

Harrogate Quaker Meeting Children's Meeting 2014

Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting and recognise the gifts they bring. *From Advices and Queries no. 19*

Sunday mornings

There are always 2 people (DBS checked) ready to be with children up to the age of 16 every Sunday morning. In the term time there is a theme but in the holidays the session is less structured. We try to provide a separate class for the over 10s on at least one Sunday per term.

Parents / carers are welcome to bring their children to Friends Hall from about 10.20 am. If the children are happy to be left and you are happy to leave them, feel free to go into the main meeting for worship. A parent or carer usually stays with very young children (for example under 2).

We usually have 'gathering' times for the whole group at the start of Children's Meeting and again when we prepare to go into meeting for worship. In between we plan a variety of activities including stories, making things, drawing, role play and games to suit the theme.

Information needed

We ask parents to fill in 2 forms about their children; one is for contact details and the other is about any medical information we need to know. The forms are kept in a locked cupboard but easily accessible if an adult volunteer needs them. The information is also kept electronically by the convenor of Children's Committee and one other member.

Joining the adults

At about 11.20 the children and adults join the meeting for worship in the meeting room. From this point the children are the responsibility of their parents / carers and also during tea and coffee time afterwards.

It is very difficult for very young children to be completely silent (and their vocal ministry is often welcomed!) but we encourage stillness and listening to vocal ministry and the notices. We try to prepare children for this as a last activity in Friends Hall before bringing them into the Meeting Room.

Tips to newer parents from other parents:

- Have the child sitting on your knee
- Reading or looking at a book quietly (perhaps whispering the story in a child's ear)
- Holding a soft toy (there are some special ones in the cupboard)
- Looking at one of the sand timers

If your child doesn't settle do feel free to take them out and rejoin the meeting when you are both ready. Sometimes it's helpful to spend 2 or 3 minutes with very young children at first and build up gradually to the full 10 minutes.

The children enjoy shaking hands with other Friends at the end of Meeting for Worship and older Friends enjoy shaking hands with the children.

Quakers in Yorkshire Events

- 1) **Junior Holidays** 2 holidays arranged each year for 7 – 17 year olds. For further details see: <http://www.s113871194.websitehome.co.uk/> or the Quakers in Yorkshire card (available in January each year).
- 2) **Yorkshire Friends Holiday School** for 13-18 year olds website. Dates for 2014: August 17th – 24th at Bootham School in York. Website <http://www.yfhs.org.uk/>
- 3) **Junior Yearly Meeting** and other national gatherings for older teenagers and young people.