



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition May 2019 Issue 121



Gardening

Getting ready

This is part of the series which focusses on 'Room for All' the theme for Quaker Week 2018.

Quaker week looked at how we can become more diverse, more welcoming and reach out into the community. This issue looks at how gardens and gardening can be a way of creating hope by reaching out to the wider community around us and by offering spiritual growth and healing. Take a moment to think about what gardens you have visited and may have worked in. Think about how gardens were important to Jesus, they were places he went to walk, be silent and pray to God.

In this issue we are going to look at: how gardens bring people together; how gardens grow not only plants but people; how gardens help healing and bring hope. In the same way we need to nurture plants we need to nurture each other, our friendships and relationships. You might need to gather some materials together for the different activities. Details of resources and equipment needed are included in each section.



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

Gather in a circle for a time of stillness to begin. Have some pictures of gardens, flowers, plants, gardening tools for children to look at. Ask if any of them would like to share anything about a garden they have or have been in. Ask them to choose one of the pictures that they like and why.



Explain that today you will be thinking about gardens and how gardening and gardens build hope, communities and healing. Ask them what it might be like to live somewhere with no gardens, parks, trees? You could read the story '*A child's garden: a story of hope*' by Michael Foreman (see sidebar p.3).

Underpinning references

Bible: Luke 13 v.18-19
The parable of the mustard seed:

He said therefore, 'What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in the branches.'

Engage

Ask the children

Can they think of any ways that gardens and gardening help people? Some ideas are as follows:

Gardens can help bring different groups of people together to break down barriers: they can give people with no jobs something to do; they help people make friendships and build communities; they provide good food for people without much money; they can give groups of people hope and something to look forward to. Working in a garden can help people who are mentally ill, have a disability, or who are in prison feel more positive.

Community Gardens

Ask if the children know of any gardens that are helping to bring people from different cultures, backgrounds or circumstances together. These are often called community gardens. Planting a garden together gives people something to look forward to and a sense of purpose. Here are two examples to explore: (see sidebar for links to the following projects).

Mulberry Tree Community Garden - Tottenham Quaker Meeting have created a community garden in their meeting house grounds. It brings people together from across the community – they share the vegetables they grow. The garden gives people something to do, creates opportunities for forming new friendships and provides food for everyone, some who have very little money to buy good food with.

Wildflower Alley - Wildflower Alley is a community led initiative that started in 2015 to transform the derelict, rubbish filled area behind the back to back terrace housing in the 'Holy Lands' area of South Belfast, into a beautiful communal space. It has dramatically improved the life of the residents and helped to break down barriers. It has allowed long term residents, students and migrant families to work together and build relationships and understanding. It started with free flowers and free compost donated from Queen's University and has evolved to become an inspirational community space that has won many awards.

Gardens and healing

Ask the children how gardens make them feel? Many people feel that gardens are peaceful, and make them feel better. Some people who have had difficult lives find that gardening helps them heal. Gardens were important to Jesus, they were places he went to walk, be silent and pray to God (see *the New Testament in the Bible - Matthew 26 v.36*). When we plant a seed we have to look after it – what do we need to do to make a seed grow?

You might like to read '*The Promise*' (see sidebar p.3) by Nicola Davies about how a girl steals a handbag from an old lady but instead of money she finds acorns inside. She then goes on a journey to fulfil her promise to the old lady and plant the acorns. Discuss with the children how the girl felt before she took the bag and how she felt after she had planted the acorns. How did her actions change people?

Across the world people are planting gardens to help people heal – you can read more about some projects by following *other links* in the side bar.

References & other resources

Quaker Faith & Practice 28:10

Mulberry Tree

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories/the-mulberry-tree-community-garden>

Wildflower Alley

<https://keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.etinunet/keepnorthernirelandbeautiful/documents/007112.pdf>

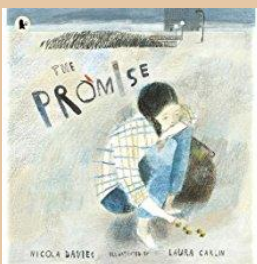
Other Links:

Seeds of hope – gardens springing up in refugee camps
<https://lemontretrust.org>

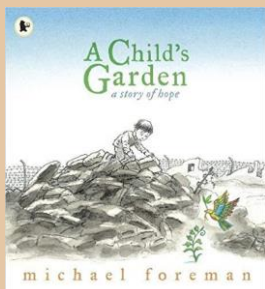
Comfrey Project - Refugees gardening in Tyneside.
<http://thecomfreyproject.org.uk>

Thrive – Prison gardening work in HM Prison Hewell
<https://www.thrive.org.uk/news/news/new-s-499.aspx>

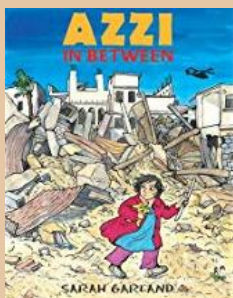
References & other resources



ISBN-13: 978-1406355598



ISBN-13: 978-1406325881



ISBN-13: 978-1847806512

These titles are available from the Quaker Bookshop

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<http://bookshop.quaker.org.uk>

Additional Resources 121.A and B can be found at:
www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren by selecting 'resources for current issue'

Respond

There are many ways to explore this topic with children. Here are some suggestions of activities. Select one or two that will engage your group and encourage them to respond to the theme:

- If you have a garden in your meeting house you could work on a project, maybe planting runner beans, peas or flowers that later could be harvested and shared with the Meeting.
- Make a miniature garden, this can be done individually, in pairs or small groups (see *Additional Resource 121.A link in sidebar*).
- Younger children could grow cress in yogurt pots, use white sticky labels on the yogurt posts so they can be decorated i.e. with a face so the cress becomes its hair.
- Make or play a game (see *Additional Resource 121.B in sidebar*). Talk about what it takes to nurture a garden.
- On a large piece of paper draw a garden – make it into a collage. Bring old magazines, tissue paper, wrapping paper, leaves and petals to rub, cut out and add on. Show how if you work together you can create something beautiful for the future, and others to enjoy. Pin it up somewhere in your meeting house so everyone can see it and be inspired.
- Older children could write a poem about a garden, seeds growing etc.
- Make a puzzle – provide some pictures of gardens, plants or flowers. Ask each child to choose one and paste it on a piece of card (old cereal boxes can be used). Ask them to cut the picture up into pieces (not too small, but can be different shapes). Give each child another's puzzle to put back together.
- 'Me and my Tree' (adapted from Spirit Games by Barbara Sher). You can play this if you have a tree at your Quaker Meeting or if you are near a park. Choose a tree(s) that works for your group. Everyone gives the tree a hug, then stand round the tree holding hands and close your eyes. Start a conversation with the tree i.e. Hello tree? How many leaves do you have? What birds have visited today? Are you thirsty? Let each child ask a question. With a piece of paper and crayon let each child take a rubbing of the bark. Finally, all sit at the base of the tree and feel at peace and loved. Listen quietly within to hear any messages from the tree. Pour water at the tree's base before you go.



Reflect

Gather the children together to talk about what they have been doing:

- Ask if any of them want to share what they have done.
- Talk to them about what have they have learned.
- Has is changed the way they think about gardens?
- Invite them to think about the season ahead – what might they be doing in the garden at home, school etc?
- What about further ahead - is there something they might like to plan for in the future e.g. creating a small garden, holding a seed swap, have a plant sale.



Remind them that gardens are places to find peace, nature, community etc. and places where they can meet God and that of God in everyone.

Finish with a time of stillness and quiet.

Review

It's good to take time to review the session.

Take time to think about:

- Did the children engage with the topic? What questions or issues did they raise?
- Did the activities work well? Did they enable the children to work together?
- Were the children been able to participate in their own way and each one feel that they could express their feeling and experiences?
- Did the children suggest any follow-up activities that you might be able to take forward and do another time?
- Is there anything that didn't go well and if so why?

This issue was written by Megan Corrigan and edited by Mel Cook and Howard Nurden.

Journeys in the Spirit is published in two formats on alternative 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 alternative month is a topical activity – something about the news or of a seasonal interest.

Available from 6 June 2019 (later due to Yearly Meeting) topical activity 'Housing'.

Available from 1 July 2019 'Future'.

Materials available online are:

Additional Resources Sheets

An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting

A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship

These can be accessed through

www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren by scrolling down to 'resources for current issue'.

For a 'How to use Journeys in the Spirit guide', the catalogue of previous issues and a link to the resources for recent issues, go to www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren and scroll down to find what you want.

Published by Children & Young People's Staff Team, Quaker Life

Available free by subscription.

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Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional Resource 121.A

Respond

Make a miniature garden



Make a miniature garden

This can be done in a number of ways depending on the size of your group and the age range.

It would work best if they can work in pairs or small groups so they understand the idea of working together to create a garden.

You will need:

- A plastic or tin foil plate, flan dish, old biscuit tin or plastic selection sweet box (one for each group)
- Compost
- Foil / small pot / lid of a jar (for a pond)
- A combination of any of the following: stones, twigs, shells, pebbles, bark, sand, gravel, seeds (i.e. cress / radish, rocket), moss, carrot or parsnip or celery tops, maybe some small plants (plugs in trays from the garden centre, herbs etc.), small jars can be used to put flowers in (the ones you get in a café with jam in), small flowers

Making a garden:

- Fill container with compost
- Add stones for a path
- Use foil or small pots / lids to make a pond
- Use twigs for trees, fence
- Put carrot, parsnip, celery tops into glass of water and they will sprout leaves in a few days
- Make grass by scattering cress seeds, radish or rocket seeds on the compost
- Use small plants if you have them
- Use small jars and flowers if you have them
- Water well and leave for a few days to grow

You can let your imagination go wild - do something very simple or something more adventurous!!





Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resource 121.B

Respond

Make and play a game



The game in this sheet is an idea that can be used or adapted in many ways depending on the size of your group and the age range:

- The game can be made beforehand by printing it out or copying it onto a larger piece of card / paper to be played as part of the session
- The outline for the game can be made and filled in with the young people before playing it
- The game can be made from scratch in the session, working as a team and playing it together once made (this design is just an idea so any similar design would work)

You will need:

- A large sheet of paper, card or a cereal box opened out
- Some pencils, pens, crayons
- Scissors
- Glue
- A dice and shaker

To make the game:

- Print out the template or draw it out onto a large piece of card or paper – you can draw any type of flower / plant you like
- Divide the stem into squares and add in instructions on some squares – the ones included on the template are some ideas but your group may be able to think of others. Depending on the size of your piece of card/paper more squares can be added
- Colour in the picture with pencils or crayons
- Make a counter for each person playing – draw round a 5p or 10p piece, cut out and colour each a different colour

To play the game:

- The youngest player starts
- Each player puts their counter on the starting place
- In turn each player shakes the dice and moves the number of places shown on the dice
- If they land on a square with instructions they need to follow what is written
- The first person to the centre of the flower wins

Have fun!

