

# Quaker Kids

## Children's Meeting Resource Kit 1: Water

Welcome to QSA's first kit of resources for Children's Meeting. Since 2008 is the International Year of Water and Sanitation, these activities are all about water, and a bit about poo! QSA works with partners all around the world who need to plan carefully if they want enough water to safely drink, wash and look after their crops and animals. This kit includes activities, stories and ideas for fundraising. We hope you enjoy it!



### Activity: Go fetch

Aims: This activity helps children think about water, water needs in developing countries, and to experience collecting water.

Project link: The Mitukula Women's Development Association in Uganda works towards food security which is impacted by the availability of water during dry seasons and illness due to water born diseases and the poor hygiene and sanitation situation. Mitukula has recently purchased ten water tanks, and is also providing instruction to the community in good health, sanitation and hygiene practices.

Materials needed: one large water storage container filled with water (ideally a nearby creek, but if not, a garbage bin worked well for us), and 2-3 empty buckets and 2-3 smaller plastic cups or buckets.

Venue: ideally outside, in a grassy space or near a creek or other water source.



Begin by talking briefly about how each child receives water at their place (ie tap, tank, well or other), and how much water they think their family uses each day. Explain that QSA works with people in Uganda who do not have easy access to water. Invite the group to spend the next half an hour experiencing what it might be like for people in Uganda. Divide the children into 2-3 groups (ideally there are at least 2 children including one older child in each group) and give each group a bucket and a cup. Ask each group to set up "camp" in one corner of the play area. Then invite each group to take turns collecting water from the water source and bringing it back to their camp.



Discussion: How easy was it to collect the water? Was it was enough water for your group for a day? Is this water clean enough to drink? What would need to happen to make it clean enough to drink?



Dry Kanmai

## Story: Keeping the Kanmais

Aim: to help the children think more about the problems others face in getting enough water and what they could do to help.

Project link: The Vasandham Society in India empowers Women in the Varusanadu Valley, Tamil Nadu. These women are concerned about the traditional water reservoirs (kanmais) and the fact that they are being encroached upon by large and wealthy landowners. A fear of violence, harassment and withdrawal of work has kept local people silent over the issue.

Story: Vasanda and her husband Palanichami live in India. They have two children aged 9 and 12. They have 11 buffalo and one cow. They are able to sell the buffalo and milk to earn some money. Each day Palanichami takes the buffalo out for grazing “but after a couple of hours they need water”, he says. “They need to be in the water for about 2 hours during the midday heat, so I take them to the river”. But sometimes the river is dried up. Then they go to the Kanmai. The Kanmai is a special water reservoir (like a dam) that stores rainwater in the rainy season through to the dry season. They also provide irrigation for the land surrounding them and are useful in preventing flood. Sadly, greedy landowners who live near the Kanmai use it all for themselves and their animals, leaving no water for poorer people. If the Kanmai is dry Palanichami has to fetch water in buckets and throw them over the buffalo. “It’s very difficult. If there isn’t water for a long time I have to sell the buffalo. You can’t keep animals without water”.



Look how much water there is when the Kanmai is full

Discussion: How are the Kanmai important to local people in this story? Why is their life more difficult now? What could they do to regain access to the Kanmai?

## Time for action: what you can do

Would you like to share with your Quaker meeting some of what you’ve learnt? Why not put on a short play about water, toilets or kanmais. You could learn about other similar stories from around the world on our website [www.qsa.org.au](http://www.qsa.org.au) and then act out a story using a few clever props such as buckets, wellington boots, or a watering can.

You might like to think of some fun ways to fundraise for QSA. Perhaps a car and bike washing service for your local meeting house, or build a “wishing well” and invite local Friends to throw a few gold coins into the well.