

Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

At the Yearly Meeting held In York during the Yearly Meeting Gathering at the University of York 25 July – 1 August 2009

Minute 38: Receipt of minutes from the Children & Young People's Programme

We have received minutes from the groups of the Children & Young People's Programme (0-15 year olds) of this yearly meeting as follows:

The Sunflowers (0-3 year olds)

We are the Sunflowers and have been building our own little community as everyone else at Yearly Meeting Gathering is much bigger than us.

We have enjoyed meeting lots of new people. We have explored the world around us using our senses. We have spent a lot of the week singing old and new songs.

The 'Wild Strawberries' came to visit us and bought us chocolate covered fruit, including strawberries. They also sang 'He's got the whole world' to us, which we enjoyed dancing to. To thank them we made them bread rolls. The 'Lively Links' came and entertained us playing musical instruments they had made and sang us some songs.

We have had a good but tiring week. Making a new community isn't always easy and there has been some crying along the way. There has also been lots of singing, smiles and giggles.

The Wellyphants (3-5 year olds)

From the Wellyphant community (and this is our Meeting House)

We learned all our names and got to know each other.

We made lots of different buildings, and helped one another to build and paint.

We made shakers, and danced together around our buildings.

We gathered in our Quaker Meeting House and worshipped together.

We welcomed visitors and showed them around.

We are saying goodbye to our Community and taking our boxes of treasures to share with friends at home.

Lively Links (5 & 6 year olds)

We were nervous about meeting new people, but now we are a friendly group.

Together we have enjoyed and been excited by different activities.

We now know we are connected to nature and need to take good care of our world.

We also need to take care of ourselves and each other.

Wild Strawberries (6-7 year olds)

We have thought about people who are upset and have agreed to have a buddy bench.

We thought about the people who are special to us, and we all made pictures of them, so that it was like they were with us.

We have also thought about how we should control ourselves when we are angry/cross.

We all enjoyed getting to know each other.

We agreed to have rules to help us to have fun and be kind.

We all got very good at welcoming visitors.

Liz and Jackie came to visit us and they talked to us about how people got on when they can't see.

Jane came in and told us a story about people who had to leave their home and settle into a new home.

Over this week we have succeeded to make a community.

One day of the week we all went to the worship tent with Julia who comes from Sweden.

We shared a different way of worship, and we want to share some of a worship song with you.

When we have finished, please hold the stillness.

We know the whole world's in God's hands.

We know the whole world's in our hands.

Fidgety Frogs (7-9 year olds)

This week the Fidgety Frogs aged 7 to 9 have met to explore the Yearly Meeting Gathering theme through crafts, stories, drama and sports. Our highlights included a scavenger hunt around the grounds, making model villages and sharing exciting ways of worshipping.

We laughed a lot when Lucas the lizard danced in the story of Tiddaluk the Frog; Conor did his walking handstand and when Molly, Elizabeth and Olivia pretended to be posh old ladies. We have enjoyed our week together and will miss the new friends we have made. Thank you to all our helpers and especially to Simon Best who has worked so hard.

Q'nex (9-11 year olds)

Q'nex started the week getting to know each other, pleased to meet old friends and make new, discovering our similarities and forming a web of connections.

We enjoyed a sculpture walk which showed us the University. It helped us to open our minds to different possibilities, showing there is no right or wrong way to interpret sculptures or the universe or God.

Our group explored the story of God's people going into exile, helping to realise that God is with us wherever we are. We thought about the relationships we have, how these are special and how each is unique, and needs nurturing.

Hilary Brown from the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme talked about what it is like for people living in Palestine/Israel. We were moved to hear that even the soldiers are unhappy about having to do what they do. We thought we could help by making crafts and sweets to raise funds for EAPPI's work. We raised £70.14.

Luzili led us in African singing. We shared this with the Gathering at Epilogue. She taught us about how Kenyan communities live and worship.

Throughout the week, we have shared craft activities, co-operative games and worship and linked with other age groups. We have shared our ideas and skills with each other, developing a sense of warmth and community in our group.

Wacky Witnesses (12-14 year olds)

We're the Wacky Witnesses, aged 12-14.

During the course of the week, we've had various guest speakers: Chas Bailey, Peter Eccles and Julia Ryberg. All of them prompted interesting discussions in base groups, including ones about conflict in a community.

In the evening sessions we joined with the Fibreoptics to form a 12-15 group for multiple activities. These included a team quiz, drastic drama, a base group challenge and a cross-dressing trash fashion challenge.

We have formed a strong community in our group via playing several games, including the caterpillar game, parachute games and the chocolate game 'It's not fair!', which taught us about fair trade and its workers.

We've tied in one of the main issues being discussed at Yearly Meeting Gathering, committed relationships, by having smaller discussions in base groups.

A highlight of the week was Hunt the Quaker, which was organised by Junior Yearly Meeting. This involved various over 20's dressing up and hiding around the campus.

Our community is based on friendships, both old and ones made at Yearly Meeting Gathering.

The Fibreoptics (14 & 15 year olds)

In the Fibreoptics, the group for 14 and 15 year olds, we have spent an enjoyable week creating a fun and inclusive community in which we trusted each other and looked for that of God in everyone.

We have been creating connections with the rest of the gathering through Home Groups. We joined up with Junior Yearly Meeting and the 12-14s once for a fantastic game of Hunt the Quaker, where we had to find disguised over 20s around the campus, but we would have appreciated more time with JYMers.

As well as this we had evening sessions where we linked with the 12-14 year olds for fun activities such as trash fashion and team sports.

We had a good session about committed relationships in which the group felt that they were behind same sex marriage but understood there were legal complications.

Another session was spent with Peter Eccles who gave us an insight into what the rest of the Gathering was going to hear in the Swarthmore Lecture. After hearing this, some of us decided to attend the lecture and thoroughly enjoyed it. We had a thought provoking session on Ubuntu, the JYM theme, which is the Zulu concept that 'because of you, I am'.

We also had fun sessions such as singing and working together to build towers out of dry spaghetti and marshmallows. In addition, the Leaveners organised a great session of art and drama for us, which the rest of the gathering had the opportunity to attend.

Many of us feel the week has affirmed our Quaker faith as well as making new friends and catching up with old ones. There was much exchanging of friendship bracelets and secret friend presents and as one Friend put it, 'I've never hugged so many people in my life!'