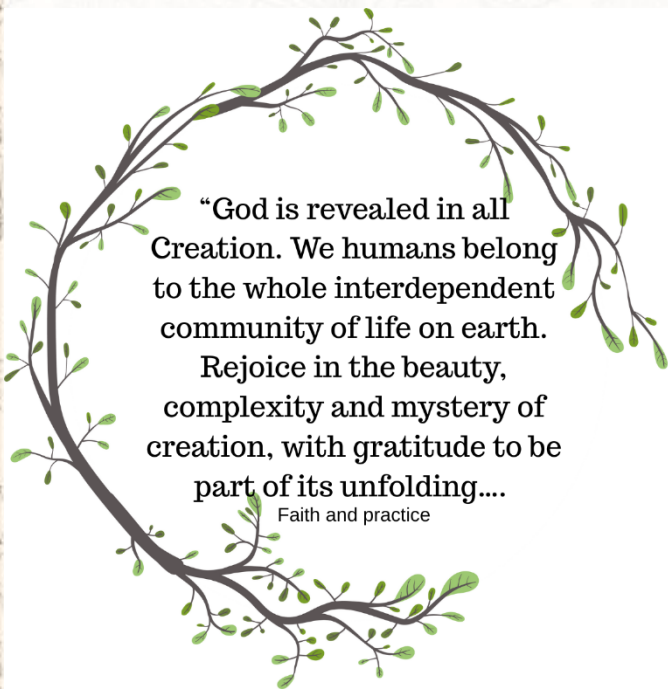


# Journeys in the Spirit

May 2025

Into the wild



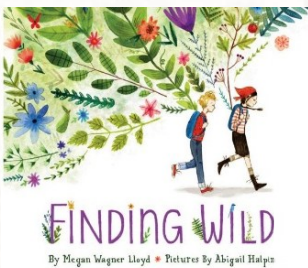
“God is revealed in all Creation. We humans belong to the whole interdependent community of life on earth.

Rejoice in the beauty, complexity and mystery of creation, with gratitude to be part of its unfolding....

Faith and practice

[PYM Faith and Practice 2001](#)

## Read



This lovely book reveals how the wild is closer to us than we think.

[Finding Wild](#) by [Megan Wagner Lloyd](#) and [Abigail Halpin](#)

## Nature Detectives

Many of us live in towns and cities where it seems that nature has largely been pushed out. All of us benefit from connecting with the natural world, which is known to lift our spirits and calm our souls. But what if this connection isn't obvious? Where can we look? Well, we can start by looking up – who's in the sky?

And down – who's hiding under that brick? Even when the natural world seems far away, if we seek it, we can find all kinds of ways to get closer to nature. Provide



each child with a notebook and a [magnifying glass](#) and encourage them to spend time observing nature during their week. Did they hear the wind whooshing? Are the birds singing? What time was the dawn chorus that day? Was there a tiny flower growing through a crack in the pavement? These things happen regardless of where we live, and

appreciating them increases our connection to nature.



The children could draw or write in their books about what they have

noticed, to share with the group next time.

“You should sit in nature for twenty minutes every day - unless you're too busy; then you should sit for an hour.”

If you have a garden or park nearby, spend some time quietly sitting and noticing with the children. Encourage them to focus on the small details around using all their senses. Return to the same spot a few weeks later and notice if the sounds and smells have changed. Is there anything there to be thankful for?

## Botanists

Over time, many Quakers have engaged in the study of plants and flowers. In the past, botany did not require a university education; since Quakers were excluded from universities until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, they could study botany informally. Read about some Quaker Botanists [here](#). Plants are not only beautiful but also helpful, and Quakers were called to engage in meaningful work, making this a good fit. Talk with the children to see if they have any interests or hobbies that are tied in with their Quakerism or strong beliefs. Use the book [Let's explore the Quaker way](#) as a way into this discussion.

## Make



Create some fun figures with the children to show what they enjoy doing. Cut out a simple face and shoulders from a cardboard box, and then add a head dress and costume made from cutouts of what the children love. Use old magazines, brochures, newspapers, or drawings. These could be plants, sea creatures, cats – the list is as long as their imagination. Set up a gallery and invite people to see the beautiful creations, maybe serving tea and cake, and then it becomes a

wonderful opportunity to get to know each other.

## Incredible Edibles

In addition to cake, prepare some healthy snacks to serve to your guests. A centrepiece of fruit and vegetable flowers will look beautiful and taste great. Use flower-shaped cutters to cut shapes from cucumbers and carrots, then thread them onto a bamboo skewer. Top with a blueberry and arrange in a vase. Full instructions can be found [here](#).

## Send some love

If there are Friends who can't make it to the gallery or who are feeling under the weather at home, consider sending them a [vegetable bouquet](#) made from gifted produce or from produce from allotments. Let everyone know what you're planning ahead of time so they can bring along any fresh produce they'd like to share. Have fun arranging the bouquet together and adding a kind note.



Quakers have been involved in creating [allotments](#) to support families for many years. If friends have access to a nearby [allotment](#), could the children get involved in a growing project to help others?



## All Age Worship

Consider meeting outdoors for a time of worship. Please ensure there are pens, paper, colouring pencils and possibly watercolour paints. Some people will need chairs and a selection of blankets to sit on. A bring-and-share picnic could follow the meeting.

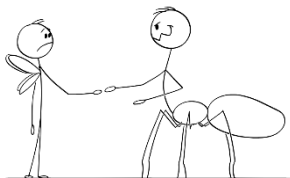
### Introduction

“Welcome to all Friends. Today, we will hear about the many Quakers who have shared their joy in the natural world by writing about it”.

### Read

*In the late 18th and early 19th century, many Quaker women expressed their joy in nature by writing books of facts and poetry, often aimed at children. This was unusual, as it was rare for women to write books, especially about science and natural history, making Quaker women trailblazers. They frequently wrote letters, poems, or stories detailing animals, insects, or plants. Priscilla Wakefield, from Tottenham, Sarah Hoare, a teacher who lived in Bristol, and Mary Botham Howitt were all women who wrote.*

*Mary wrote over 100 books, including the famous poem “The Spider and the Fly”, where she uses an example from the natural world as a cautionary tale!*



*Adults made these books, but Quaker children also created some. Nine-year-old Edward Portsmouth Fry was the eldest son of a Quaker named Sir Edward Fry, who published a book all about moss. Edward wanted to create something nice that his father would appreciate, so he copied facts and drawings from a book titled Natural History Mammalia, adding some of his own comments. It took him three years to finish.*

*Some boys at The Woodlands School in Hitchin created a magazine together. This was a small boarding school for Quaker boys, and they produced a magazine to showcase some of the things they had been learning and doing. Most Quaker schools had a natural history club, and the Friends House Library have some of the reports that they wrote.*

*As well as delight and joy, we can find peace in nature and writing poetry. Putting our thoughts on paper can help us make sense of our various experiences.*

Invite people to find an interesting or beautiful organic object—a rock, stick, leaf, flower, etc. Then, they could sit and look at or feel the object closely for 5 minutes. Once they think they’ve examined it thoroughly, inspect it even more closely to see if they can spot something new.

Say and write words, phrases, and sounds about the object, or draw pictures. Here are some prompt questions:

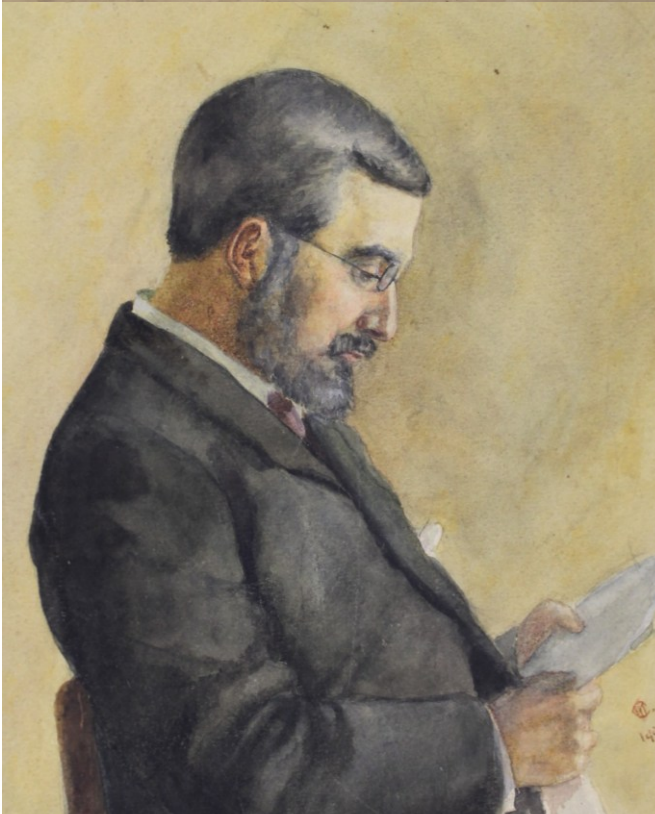
What do you see? How does it feel? How do you feel when you look at or feel it?

Combine the words, phrases, and sounds into a poem or a picture.





Edward Portsmouth Fry (1860-1928)



Look for words that start with the same letter or include the same sound and group them, e.g., green growing grass; shiny sunshine.

Sit in a circle and invite people to share their poems in the spirit of worship.

After the worship, conclude by shaking hands before moving on to share your picnic.

With thanks to the [Friends House Library](#) and Ellie McCarthy for materials used in this issue. Pictures of Edward Fry courtesy of FH Library.

