



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition November 2014 Issue 93



Equipping children for ministry

Getting ready

At Woodbrooke Quaker Study centre there is a course for adult Friends called 'Equipping for Ministry'. This enables Friends to explore and develop what ministry is for them. The writer of this issue wanted to offer ways to explore a similar approach with children. Here is an extract of a conversation he had after one meeting for worship as an explanation of what 'equipping children for ministry' means:

"We'd had the notices, including reports from the children about their understanding of Paul's letter to the Corinthians 1:13 – envy, boasting, selfish, truth, kindness. I was talking to the convenor of children's committee. She said, 'I thought the children were great today. That line in Paul about putting away childish ways really gets to me. I have so much baggage that gets in the way. The children just get it. They just do it. It's simple for them and that's why I offer to take the children. It's a way of connecting for me in the simplest way with God.'

During meeting, another friend had read aloud unprompted from Advices and Queries 19. It's all there, listening to each word, plump with life, dancing like cooking apples and pears on the trees.

So, I think, we heard our children today. They came back into a simply, lovingly, gathered meeting and joined in the final minutes of worship. We heard our children later too, outside in the peace garden, where we held a 30 minute meeting for worship for Peace One Day. Three of our youngest children, accompanied by an adult, asked passers-by if they would like a leaflet. As far as I could tell, all but one took a leaflet cheerfully."

Much of this issue may seem to be about ways into worship – the intention of this issue is to go beyond that into exploring what meeting for worship is and the affect it can have.

See sidebar for details of the booklet *Quaker meeting and me* – on page 21 there is a picture that links to the 'apples and pears' reference above.

Gather

Instead of a time of stillness play a name game after any news that children want to share – this is because there is an extended worship activity in the *Engage* section on page 2. Here are three examples:

- My name is ___ and my favourite woodland animal is a _____
- My name is *Tom* and I like *tortoises*. (Each person chooses an animal that starts with the same letter as the person's name).
- My name is Christina and I like to

Choose one or more of these. Each person takes it in turn.

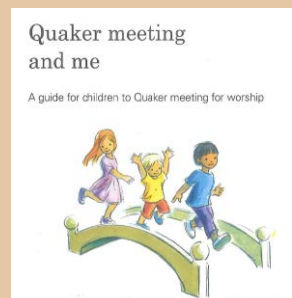
Journeys in the Spirit offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children and young people.

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 and Practice 2.76 – Anne Hosking children in meeting and ministry



For free booklets email cypadmin@quaker.org.uk or phone 0207 663

Engage

After the name game ask the children to have a little shuffle about and then sit comfortably.

Say that everyone is going to stay sitting for a few minutes whilst you read through a special thinking story. Adjust the language for different ages as needed. Ask them to imagine they are sitting round a table in a cottage which sits in a small village on the edge of an old wood. Continue by slowly going through the following script:

Imagine something precious (but you don't know what it is) in a parcel, wrapped in several layers of paper in a box. It's all covered with brown paper tied up with string.

As you settle into silence, you are going to imagine opening this parcel. I will describe things which come into our minds in worship and ask you to throw each away in turn, like the layers of the package.

So first look around. See who's here. Smile at your friends. See where everyone's sitting. Look at the people you came with and see if they're smiling. That's fine. You've had a good look. Now take all those thoughts about people and put them to one side, like the string on the parcel which we don't need at the moment. (*Ask the children to close their eyes – if they are comfortable doing so.*)

Let's go on to the first, the outer layer of paper.

Think about the rest of your day. Do you know what's for dinner? What are you going to do this afternoon? Think of everything you've got to do – and what you're going to enjoy. Right, now put those thoughts behind you too; we don't need them at the moment.

We're going further into ourselves.

The box stands for anything you're worried about: next week at school, things at home, trouble with friends, anything. Don't be afraid to think about them. Have a real good worry. And now let's dump all those sad and frightening things for the time being.

In your imagination throw the box away.

Listen to all the noises you can hear: birds, cars, people outside the room; breathing and gentle movement in the meeting. Listen, listen, then let all those noises go like an unwanted wrapping.

We've come to the last two layers.

Listen inside your own body to those funny clicks and thumps inside it. Can you feel your heart beating and your breath coming and going, and the sound of swallowing, like a click? Concentrate on that. Then forget it too.

Now take off the final wrapping by listening deep inside yourself and find a treasure hidden inside the parcel.

I can't tell you what it will be because it's different for each person. What do you see? What do you feel? Just close your eyes and listen and see... look deeper.

Pause.

After a few moments tell the children to open their eyes, if they have been shut, and slowly have a stretch of their arms and legs and a shrug of their shoulders – nothing hurried.

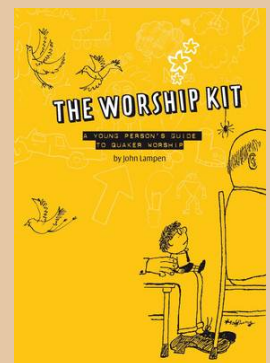
(The script above is drawn from the book, *The Worship Kit*, by John Lampen – see side bar for more details).

Now go onto the questions and one of the activities in *Respond*.

References & other resources

Quaker Faith and Practice; Advices & Queries 1:19

Further examples of stilling, centering and worship guidance can be found in *The Worship Kit* by John Lampen. These have been used very successfully with children in a variety of Quaker settings.



Available from the Quaker Bookshop
0207 663 1030 or
www.quaker.org.uk/shop

References & other resources

Music example -
CD Musica
Barocca, Il
Giardino
Armonico, 2001 &
2013, Das Alte
Werk

The poem by
Phillip Gross,
*Quakers in
Pompeii* is from
the collection
*A Speaking
Silence*, Quaker
poets of today,
Edited by R Bailey
and S Krayner

A speaking silence

Quaker poets of today

Edited by R V Bailey and Stevie Krayner



*Additional
Resource 93.A and
93.B* can be found
at:

[www.quaker.org.uk
/resources-children](http://www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children)

Respond

Before doing one or more of the activities below ask the children some questions like:

- What did you feel like in the sitting exercise you just did?
- What did you like about it?
- Was there anything that you thought was important about it?
- Was there anything that you didn't like?

Just listen to the responses making no judgement on what is said or not said.

Colouring and modelling. *Resources for this activity: A4 drawing paper - the best you can find; oil pastels; colouring pencils; wax crayons of different thicknesses; modelling clay, plasticene or playdough; boards or card to rest or work on. Have a CD or other music player playing soft music during this activity – an example is in the sidebar.*

Set out the creative resources on different tables. Tell the children that they can use one or both of the types of resources that have been set out but they have to complete one first. The task is to use the colouring equipment to make a picture or a shape that somehow shows or describes what it was like when they were doing the 'unwrapping the box' activity in the quiet and stillness. The colouring can be a pattern or a picture or words in colour.

The modelling material is to be used to make a shape of or about what they imagined or saw or felt in the 'unwrapping the box' activity. Initially children may want to talk about their idea a little – that is fine. That said, this activity is to be done quietly. Discourage anyone from saying what they have made. They can talk about them later in the group or to a parent or a Friend in Meeting, if they wish.

What has been made is quietly brought into the circle of the group when everyone has finished. Everyone then quietly looks at what has been made. If children want they can then take what they made into meeting for worship.

Peter Peri sculpture. Hand out copies of the picture of the Peter Peri sculpture, '*Quaker Meeting*' – these are on *Additional Resource 93.A*. Ask questions about the picture:

What's happening? Who can you see? What do you think they are thinking or feeling? Is anybody missing? How do you feel in meeting for worship?

Is there any difference between how it feels to be in the children's meeting for worship compared to the main meeting for worship?

Children who want to speak (or minister) should use a talking stick. This could be a stick, a smooth stone, a shell or a copy of *Advices and Queries*. Explain how the 'talking stick' works – people can only speak when they are holding it; a person who speaks has to replace the object back in the centre of the group – this creates a pause between people speaking. Place whatever you are using on the ground in the middle of your group. Using the resources as outlined for the drawing and modelling reflection above ask the children to make a drawing or model of meeting for worship – what it looks like or what it feels like or what is going on.

A poem by Phillip Gross, *Quakers in Pompeii*. This is an activity for older children. Have copies of the poem available - it is on *Additional Resource 93.B*. Also have copies of the sculpture pictures to give out – see *Additional Resource 93.A*. Explain what the reference to Pompeii means. Say that it might be a bit difficult to hear first time and that it is not expected that it is understood straightaway. It will mean different things to different people. Suggest that children listen for a word or phrase which stays with them. Just enjoy the words. Go on to read the poem aloud. Use the drawing and colouring equipment listed above – include drawing pencils – for children to draw or write about the poem as they would like. The poem come from a collection – see sidebar for more details.

Reflect

Bring the children back together into a circle. Ask some or all of the following questions.

How does it feel to sit in stillness?

Have you ever wanted to speak or minister in meeting for worship?

How does it feel if you just don't have anything that you need to say in meeting for worship?

What do you think if somebody wants to minister more than once?

What if you can only speak once when you are talking at home or in school. How does it feel?

Where do you think the words or pictures come from when you are in a meeting for worship or in a still, quiet time?

Read Advice and Query 1:19. Ask children what they think it means. Ask the group if someone would like to read aloud Advices and Query 1:19 when everyone goes into the other meeting for worship. This could be at the end of notices.

It might also be that one of the older children would read the Phillip Gross poem if it has been considered.



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 – this time about supporting a climate change campaign in Oceania

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.

Review

The review can happen at the time or later – maybe by yourself or with others.

Some useful questions for the use of volunteers to look back over and learn from the session include:

- Have children been able to participate in their own way?
- What went well and why?
- Has each child been able to reflect, even a little, on something about her or his thoughts and feelings about being in worship and what it feels like?

This issue was developed and written by Bernie Kennedy and edited by Chris Nickolay and Howard Nurden. Chris Nickolay also wrote the Topical Activity.

Issue 94 is the fifth in the series about *Living as a Quaker*. It has the title *'The Quaker business method'*. Available from 1 December 2014.

Issue 95 is the sixth in the series about *Living as a Quaker*. It has the title *Advice and Query 1:19*. Available from 5 January 2015.

Issue 96 is the seventh in the series about *Living as a Quaker* and has the title *Quakers and the Bible*. Available from 2 March 2015.

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 resources 93.A

Respond

Peter Peri sculpture



When using these pictures in a Respond activity print and cut out enough for everybody to have one.



Peter Peri (1899-1967) **Quaker Meeting**, sculpture
Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 93.B

Respond

Phillip Gross poem



This poem refers to the Peter Peri sculpture of a Quaker meeting on Additional Resource 93.A

Quakers in Pompeii - a poem

Let's say the ash came down;
we were forged and preserved.
Here's a good girl, sitting up at table
waiting to be served.

This woman's big hands
think nappies, think bleach.
She'll give the world a clip around the earhole
if it gets within reach.

That man is hugging
something spiky to his heart.
This one says *Sorry, Sir* (though he's a big
boy now) *it fell apart*

in my hands. Age
tenses this one like a spring
or a grasshopper, poised to flick away
into nothing. Or to sing.

This one's a sit-down striker
who will not be moved.
That handcuffed convict waits
for his appeal to be refused

again, again. This woman stays
slumped backwards where
somebody knocked her. She hides her face.
She holds the chair.

The last man frankly
wants to be excused...
as well we all might if the final flash-
bulb caught our attitudes,

when the clay we've been moulding
eventually bakes.
Until then, listen to them breathing. Love
the fidgets, Love the aches.

This poem by Phillip Gross, *Quakers in Pompeii* is from the collection
A Speaking Silence, Quaker poets of today, Edited by R Bailey