

# Journeys in the Spirit



November 2023

Worship is the response of the human spirit to the presence of the divine and eternal, to the God who first seeks us. The sense of wonder and awe of the finite before the infinite leads naturally to thanksgiving and adoration.

Silent worship and the spoken word are both parts of Quaker ministry. The ministry of silence demands the faithful activity of every member in the meeting. As, together, we enter the depths of a living silence, the stillness of God, we find one another in 'the things that are eternal', upholding and strengthening one another.  
QF&P 2.01

Once there was a boy who loved looking at the sky. Luke Howard, a Quaker, started recording the weather in his journal at a young age. He was particularly fascinated by how clouds formed and moved across the sky. During Luke's time, there was no universal system for identifying different types of clouds, although cultures and civilizations around the world had been observing and naming the weather for centuries. Luke wanted to capture the sky that he was looking at and help his own understanding and came up with three categories of cloud: cumulus, strata and cirrus. Luke Howard's classification of clouds revolutionized meteorology by providing a scientific framework for understanding weather patterns and a classification that all can share.

## Read

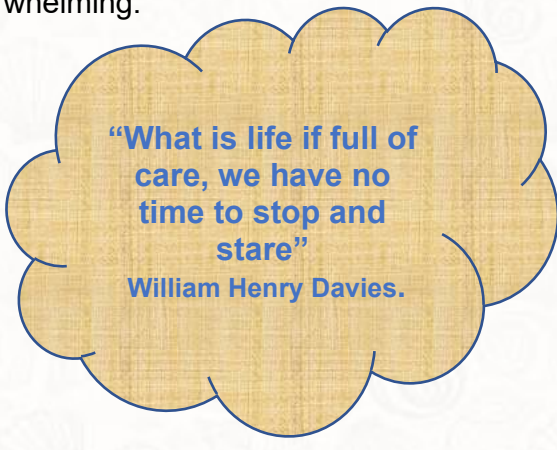
A short story about Luke Howard can be found in [Journeys in the Spirit issue 40](#). *The Man Who Named the Clouds* By Julie Hannah and Joan Holub is available to buy or listen to [here](#).

## Listen

Kitty McFarlane's song '[Namer of Clouds](#)' is a song about Luke Howard – giving a name to something fleeting.

## Look up!

We don't need to know the names of clouds to appreciate them. We are all part of the same creation and children are able to experience this connection without the need for language. If possible, go outside with the children and watch the clouds. After some time of stillness engage with them, ask them about what they see and how being still makes them feel. This exercise can also help when things get overwhelming.



**“What is life if full of  
care, we have no  
time to stop and  
stare”  
William Henry Davies.**

## Make

Eric Carle writes the story of [Little Cloud](#) – a cloud that changes shape as it floats across the sky. Paint clouds onto coloured paper and when they dry, swap pictures with each other and use felt pens to draw the creatures or other things you see over the clouds. A dinosaur? A cow? Maybe a fire engine? If you're feeling adventurous, use shaving foam and paint to create puffy cloud shapes. The recipe is [here](#).



## Play Cloud catching

Give each child a tissue or white scarf. On the count of three, everyone throws their 'cloud' in the air and catches it – on their nose or sleeve or back. Have fun and take turns to decide where to catch your clouds.

## Wonder is the beginning of wisdom – Socrates

We can easily spot clouds during the day, but the winter months provide more opportunities to stargaze and observe planets at night. Jocelyn Burnell, born in 1943 in Northern Ireland, developed an early fascination for astronomy, spending hours engrossed in books about stars, galaxies, and space that her father brought home from the library. Against the odds, her curiosity and passion later led her to identify the first four ever neutron stars.

## Read

[Listening to the Stars](#) is a beautiful retelling of Jocelyn's journey.



## And wonder...

Astrophysicist Ray Jayawardhana has written [Child of the Universe](#), a bedtime story about a child understanding her place in the cosmos. *"One night, my father told me that people had been to the moon. I was just amazed. Suddenly, that bright light up above became a place that one could visit. At that moment, my sense of what's possible expanded dramatically."* [npr Weekend Edition](#)

Read the story with the children and follow with some wondering questions:

I wonder which was your favourite part of the story?

I wonder which is the most important part of the story?

I wonder where you are in the story?

## A How! A Wow! A Bow!

Try this noticing exercise. Cut out star shapes from colourful paper and give each child at least six stars. Then, ask them to write or draw three things on the stars:

1. Something that has made them ask "I wonder **How...?**"
  2. Something that has made them go "**Wow!**"
  3. Something they are thankful for - a **Bow!**
- Stick the stars on a large sheet of dark paper. You can add to this each time you meet and recall what you've done or seen that week.

## Sing Together

Provide pens, paper, crayons, and collage materials for each child. Play a version of the song '[Wonderful World](#)' and ask the children to respond with pictures to what's wonderful in their world. The lyrics of the song can be found on the internet, and then you could spend some time learning it together.

Other songs to sing can be found in

[Sing me on a journey](#)

Singing is a wonderful way of bringing your Quaker community together!

