



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition January 2020 Issue 125



Children's voices: Understanding privilege

Getting ready

Where we are born, the body we have, the family who raise us, our gender, class, race and beliefs, the society in which we live...all of these things affect our life chances.

This edition of *Journeys in the Spirit* offers ideas for activities and resources that can be used with children to explore the idea of privilege. Children often have a clear sense of fair and unfair and may readily understand what privilege is. They may need support to realise what privileges they have or lack and to be clear that being privileged or lacking privilege is not something they should feel bad about.

Be aware that everyone in the group will have different experiences of privilege. Some differences may be obvious, but do not make assumptions about, for instance, class, income, invisible disabilities or mental health problems. Some people may welcome the opportunity to share their experiences, but some won't.

Reflect on your own responses to the material; it will be helpful to do this with any people you work with. If you can, spend some time in worship as a group.

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

Prepare the room with a circle of chairs and a centrepiece, such as some flowers or pebbles or, if it's safe, a candle.

If the children have been in Meeting for Worship already everyone will need to jump and wriggle. If not, move straight into a circle. Make sure everyone knows each other's names and give the opportunity to each person to share any news they have.

Introduce the session. You could say: 'Today we are thinking about privilege – about how good or bad luck helps to decide how our life is and what we can do about it.'

Then have a few moments of quiet. You could say: 'Let's all be quiet for a little while. Close your eyes or look at the flowers (etc.) and let's all think about each other and how to listen and be kind this morning'.

Underpinning references

"Are you alert to practices here and throughout the world which discriminate against people on the basis of who or what they are or because of their beliefs? Bear witness to the humanity of all people... Seek to understand the causes of injustice, social unrest and fear. Are you working to bring about a just and compassionate society which allows everyone to develop their capacities and fosters the desire to serve?"

Advices and Queries 33

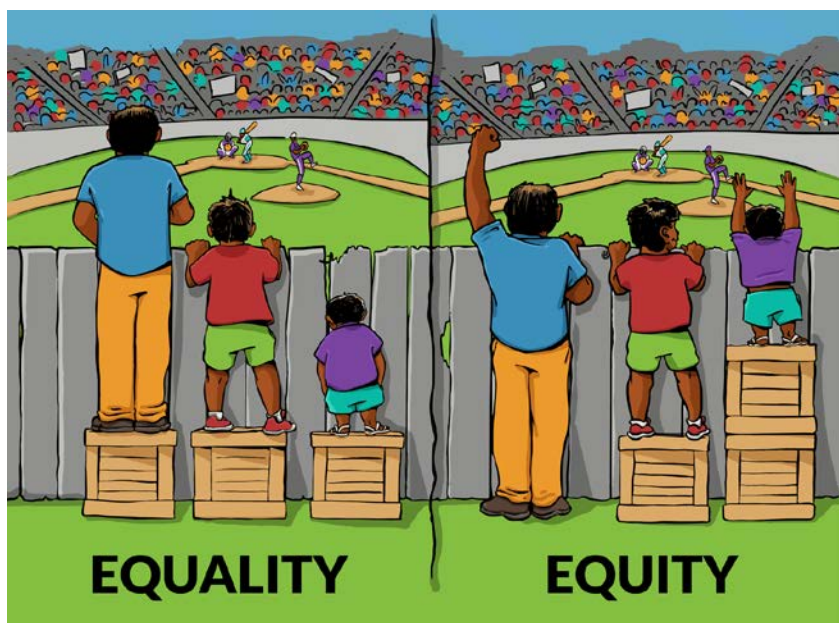
Engage

What is privilege?

Move all the chairs into a line; ask everyone to sit, at random in the line. Give each person a 'ball' made of a screwed up sheet of paper; have a bucket or waste bin at the front of the line. The task is for the children to throw their ball into the bin. It won't take long for everyone to realise that it's easier to do if they are sitting at the front – and that it's unfair. Stick at the task...don't let people move, swap or stand up until everyone is a bit cross!

Come back into the circle. Explain that this is how privilege is: everyone has the same task, but it's harder for some people – and it's luck that decides where you sit. Maybe the person at the front still didn't get their ball in the bucket; maybe someone further back was very good at throwing. And maybe you feel cross if you're at the back – or guilty if you're at the front. Maybe you're worried about getting hit on the head by a ball from behind. But remember – everyone sat down at random – no one should feel bad that they found it was good or bad to sit where they did.

This is like life; how well you do at any task is partly down to your own skill and how hard you practice, but the task will be easier because of some things that are down to good fortune. Some children might be able to identify factors that decide where you 'sit' in life – give them space to do this if possible. Some groups will need you to explain some of the ideas. It may be appropriate to use examples from yourself or those working with you. If children volunteer information about themselves this will be helpful, but do not force them to do so.

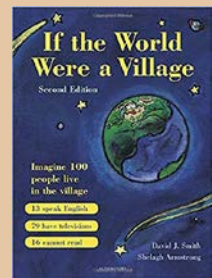


Look at the picture with the children (see the sidebar for links to a larger version in *Additional Resource 125.A*). This is another demonstration of privilege. Wonder with them about why is it easier for some people to see the game? Is this luck? Is it fair? What could be done about it?

Read

Choose one of the books in the sidebar to read and then talk about with the children or read the story from Luke 18, 18-27 in the bible. Talk about what might Jesus mean in this story? Wonder what it might mean for us?

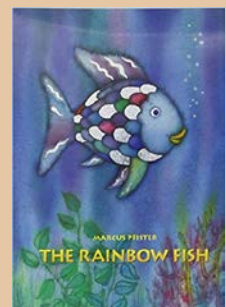
References & other resources



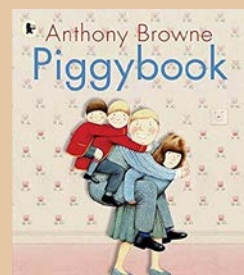
ISBN 9783314015441



ISBN 9781684182459



ISBN 9783314015441



ISBN 9789681636517

Available from the
Quaker Bookshop
<https://bookshop.quaker.org.uk/>
020 7663 1030

Additional resources
and games
supplement:
www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:1-12 The bible

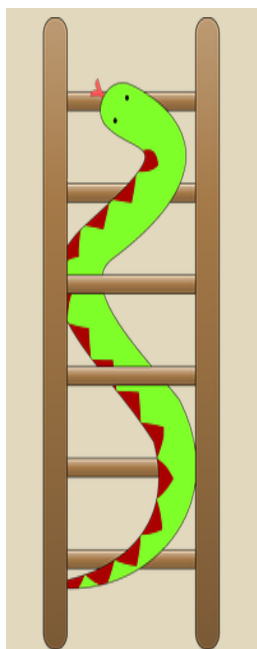
“Evils which have struck their roots deep in the fabric of human society are often accepted, even by the best minds, as part of the providential ordering of life.”

William Charles Braithwaite
Qf&p 23.05

Journeys in the Spirit index:
<https://together.woodbrooke.org.uk/journeys-in-the-spirit/topic/>.

Respond

Snakes and Ladders



A game of luck!

There may be a version of snakes and ladders in the cupboard or at home, or you could make one using the instructions (see *Additional Resource 125.B* in the sidebar on page 2).

The reason for playing the game is to explore the sorts of things that might be snakes or ladders in life – the privilege or lack of privilege that might send you leaping up a ladder or sliding down a snake.

To play this version, when anyone lands on a snake or a ladder they pick up a card, indicating the privilege or lack of privilege that is sending them up or down. Depending on the children in the group, either print off the cards in *Additional Resource 125.B* or prepare blank ones and ask the children to identify things they think would

So what to do?

Bring out the bucket and paper balls again. Ask the children how we could make it fair for everyone? What ideas do the children have? The fairest might be the chairs in a circle with the bucket in the middle; there might need to be adaptations – people who are small or who have poor sight or coordination might need to be closer. Can the group work this out?

Think back to the picture on page 2. Why are the people in the picture trying to see the game from behind a fence? Wouldn't it be better if there were no fence? Can we work to try to make our world fairer?

Children are involved in campaigning for government action on climate breakdown. Children at Quaker Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2017 gave everyone a ribbon to remind us all about people who are hungry and who don't have anywhere to live. Children are involved in raising money for charities such as Comic Relief, which aims to create a world free from poverty by supporting vulnerable people in the UK and in other countries.

Everyone can try to be kind and to listen.



Reflect

Ask everyone to sit in a circle; put the centrepiece back.



Invite the group to ask questions or to make comments.

- What have they learned about privilege? Do they have thoughts about how to address privilege?
- If the children talk to the main meeting about their activities, what do they want to say? If they suggest saying they played snakes and ladders ask them why? What did they learn?

End with a short period of silence.

You could say: 'Now we are going to be quiet for a moment. Close your eyes or look at the flowers and think about what is unfair for us, what is unfair for other people and how we might be able to be kind, or to campaign or to work for a world that is more fair.'

Review

Privilege can be a challenging topic for all of us to explore and the session may have brought up difficult ideas and thoughts for everyone. Take a little time to reflect yourself, and check in with other children's team members straight after the session.

Review the session. What worked well, what was difficult? Did the children understand the topic more by the end? Are there follow up activities? Do you need to liaise with others who lead sessions with the children?

This session is part of a series on Children's Voices; the aim is to empower children to realise their own role in shaping the world around them.

This issue was written by Alison Mitchell 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 1 February 2020: Topical Activity

Available from 3 March 2020: Climate Activism

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 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 and scroll down to find what you want.

Published by Children & Young People's Staff Team, Quaker Life

Available free by subscription.

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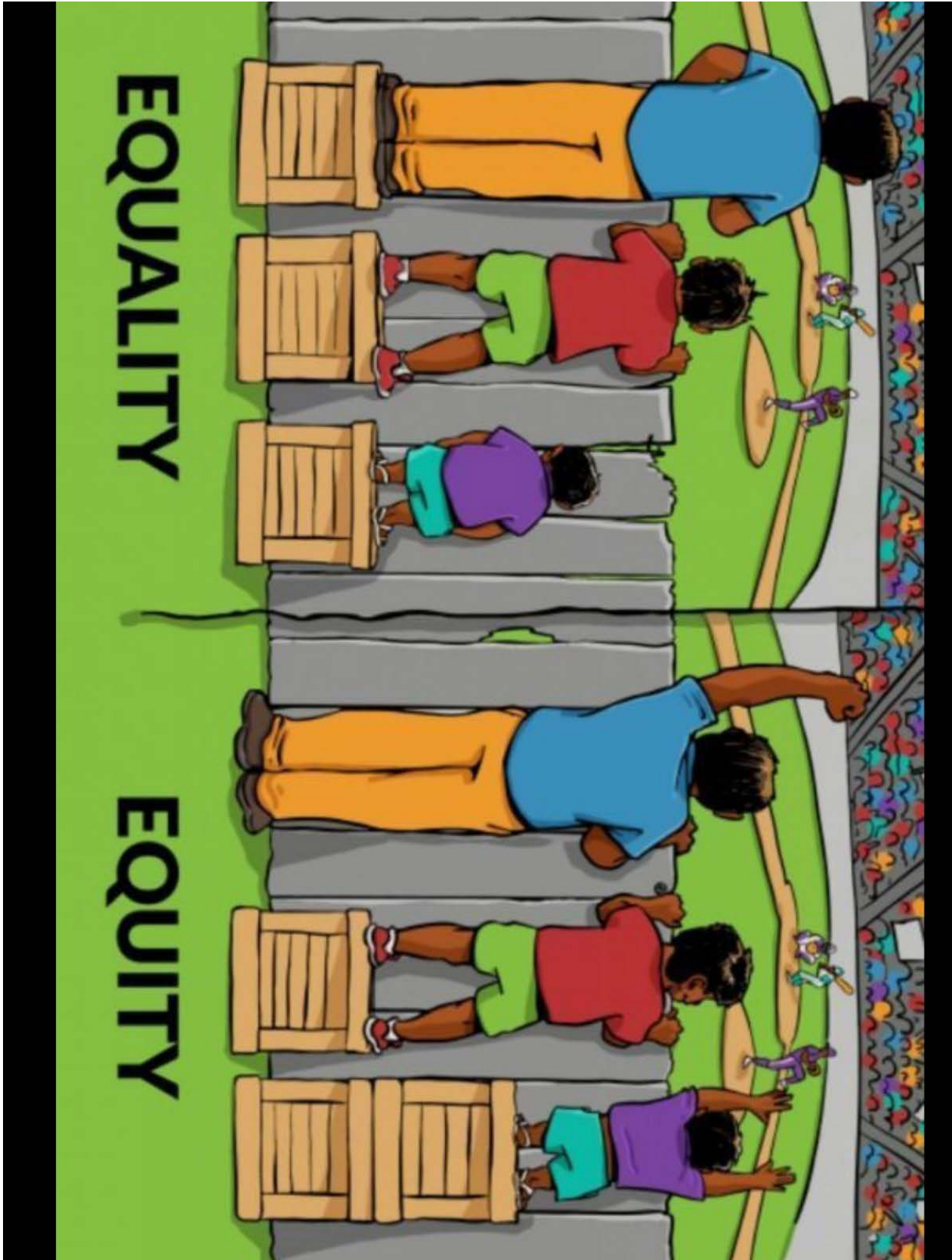
Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

January 2020

Discuss

Additional resource 125.A





Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

January 2020

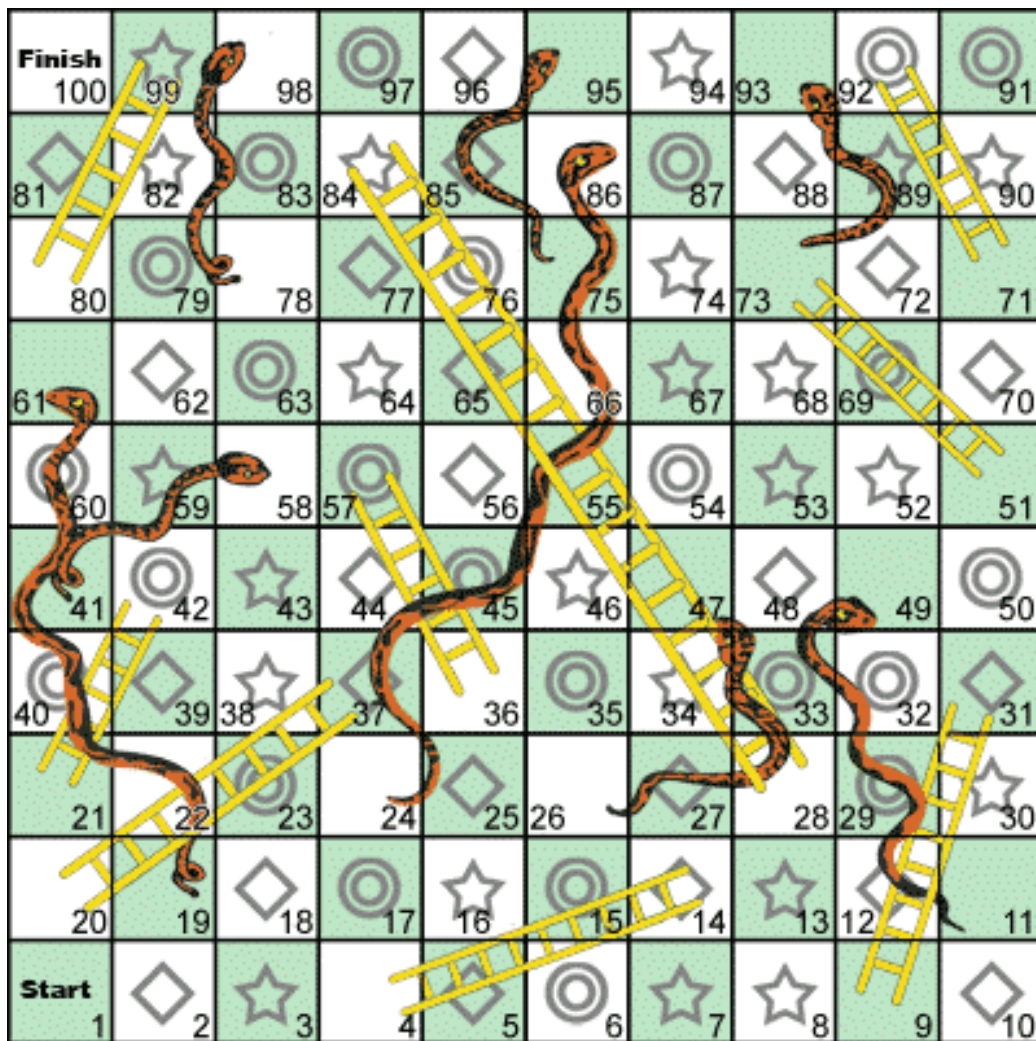


Snakes & Ladders

Additional resource 125.B

Snakes and Ladders

If you are making the game you need a large sheet of paper, drawn into squares, numbered 1 – 100. To check you're numbering correctly, imagine you have rolled the dice and are moving from square number 9 to square number 12; the numbers need to flow around the end of the row. Then add in snakes and ladders.





















This template can be downloaded free from this link:

<https://www.edu-games.org/board-games/snakes-and-ladders-downloads.php>

To play the game you need a dice and a counter for each player. Each player rolls the dice and moves along the number of squares on the dice. If they land on the bottom of a ladder they climb up; if they land on the head of a snake they slide down. The winner is the first to get to 100.

To play the privilege version you also need a pile of ladder cards and a pile of snake cards (examples follow). When a player lands on either they pick up the relevant card to explain why they are going up or down. Encourage discussion about what the statement means and whether or not it feels like a privilege or lack of privilege.

Here are playing cards to print off – or you can print off the blank cards and ask the children to fill in what they think might be a privilege or lack of privilege. You could use a mixture of blank and pre-prepared cards. (Please note you will need to print these on the one sided setting).

 <p>Being a girl</p>	 <p>Going to school hungry</p>
 <p>Being poor</p>	 <p>Not going to school</p>
 <p>Being black</p>	 <p>Living in a war zone</p>
 <p>Being disabled</p>	 <p>Being scared</p>
 <p>Being sad all the time</p>	 <p>Not living with your family</p>
 <p>Being a refugee</p>	 <p>Being homeless</p>
 <p>Being bullied</p>	 <p>Being autistic</p>
 <p>No books at home</p>	 <p>Being young</p>
 <p>No car and no buses where you live</p>	 <p>Being ill</p>



Being a boy



Having good friends



Being white



Being good at sport



Being healthy



**Living in a peaceful
country**



Being clever



**Living in a prosperous
area**



**Clean water coming out
of the tap**



Eating good food



Living in a loving family



**Being able to make
decisions**



Being happy



**Seeing a doctor when
you need to**



Going to a good school





















**Being a Christian in a
Christian country**

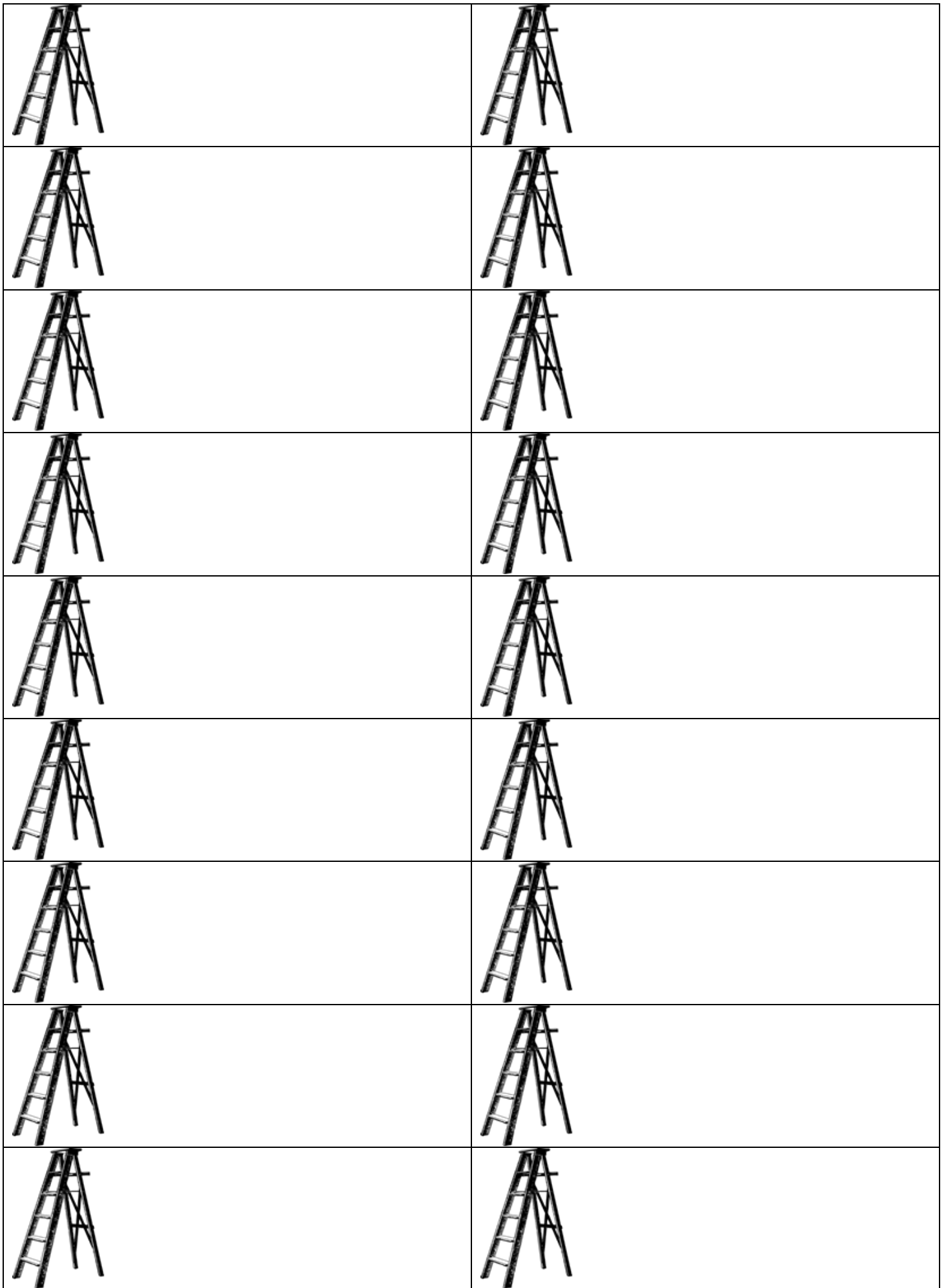


Lots of books at home



**Feeling part of your
community**





Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

January 2020

Issue 125



A simple plan for an all-age Meeting for Worship

Preparation

Privilege can be a tricky topic for all of us. Make sure there is a small group of people supporting each other as you work on this; spend time together in worship

Talk to Friends who have eldership responsibility for this Meeting for Worship and ensure they are ready to offer support if anyone struggles with the topic.

You will need a copy of the book you read; a supply of sticky notes and a pot of pens. If there is a blank wall this can be used to put up the sticky notes – or a large sheet of paper, perhaps on a flip chart. Prepare for the song – word sheets, an instrument, a video clip or a talented singer?

If there are children who will struggle to sit still, you could have a small table with perhaps pictures of the rainbow fish that can be coloured in (<http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/rainbow-fish>).

Before the meeting let people know about the All Age Meeting for Worship; tell Friends what the topic is; invite them to reflect on their experience and understanding of privilege.

Some Friends find it helpful to have a written notice outside the meeting room welcoming everyone, detailing the topic and outlining the programme.

Welcome

Welcome everyone and say that you will start with a period of silence (5 minutes is a good start).

Introduce the topic

Where we are born, the body we have, the family who raise us, our gender, class, race and beliefs, the society in which we live...all of these things affect our life chances. Today we join together to think about privilege and to bring our reflections together in worship.

Some things simply are not fair...and we're going to think about what is fair or unfair for us, how that makes us feel and what we can do about it

We will be listening to readings, to a story, joining in an activity and singing. There will be periods of silence and spoken ministry is welcome at those times.

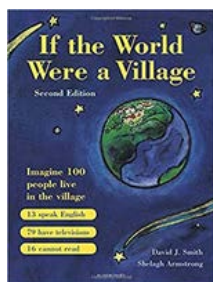
Read

'Are you alert to practices here and throughout the world which discriminate against people on the basis of who or what they are or because of their beliefs? Bear witness to the humanity of all people...Seek to understand the causes of injustice, social unrest and fear. Are you working to bring about a just and compassionate society which allows everyone to develop their capacities and fosters the desire to serve?' Advices and Queries 33

Silence



Story

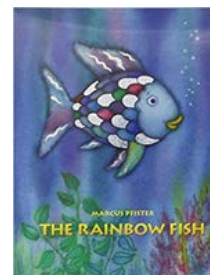


If the World Were a Village

This book compares lifestyles across the world: is it fair that we have so many resources?

The Rainbow Fish

This is the story of a beautiful fish who realises no one likes him because he's vain and selfish; he eventually gives away his sparkly scales and makes friends.



Silence

Activity

Ask Friends to do this in worshipful quiet. If anyone doesn't want to take part ask them to uphold the Meeting.

Give everyone two (or more) sticky notes – different colours. Invite Friends to reflect on their own life: everyone has some ways in which we have privilege and some ways in which we lack privilege. Invite Friends to write on one colour sticky note a way in which they feel they have privilege and on the other a way in which they feel they lack privilege. You could explain this to younger children as something that is good luck for them and something that is unfair for them.

Invite Friends to stick the notes on different sides of the large sheet of paper or wall.

Invite Friends to read other people's notes and reflect.

If there are young children you could read out loud some of the statements so that everyone can share.

Silence

Sing

When I Needed a Neighbour Were You There - Sydney Carter. We all need help sometimes – how do we respond to others?

Many Friends will know this song – you could print off copies of the lyrics. Someone might be confident to lead the singing, or play an instrument – or play a YouTube clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fExR7eOhJ00>

Read

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5 1-12 The Bible

Silence



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work January 2020 Issue 125

An easy-to-use plan for a Children's Meeting



Make sure you have a little time of worship for yourself and other volunteers before the session – even a few minutes is good. This outline is based on a 45 minute children's meeting.

Gather

Prepare the room with a circle of chairs and a centrepiece, such as some flowers or pebbles or if it's safe, a candle.

If the children have been in Meeting for Worship already everyone might need to jump and wriggle. If not, move straight into a circle. Make sure everyone knows each other's names and give the opportunity to each person to share any news they have.

5 minutes

Engage

Look at the picture with the children (see the sidebar on page 2 in the main issue for a link to a large version in *Additional Resource 125.A*). This is another demonstration of privilege. Wonder with them about why is it easier for some people to see the game? Is this luck? Is it fair? What could be done about it?

10 minutes

Respond

There may be a version of snakes and ladders in the cupboard or at home, or you could make one using the instructions (see *Additional Resource 125.B* in the sidebar on page 2 of the main issue).

The reason for playing the game is to explore the sorts of things that might be snakes or ladders in life – the privilege or lack of privilege that might send you leaping up a ladder or sliding down a snake.

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25 minutes

Reflect

Ask everyone to sit in a circle; put the centrepiece back. Invite the group to ask questions or to make comments.

What have they learned about privilege? Do they have thoughts about how to address privilege?

If the children talk to the main meeting about their activities, what do they want to say? If they suggest saying they played snakes and ladders ask them why? What did they learn?

5 minutes

End with a short period of silence