



# Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition November 2018 Issue 118



## Diversity

### Getting ready

This issue is the first in a series, which focusses on the theme of 'Room for More'. As Quakers, our table is already rich with good things, but who is missing? How can we let people know that there's a space for them and a space for what they bring with them?

This issue looks at the topic of diversity and how important difference is. It encourages us to consider how we can be welcoming and caring, not only to people who are like us, but to everybody, however different they might be.

As you prepare, think about the diversity of your children's group and your own meeting. How does it compare with the diversity of the community in which you live? Are there any issues you need to be sensitive to? You might need to gather some materials together for the different activities. Read *Additional resource 118.A* (for link see sidebar, page 2 of this issue) about sharing Bible stories with children.

*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 or play game 6 from *Journeys in the Spirit* games supplement (link in sidebar p.2).

Explain that today we are going to think about diversity. What does this mean? The children may have some ideas. Diversity is about difference and valuing these differences. We live in a universe full of difference: each planet is different; each star is different; our world is full of different plants and animals. People come from different cultures and speak different languages. Each person is different, and we are all good at different things. Talk about why this is important. Imagine a football team which only had goalkeepers or an orchestra where everyone played the same instrument!

Quakers welcome diversity. We value and try to increase our understanding of those who are different from us. Talk about who you know who is different from yourselves.

### Underpinning references

A&Q 16: Do you welcome the diversity of culture, language and expressions of faith in our yearly meeting and in the world community of friends? Seek to increase your understanding and to gain from this rich heritage and wide range of spiritual insights. Uphold your own and other yearly meetings in your prayers.

# Engage

## Jesus and difference

The stories of Jesus from the Bible have a lot to tell us about how difficult it can be to be different. Jesus was always spending time with people who were thought of as 'different', particularly those whose differences made them unpopular. Can you think of any examples?

*Read the following paragraphs and then talk about them with the children.*

Jesus lived in a time when people didn't understand what caused illnesses. When people became unwell, demons were blamed. Diseases which can be easily treated with medicines today, such as leprosy, were very dangerous then because there were no medicines to cure them. People thought leprosy could be caught by touching those who had the disease. Those who caught leprosy were sent away to live outside of their village or town in case they gave the disease to anyone else. In the Bible, there are many stories about Jesus caring for people who were unwell, including people with leprosy. People believed that Jesus could heal them and often, Jesus made them feel better by touching them, something that other people were not prepared to do.

*Discuss with the children about who might we find difficult to touch today?*

Jesus also lived in a time when his country had been invaded by the powerful Romans. Sometimes, this made life difficult for ordinary people and the Roman soldiers were not popular. People didn't want to have anything to do with them unless they had to. But when a Roman centurion's servant was sick, Jesus was willing to help.

*Discuss with the children who the powerful people are in our lives today? Ask them to consider whether we care about them, even if we disagree with them?*

Jesus was very good at noticing people, especially the people nobody else noticed, who were often poor and powerless or people who had done bad things. One of these people was called Zacchaeus. He had collected taxes from ordinary people for the government and he forced people to give more money than he was supposed to, keeping it for himself. This made him unpopular. When Jesus visited the city where Zacchaeus lived, Zacchaeus didn't imagine for a moment that Jesus would want to see him, but he wanted to see Jesus and he climbed up in a tree to get a better view. Imagine his surprise when Jesus looked up into the tree and said he would like to stay at Zacchaeus' home. It was a visit that would change his life.

*Discuss with the children who we walk past and do not notice in everyday life?*

In Jesus's time, just like today, people could be suspicious of people who came from different countries and had different beliefs. Sometimes, even Jesus was suspicious. One day he met a mother from Syrophenicia whose daughter was unwell. She asked him to help her daughter, but Jesus refused at first, saying that helping his own people was more important. The mother challenged him and changed his mind, persuading him to help. Jesus learnt that we should care for everyone, regardless of how different they might be to ourselves.

*Discuss with the children who we might need to change our minds about and see differently?*

## References & other resources

Jesus heals a man with leprosy: Matthew chapter 8 1-4.

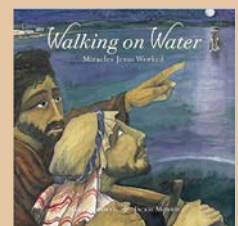
Jesus heals the centurion's servant: Matthew chapter 8 5-13

The story of Zacchaeus: Luke chapter 19 1-10.

The story of the Syrophenician woman: Mark chapter 7 24-30

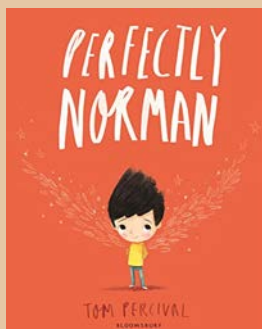
All these stories are found in the New Testament section of the Bible

Walking on water: miracles Jesus worked - by Mary Hoffman and Jackie Morris includes the story of healing the centurion's servant



*Additional Resource 118.A and Games supplement*  
<http://www.quaker.org.uk/children-and-young-people/work-quaker-setting/resources-children/journeys-child#heading-1>

## References & other resources



Perfectly Norman by Tom Percival. Norman had always been normal... Until the day he grew a pair of wings.



Coming to England by Floella Benjamin is a book for older children, which explains what it was like coming to England from Trinidad and being treated differently.

All these books are available from the Quaker Bookshop

020 7663 1030 / 1031

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

## Respond

### Exploring Bible stories

Choose a Bible story about difference and use some of the ideas in *Additional Resource 118.A* (see link in sidebar on page 2 of this issue) to bring the story to life. It might be one of the stories on page 2 or a story you have found yourselves.

### Our differences

Play a game of 'the sun shines on...' to illustrate difference. Ask everyone to sit on chairs in a circle with one person in the middle. When the person in the middle says, 'the sun shines on...' for example everyone who likes pasta, then everyone who likes pasta changes places and must find a seat, including the person in the middle. The person without a chair remains in the middle. Encourage everyone to include a variety of differences e.g.

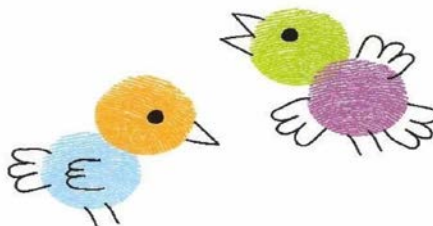
- colours they are wearing
- activities they like doing
- activities they are good at
- places they like going to

Continue until everyone has had a go at being in the middle. Comment on how different everyone seems to be.

### We are unique

Using an ink pad or paint and paper, invite everyone to make a finger or thumb print. Look at them under a magnifying glass. Talk about the similarities and differences. Not only does each person have a unique set of fingerprints, but the pattern on every finger is unique.

Make some fingerprint pictures. When you have finished, share your pictures together. Are they all different too?



### Our similarities

It is important to celebrate our differences, but it is also important to remember our similarities. People may look different to us and think differently too, but the feelings we have when things happen to us are often the same. One way to illustrate this is to take some apples or hard-boiled eggs of different colours and cut them in half. They look different on the outside, but just like people, they are similar on the inside. Do they smell and taste the same as each other?



## Reflect

Before the end of children's meeting try to have some time to reflect on what you have shared.

Questions to think about: -

- Why is it important to value difference?
- Why is it important to remember that people who seem different from us are often like us on the inside?
- What might we do to show we care about other people who seem different from ourselves?

Talk about the way in which small, kind, loving actions can make a difference and see if the children can think of some examples.



### 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](http://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](http://www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren) and scroll down to find what you want.

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Contact:  
CYP Staff Team,  
Friends House,  
173 Euston Road,  
London NW1 2BJ

Phone: 020 7663 1013

Email:  
[cypadmin@quaker.org.uk](mailto:cypadmin@quaker.org.uk)

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

## Review

When reviewing the session, think about.

- How did the children engage with the Bible stories? Which ideas from *Additional Resource 118.A* did you use and how well did they work?
- Did relationships within the children's meeting enable the children to be open about their feelings and experiences? Are the differences they perceive self-identified or those that are identified by others?
- To explore the issue of diversity further, you might like to contact Edwina Peart, Inclusion and Diversity Coordinator at Friends House: [edwinap@quaker.org.uk](mailto:edwinap@quaker.org.uk). She would like to hear children's thoughts on diversity.

### This issue was written by Kathy Chandler 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 3 December 2018: Topical Activity - Christmas

Available from 2 January 2019: Community Service





# Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resource 118.A

Getting Ready    Sharing Bible stories with children



## 1. Get to know the story

Read the story yourself several times. If possible, read it in different versions of the Bible. If you have a Bible with a commentary, read what this says about the story.

Ask others about the story and see what they say about it. We all interpret stories differently and we create their meaning for ourselves.

Even if it is a story you know well, remember that our understandings of stories can change when we come back to them because we are not the same people as we were when we last heard them.

Ask yourself:

- Who first told the story and when? What can you find out about the storyteller(s)?
- Who was the story first told to? What can you find out about the audience? What were their lives like? What was important to them?
- When was the story first written down? Remember that some stories in the Bible will have been passed down from generation to generation orally before being written down.
- What is the story about and why was it told? Is it a **true** story, based on an event which happened or is it a **truth** story, told to convey an important lesson or idea? Many stories have elements of both. Some stories in the Bible are understood differently by different people at different times. For example, some people might regard Noah's Ark as a true story, whereas others might regard it as a truth story, told to encourage people to take better care of the world we live in.

## 2. Think about the relevance of the story for today

Think about your own context and the children in your meeting. Ask yourself:

- What insights do you gain from the story personally?
- What are you hoping that the children will gain from hearing the story?
- Which aspects of the story will interest the children? Think about which parts of the story you plan to emphasise and which parts you might simplify.
- How does the story fit with any themes that the children or the meeting as a whole have been thinking about and how does it fit in with any other activities you plan to cover in your session?

## 3. Make the story come alive

Think about ways in which the children can use their different senses to experience the story. Think about:

- **Hearing:** Adapt the story to suit your audience, writing it in your own words. Don't be afraid to shorten it, simplify it and choose language appropriate for the ages of the children who will be

listening. If there is any music or singing in the story, think about how you could reproduce this and how the children might join in.

- **Seeing:** Consider using pictures, play dough/plasticine/Lego figures, felt boards, puppets, drama or Godly Play. For more information about Godly Play, see <http://www.quaker.org.uk/children-and-young-people/work-quaker-setting/resources-all-age>
- **Touching:** Are there any objects in the story that you could bring along and invite the children to touch or hold?
- **Tasting:** Is there any food, such as fruit or bread, in the story? You could prepare and share some with the children at the appropriate point. Remember to consider any food allergies.
- **Smelling:** What smells would the characters in the story have experienced? It might be a challenge to replicate these whilst telling your story but you could mention them and encourage the children to imagine the smells.

You can also encourage the children to use their imagination to **picture themselves within the story**. Ask questions like:

- Which character would you be if you were in this story?
- What do you think you were doing just before/after the story happened?
- How did you feel when...?

Think about ways to enable the children to identify with the **feelings** of the characters in the story. Ask them how they think the characters are feeling at different points: happy, sad, surprised, scared...?



Stories can also involve **movement**. You could put a different feeling in each corner of the room (see paper plates above) and ask the children to run to each one to show how they think the characters are feeling at different points in the story.

For younger children, you could add actions for the children to do each time a particular character appears in the story or each time a particular thing happens.

Many Bible stories involve journeys between different towns and different countries. Telling different parts of a story in different parts of the meeting house or garden to represent the different places can make these journeys memorable.

Alternatively, you could cut a simple written story into parts and hide the parts to make a story treasure hunt. Younger children will enjoy finding the parts, whilst older ones will enjoy trying to put the pieces in the right order.