



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition October 2014 Issue 92



Looking after each other & making links

Getting ready

In this issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* we look at the story of Margaret Fell, one of the founders of Quakerism, and how she helped shape the way Quakers look after each other today. She has been called 'the Mother of Quakerism' but as well as her direct work for Friends she was a prolific writer, witness for women in the emerging Quaker movement drawing, for both these strands, on a deep Biblical knowledge and vision.

This is not only about history but about what systems Friends use now. Finding out about how Quakers look after each other is important for children to know about – it is part of learning how to ask for help when they need it. It can also be part of understanding that having support is an important aspect of living and growing up.

We can only touch the surface of the story of Margaret Fell but the intention is to assist children, and adults, into an understanding of how what we do now comes from a long time ago but is still very helpful now because it works. Before beginning you might like to consider the question – '*how can we make our meeting a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured and strangers are welcome?*'



A rather romantic picture of Margaret Fell and George Fox

Gather

Listening and looking after each other.

Welcome each person as they arrive, asking how their day has been so far and whether they have had a good week?

When everyone has gathered in the circle, and there has been a small period of silence, ask everyone in turn to share any news they may have. When news has been shared ask children if they have any questions about things they have heard. It is important for everyone to feel they have been listened to.

Read out advices and queries 1:18 about making the meeting a community. Simplify the language if necessary. Ask children what they think the Advice means. Explain, if necessary, what you think it means. Ask the children how they accept each other?

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

Advices & queries 1:18

Women in the Bible:
www.womeninthebible.net/Priscilla-Prisca.htm
www.womeninthebible.net/2.8.Samaritan_woman.htm

www.galaxie.com/article/pp09-3-03 - an extract about Margaret.

Engage

A story about Margaret Fell. Say that you are going to talk about a woman called Margaret Fell – one of the very first Quakers. The story is written below. There are pictures of Margaret and Swarthmoor Hall on *Additional Resource 92.A* - show the pictures as you tell the story. Read the story – adapt the language as you think necessary.

Once there was a woman called Margaret Fell. She lived in the part of the country we now call the Lake District – mountains, lakes and forest. Margaret was born in the year 1614.

She lived for 88 years – a very long time then when there weren't doctors as we have them now. In the time that she lived there were 6 Queens and Kings – one of whom was executed. There was also a horrible war in England between people who liked having a King or Queen and people who didn't (it is much more complicated than that but this is another story).

When Margaret was 17 she married a man called Thomas Fell. He was going to be a Judge. Margaret had 9 children with Thomas – 8 of their children lived to become grown ups. Margaret lived with Thomas in a big house called Swarthmoor Hall. You can stay there today.

As Margaret was growing up she always went to Church like everybody else did. The Church had somebody called a vicar or priest in charge who was there to tell people what God wanted them to do. One day a man called George Fox came to Margaret's house. He was one of the first Quakers. Margaret listened to George talk about Quakers. Thomas was away. When he came back some people said George had put a 'magic spell' on Margaret. George frightened them – they thought he was scary. There was no magic –Margaret was just different after listening to George. He went to Margaret's church. He asked to speak in the church. After the singing, prayers and talking by the vicar George stood up and spoke. He said that the vicar wasn't telling the truth about what Jesus had said in the Bible and how people should live their lives. Margaret said that, after hearing George say this, she cried and her heart hurt like it was a bit broken. She became a Quaker. Lots of family and people in her house joined the Quakers.

Margaret was in charge of the farm at Swarthmoor. Margaret also looked after a factory near Swarthmoor called 'the forge' where a metal called iron was made. Margaret was very good at organising and this was a big help to Quakers.

It was very difficult to be a Quaker at this time as many people thought that Quakers were against the King and God and many Quakers were put into prison for their beliefs. Margaret was also sent to prison. This was horrible.

When Margaret wasn't in prison she worked hard to make sure that there was money to help Quakers who were travelling talking about what they believed. Travelling was hard – they used horses, coaches or they walked. They were often in trouble and hurt by people who didn't like them.

Margaret was always very busy writing letters to Quakers who were travelling, starting up Quaker meetings, who were in prison or who just needed to be cheered up when things got hard. Swarthmoor Hall became like the main office of Quakers. Without the work that Margaret did being a Quaker would have been much harder. As Margaret's children grew up they also helped – it wasn't always easy for them. At least once soldiers broke into their home to arrest their mother.

What else did Margaret do? She wrote letters to the King and went to speak to him to tell him Quakers were people of peace and would not start fighting him. She asked him to let Quakers meet to worship and be set free from prison. She also helped to start Quaker Women's Meetings that talked a lot about what Quakers should and did lots to help poor and hungry people – Quaker and not Quaker. Margaret was doing all this at a time when most people thought women should be quiet and do as they were told.

Pause after you finish. Ask if anybody has any questions. Ask if there is a bit of the story children liked the most or that they thought was most important.

References & other resources

Fell and the Rise of Quakerism:
Bonnelyn Young
Kunze - available
online

*Margaret Fell
Overview:*

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/margaret-fell/#LifWor>

For older children it might be worth looking at the *Horrible History* series for more information about the Stuarts– there is one called *The Slimy Stuarts*.



Contact the
Quaker Bookshop
to order a copy at
0207 6631030

*Additional
Resource 92.A* and
can be found at:
[www.quaker.org.uk
/resources-children](http://www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children)

References & other resources

Quaker Faith & Practice: 4.12
Describes the reason why meetings were set up.

Amnesty International - writing letters

www2.amnesty.org.uk/sites/default/files/activity_10_part_2.pdf

Information to read:

The roles of Elders and Overseers.
Quaker faith & practice: 12.12 and 12.13

Respond

After the open questions at the end of the story in the *Engage* section say something like: "Margaret was very good at making sure people were looked after and keeping people in touch with each other. She was also very good at saying what she thought was important or true – even when it got her into trouble. She would speak out for people who were in trouble." Choose one or two of the following activities as ways for children to link with and help others.

Making links with people – writing letters. *Resources for each of the letter writing activities below: pens, paper, pencils, crayons.*

In Margaret Fell's time the only way to be in touch with people you did not see was to write letters. Sometimes letters from Quakers were stopped from being delivered as Quakers were not trusted. Letters that Margaret Fell wrote had news and words of comfort to Quakers (and her family when she was away).

Children could write or draw a letter in the children's meeting to somebody that they wouldn't normally see to tell them their news.

You could also talk about all the different jobs that people do in meeting. Ask the children to call out what they think is done – write it on a big piece of paper. Add others that you are aware of. Do they know who makes the drinks and provides the biscuits after meeting? Who washes up? Children could write or draw a letter to someone in meeting thanking them for the work they do that looks after people in meeting. Children could write a letter or letters to children in nearby Quaker meetings. What would they like to tell them or invite them to?

Speaking out for others - sending letters to people who are in prison. *Amnesty International* is a charity which helps people who are in prison when they haven't committed any crime. Every year they organise for lots of people around the world to send letters and cards to the prisoners to help them stay strong. There is a link to Amnesty in the sidebar. This may be an activity for older children.

Caring for each other - how do Quaker meetings do it? *Resources: a large sheet of paper and big felt pens.*

Ask an Elder or Overseer to come to children's meeting to talk about the ways that they are asked by meeting to look after people. Talk with children about they might do simple things to begin to act as Elders for their own meeting – closing their quiet times at the beginning and end of their meeting for example. What do they or could they do to look after each other? Ask children what they think about how they might look after each other between Meetings – especially where children's meeting is not weekly?

Have a discussion about what rules children would like to have in children's meeting to make sure everyone feels cared for. Write the rules on a big sheet of paper.

Looking after each other with food. *Resources: biscuits and icing.*

Some people have different diets and can't eat things that most people can. Gluten intolerance is something that can be a challenge when baking. Find out what different diets people have in meeting. Work with the children to prepare a simple selection of cakes and biscuits that everybody can eat. At Yearly Meeting Gathering in Bath one group of children decorated different types of pre-bought biscuits and cakes with allergen free icing – a lot of fun, quite simple and also good to eat.

Looking after each other in games. *Resources: bean bags, soft balls*

Play a simple game of catch – before it starts ask children how the group can make sure everyone can play? Play the 'tangling up and getting untangled' game. Everyone stands in a circle holding hands. One person stays out of the circle and directs people to get tangled – eg: going underneath someone's arm, turning around, stepping over a leg. People then have to carefully untangle themselves and each other without letting go.

Reflect

Looking after each other in children's meeting.

After the activities gather everybody together into a circle again. Have a little time of stillness for worship. Then ask children if anybody has anything that they would like to say to the adults in meeting about what they have all been doing. Is there anything that children want to ask adults in meeting – is there anything they would like to learn more about or be helped with? Would children like to do more in helping with the looking after of people in meeting? Finish with a time of quiet.



A painting of a Quaker meeting

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 a Quaker and looking after Quakers and other people?

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

Issue 93 is the fourth in the series about *Living as a Quaker*. It has the title '*Equipping children for ministry*'. Available from 3 November 2014.

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.

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 climate change actions.

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 92.A

Engage

The story of Margaret Fell



This is a picture of Margaret – she is the tallest of the three young women:

