on *additional resource 103.A* (see sidebar).

Talk about the story

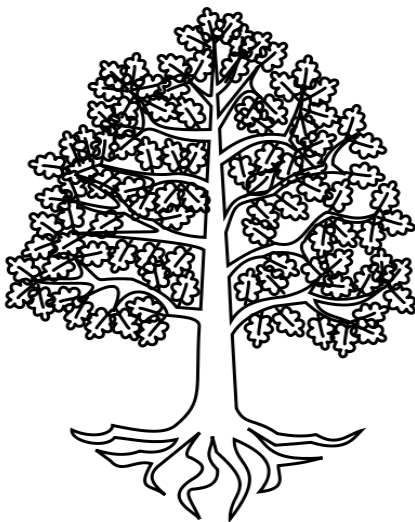
Ask the children to think about the stories they have heard – Toby’s, Edward’s, Esther’s and Zoe’s. All of them had to cope with difficult things; all of them were trying to live good, loving lives.

- What helped them all to cope with things in their lives?
- What might Edward and Esther have meant when they spoke of ‘the light’?
- We often hear about the things that Quakers do – working for peace and justice, caring for the environment, showing love and kindness to others – but have you ever heard some the Quakers in your meeting talk about what gives them courage and hope in their lives?

Respond

Roots and Fruits

Place a large, simple, outline drawing of a tree in the centre of the room. It should show both the roots and the branches. You need to have prepared some paper apples or pears or leaves from a simple template (*additional resource 103.B* – see sidebar). Ask the children what are some of the fruits of Quaker living? How do Quakers live? What do they try to do? Is it being kind, friendly, living sustainably, working for peace? Encourage them to think about their own and others Quaker’s lives, then write these things onto the shapes and then stick them onto the branches.



Plant a tree...

Depending on the time of year you do this, you might want to plant a small tree in a pot or perhaps plant some seeds. Talk about how the plant will grow roots that will draw up goodness from the soil to help the plant to grow. This can be a longer-term project and the children can watch the plant grow over the coming months.

Then ask them, what are the roots that feed this? What gives us hope and courage and helps us in our lives? This might include love, friendship, family, kindness, worship, God... you might want to suggest that they ask some of the other Friends in the meeting. Write some of these things on the roots. Talk to the children about the way that the roots feed the tree to produce fruit; in the same way our worship, prayer and fellowship feeds and nourishes us to live our Quaker lives.

References & other resources

Thomas Kelly, a Quaker writer and theologian, wrote:

‘Deep within us there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Centre a speaking Voice, to which we may continuously return’.

‘Journeys in the Light’ (ISBN 978-0-9556183-1-4) by Jan Arriens tells the stories of Quakers from different times and of how they lived out their faith in the world, rooting it in their worship and prayer.

Available from

quakercentre@quaker.org.uk

Tel: 020 7663 1030/1031

Additional Resource 103. A & 103.B can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren

References & other resources

There are a number of Biblical references to both the root and the fruit of our faith.

Galatians 5:22-23
– The fruits of the Spirit – is one of the best known.

Others are:

John 15 v 4-7.

Colossians 2 v 6-7

Psalm 1 v 1, 2-3

Exploring Worship at Woodbrooke
July 15-17 July 2016

A weekend for children aged 8-12 (must be accompanied by an adult) exploring worship, God and spiritual gifts using games, craft and story. For details visit:

<http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/news.php/551/exploring-worship-with-quaker-life-and-woodbrooke>

Further resources on plants:

<http://www.lessonpathways.com/Pathways/Detail/7322/taking-care-of-plants>

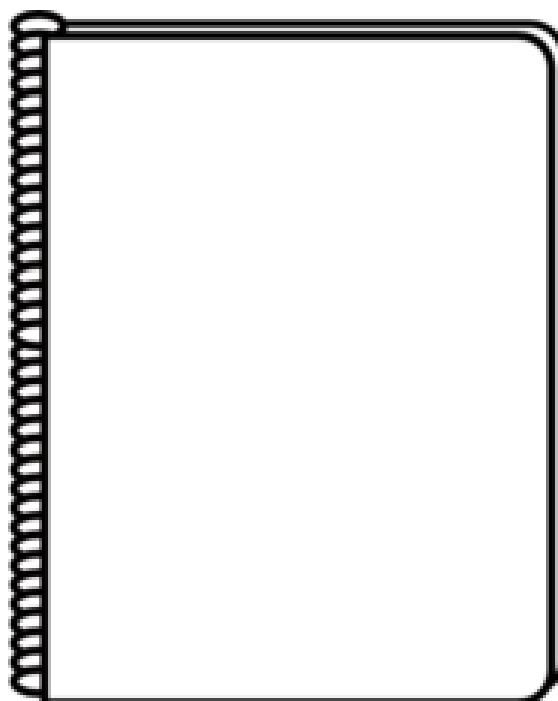
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zxdkixs>

Sharing stories

Invite the children to talk to some of the adults in the meeting about the root and fruit of their own Quaker living. (You should probably check first with the adults you are going to ask). The children could simply ask the questions:

How do you try to live as a Quaker in your daily life?

What gives you strength and hope when things get difficult?



The children could write down or draw pictures of their answers in a special Roots and Fruit note book or Journal. These could be ordinary note books that the children have decorated or covered in pictures they have drawn themselves or cut from magazines.



Talk to the children about the way that roots feed a tree to produce fruit. In the same way our worship, prayer and fellowship feeds and nourishes us to live our Quaker lives.

Trees and plants need looking after if they are to grow strong. People also need looking after and when we come to meeting we can use this as a time of looking after and helping others to grow.

Read this extract from *Quaker Faith & Practice* 12, maybe adjusting the language to help younger children understand:

'All of us in the meeting have needs. Sometimes the need will be for patient understanding, sometimes for practical help, sometimes for challenge and encouragement; but we cannot be aware of each other's needs unless we know each other. Although we may be busy we must take time to hear about the absent daughter, the examination result, the worries over a lease renewal, the revelation of an uplifting holiday, the joy of a new love. Every conversation with another Friend, every business meeting, every discussion group, and every meeting for worship can increase our loving and caring and our knowledge of each other.'

Finding out about others is a way of getting to know them and their stories and also a way of caring. We can also learn and grow our own faith as we hear about other people's journeys and experiences.

Ask the children if they've ever heard stories of others that have made them feel stronger?



Reflect

It is helpful to have some time at the end of the session to reflect and share together as a group. You might want to ask the following questions:

How did hearing the story of Toby and Edward and Esther and Zoe make us feel?

How might each of us find ways of remembering the Light within us all as we go about our lives?

What stories might some of the Friends in your meeting have to share about the root and fruit of their faith? These stories could also be collected in the children's notebooks if you have chosen to do this.

What other stories do we know that might show us this too?

Review

How did the children respond to this topic? Were there aspects of it that they found difficult or unsettling?

Where there any particular issues for the adults leading the session, particularly around the names or words we use to describe our own inward experience of the Light?

How might you share some of these questions with other adults at the meeting?

How might you return to some of these issues over the coming weeks, perhaps by asking the children if thinking about the root of their faith and hope has helped them live their daily lives?

This issue was written by Alistair Fuller 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 June 2016: **Topical Activity:** Reading Quaker Faith & Practice, an introduction.

Available 1 July 2016: **Issue 104:** Faithful Lives *Quaker Faith & Practice 18*, explaining testimonies to the grace of God in the lives of Friends.

Image courtesy of Henrysalome, Wikimedia Commons (tree)

Materials available online are:

Current issues and *additional Resources*:

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; 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 103.A

Engage

Tell the story



Tell the story

Toby had always loved spending time with Edward, who was gentle and quiet and was so interested in what the children were doing. Beneath his crown of white hair he had a kind old face and smiling eyes and would listen very intently and offer some words of encouragement and advice.

But this morning, Toby had discovered something new about him, something extraordinary and unexpected. Edward had been telling the children in meeting about being in the Friends Ambulance Unit during the war. He talked about some of the sad and frightening things he had seen and he talked too about the great courage and kindness he had encountered. As well as battles and danger, he told them about faithful friendships, about people who were generous, unselfish and amazingly brave. It had been such a difficult thing for Edward to share and some of it had troubled Toby and the other children (and some of the other adults too). Toby wondered how someone as gentle and quiet as Edward had coped with such difficult things. He thought about his own life, about the things that worried and troubled him, the things that scared him, the people he sometimes found it so hard to be with. He wondered how he would have managed if he had been so far from home and had seen those things.



So, without thinking about or really meaning to say anything, he asked Edward,

“How did you get it through it all and keep going? Weren't you scared?”

Edward looked at him and was quiet for what felt like a long time. Then he said, very softly, “Yes Toby, yes I was scared. Sometimes so scared I didn't know what to do.

We all were. But then, in those moments, I would try to be still and quiet. Then I would feel a warm, steady light, deep inside me. It didn't change what was going on or make it less scary, but it gave me hope, it helped me to cope. It reminded me of God's light inside me and that the same light was in everyone there; whatever side they were fighting on, whoever they were, whatever they might have done.

God's light was in them and we were part of each other. The light reminded me of home, too, of my family and the people in my meeting, people all over the world who were praying for me, who were holding me in the Light; people who were praying for peace. I know God was in me and I was in God. Even when everything was darkness, that Light kept me going.”

Then, in the quiet that followed, another person stood up to speak. It was Esther, a young mum, whose baby daughter Zoe had just been in hospital. She said:

“I've seen that light too. I felt it inside me and all around me this week when Zoe was so poorly. I saw it in the doctors and nurses who were looking after her. I saw it in Zoe. I see it here, every week. I don't know if I'd call it God, but I do know it's what keeps me going and helps me through. It's what roots me to the ground and helps me grow”.

Images courtesy of Religious Society of Friends (ambulance).



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 103.B

Respond

Roots and Fruits



Apple, pear and leaf templates

