

Journeys in the Spirit

April 2023

What makes your heart sing?



April Fools' Day, is the first day of April. A day when people share jokes and play tricks. Even the media join in, with the famous [spaghetti tree](#) being a memorable BBC prank. The average 4-year-old laughs 300 times a day. The average 40-year-old? Only 4. Laughter is [good for us](#) and helps us connect with each other. What's your favourite knock-knock joke?

KNOCK, KNOCK
WHO'S THERE?
YOU
YOU WHO?
YOO-HOO! ANYBODY HOME?

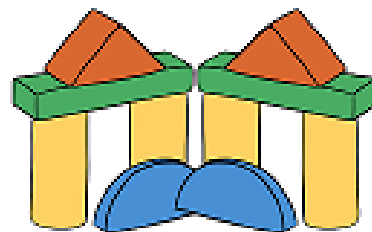
Joy-spotting

Not everything appears joyful at first, but is there a way to weave joy into the everyday? Dancing while tidying the bedroom? Teaming up with a friend to sweep the leaves? Ask the children for ideas and make a colourful chart to spread the inspiration. Look around the place where you hold meeting for worship— does it encourage joy? Are the children able to be involved in joyful changes?

In 2020 lockdown, Gareth Malone launched the [Great British Home Chorus](#) a lockdown choir for people longing for a sing-song. In a really painful and difficult time, singing brought people together and cheered up the airwaves. This home choir's rendition of 'You are my sunshine' is joyful, uplifting and reminds us that we are all connected. Music is good for the soul and benefits our health. [Sing me on a Journey](#) is a downloadable resource to encourage communities to sing together.

Be aware of the spirit of God at work in the ordinary activities and experience of your daily life. Spiritual learning continues throughout life, and often in unexpected ways. There is inspiration to be found all around us, in the natural world, in the sciences and arts, in our work and friendships, in our sorrows as well as in our joys. Are you open to new light, from whatever source it may come? Do you approach new ideas with discernment?
A&Q 1.02 7

Look around and notice your surroundings – do they spark joy? [These](#) reversible destiny lofts were designed to stimulate the immune system and promote wellness.



[Each part](#) of the building, encourages the inhabitant to use their body in more engaging ways. What would a joyful meeting house look like? Provide art materials, either 2D or 3D, and ask the children to create their own designs.

Read

In the story, *The Jar of Happiness*, Meg collects all the necessary ingredients in a jar, which she uses to cheer up her friends and family when they're feeling low. One day she loses the jar and wonders if she'll ever be happy again. [Read](#) or [watch](#) the story with the children. In sharing round her happiness with others, they were then able to help Meg when she needed them.

Make



What would be in your jar? Give each child an empty jar to fill. In it could be a twig because they love to climb trees, something blue for the sky, a square of fluffy fabric to remind them of their favourite slippers.

Pass it on

In the story, Meg used the contents of her jar to spread the joy. Joy can be infectious and cheering up someone's day will help spread happiness. What acts of kindness can the children think of to do for others? Maybe call up a grandparent? Clean a room without being asked? Sit with someone new at lunch? Make a birdfeeder? Make a kindness poster of ideas with the children to inspire others.

Just Playing Games

There are very serious benefits to being silly! Playful people are often better at coping with stress. Could the meeting hold an all age evening of silly games and sausages? The whole community could join in the silliness and get to know each other like never before. This

could be a fundraiser for charity, but there doesn't have to be a reason. 'Just because' will do. Use the [Journeys in the Spirit Games Supplement](#) for inspiration.

Create a Sound Bath

Being immersed in certain sounds can relax and rejuvenate. Some sounds, such as waves lapping the shore can be soothing. [Sense](#) have an online workshop which you could do together, or be inspired to find your own favourite relaxing sounds. Have paper, beans and boxes available and have a go at a soundscape or [Create a story](#) using sounds made with your bodies.

From Trash to Treasure

The residents of Cateura, Paraguay, have made joyful music out of a load of old rubbish. Cateura is built alongside a landfill where 3 million pounds of solid waste is dumped every day. Life is very hard for the residents, but one man saw potential to make music from the rubbish and since the first violin was made, a whole [orchestra](#) has sprung up. We should think carefully about what we throw away. What [instruments](#) could you make out of rubbish?

Bubble Meditation

Bubbles are delightful. Watching them can bring peace and calm, as well as great excitement depending on your audience. Read this [charming story](#) of a boy and his magic bubbles.

