

# Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 4 June 2007



Children

## Introduction

There are four directions to our spiritual journey. **Inwards** to ourselves; **outwards** to others; **upwards** towards God, the deeper mystery; **downwards** to the world we live in. "Journeys in the Spirit" offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children and young people.

This children's work edition for 5 –12 year olds comes out monthly. It is offered with the intention of providing an opportunity for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of partnership on our shared journey in the spirit. Included are sections on: **getting ready**, for those co-ordinating the programme; **gather**, meeting, centering, focusing: **engage**, beginning to think about the theme; **respond**, activities linked to the theme; **reflect**, ending appropriately; and **review**, evaluating what has happened. Some of the activities are included on additional sheets. Timings or ages are not stated, as this will depend on the group and how the guidance and activities are used.



The first of five issues to focus on the exploration of Quaker Testimonies.

## Testimonies: Simplicity

### Getting ready

#### Preparing Hearts & Minds

Quaker testimonies come from 'leadings of the Spirit'. They are expressions of our spirituality in action rather than in words. All Quakers have to discover the ways in which the testimonies can become true for ourselves. Through our testimonies we let our whole lives witness to the truth we have found, so that others can see and understand. (For more information go to [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk), click on Peace & Social Witness, in the sidebar click on Online Resources and select 'Testimonies leaflet').

Simplicity is integral to Quaker faith: our spiritual responsiveness depends on being as free as possible from dependence on material security. "Living simply means adopting a lifestyle that avoids the unnecessary accumulation of material items, or what Quakers have often referred to as 'cumber'. It helps us seek outward detachment from the things of this world in order to focus our lives on the leadings of the Spirit." (Catherine Whitmire, Plain living, p.15)

But simplicity is more than 'simple living'. Early Friends viewed this testimony as one to 'plain living'. "Plain living is a form of inward simplicity that leads us to listen for the 'still, small voice' of God's claim upon our lives." To simplify your life, look inward to your Guide and listen to the longings of your heart.

Some questions for getting ready include: Is the room prepared? Do my colleagues and I feel supported and comfortable with our plans and ourselves? Have we been able to find a moment of quiet to hold the coming session in the light? Are there particular needs and situations I may need to be aware of in this session? Am I confident of the health and safety arrangements? Have I reflected on the theme?

#### Equipment Needed:

Check for equipment listed on additional sheets and in Engage section, Respond zones and Reflect section as well. Selected books and copies of activity sheets as needed for different numbers.

#### Underpinning references

Catherine Whitmire, 'Plain living: a Quaker path to simplicity'. Sorin Books. ISBN 89373228 2

'Engaging with the Quaker testimonies: a toolkit.'

Quaker Books ISBN 0901689599 Both available to buy from the Quaker Bookshop – 020 7663 1030

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The Bible: Matthew 6:25-34

# Engage

There are a number of possible ways to begin to think about simplicity.

**1. Worship sharing way to simplicity.** You may find it helpful to explain simplicity to children as 'making time and space in our lives for what is really important'. Sitting in a circle, give the children time to worship share on the theme of 'what is really important to me'. You might like to use a talking token (see *Sheet 0.A in Journeys in the Spirit* – see *side bar*).

**2. Story way to simplicity.** There are a number of children's stories that can lead into helping the children to think about simplicity. Choose one that suits the ages of the children. Here are some suggestions:

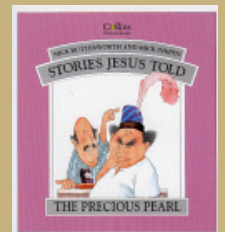
- 'The Precious Pearl'. Read the story - (see *sidebar*) - then ask each person about what is the most important thing to him or her.
- 'Marushka and the Month Brothers'. Read the story - (see *sidebar*) - then ask each person to say one or two things they particularly treasure about the season you are in right now. What flowers are growing in the garden? What fruit is in season? You might like to think about how they would know what is in season. If you have a garden, you might go out into the garden and look at what is happening in it. If it is deep winter, what does each person treasure about winter?
- The stonecutter. This story should be reasonably easy to find as it is a traditional Japanese tale. If you cannot get hold of it in a book, there is a version of it at [www.mythfolklore.net/andrewlang/241.htm](http://www.mythfolklore.net/andrewlang/241.htm) Read the story. Then invite each person to share what they are grateful for about being who they are.

**3. Bread way to simplicity.** Bring in a loaf of homemade bread and a supermarket loaf with fancy packaging and a list of ingredients as long as your arm. Talk about each loaf – 'Here is a loaf of bread; I wonder what is in it? I wonder what the loaf's journey has been?' Children could draw 'spider diagrams' of the ingredients and guesstimate the resulting food miles of the two loaves. Maybe draw a simple map of where it might all have come from – what about the wrappers? Place a picture of each type of loaf in the middle of a sheet of paper for each child to work on. (See *Sheet 4.C*)

## References & other resources

Sheet 0.A from the sample issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* is available to download from the Britain Yearly Meeting website at [www.quaker.org.uk/cyp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/cyp) - follow the link to Resources

Opening doors to Quaker worship, FGC.  
ISBN 096200126



The precious pearl (Stories Jesus told), Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen.  
Collins  
ISBN 0551028726



Marushka and the month brothers, Anna Vojtech and Philemon Sturges,  
North-South Books  
ISBN 0399227938

Books available to buy from the Quaker Bookshop, 020 7663 1030 or from various sellers online – type in the title to

## Some other resources

'Simple Abundance', Sarah Ban Breathnach, Bantam, ISBN 0553506625

'The stone-cutters wishes, in 'The Barefoot book of Fairies: nature spirits from around the world', Barefoot Books ISBN 1841483680

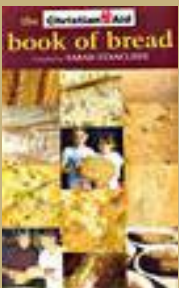
Books available to buy from the Quaker Bookshop, 020 7663 1030 or from various sellers online – type in the title to search

Qf&P 21.19

Qf&P 21.22

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Advices and Queries 1



The Christian Aid Book of Bread. Canterbury Press ISBN 9781853116261

# Respond

There are a number of activities that encourage further thinking about simplicity.

1. **Worship sharing zone and writing haiku.** This is quite complex but it also offers an exciting example of children and adults journeying together – to do something with another person is a richer experience. Have a little practice first. Read *Sheet 4.A & B* so that you understand the principles of haiku writing. Try writing a few haiku yourself first. Then in the children's meeting, introduce the idea and invite the children to write their own. There are follow up ideas on the sheet to cover further sessions if you wish.

*Resources: pencils, pens, paper. If you want to illustrate the haiku, colouring pencils or pastels, nice paper. If you want to share them with the adult meeting, a chime, bell, triangle, or flute.*

2. **Story zone: a gratitude journal.** "Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend." (Melody Beattie).

- Consciously giving thanks for what we already have strengthens us against the discontent and envy that destroy simplicity. Giving thanks daily for each day's simple joys will bring you a hope and contentedness that will surprise you if you have never tried it.
- You can make a simple gratitude list as a little zig-zag folded book (see *Sheet 4.C*) or a box (see *Sheet 4 .D*) with little squares of card in with the names or pictures of things you are grateful for.

*Resources: A3 or A4 paper, light card or construction paper, thin ribbon, paper glue, colouring pencils or felt tip pens, magazines, scissors*

3. **Story zone: a collage.** The children might respond to the theme of simplicity by making a collage. This could be a picture of Marushka's friends (a collage of faces cut from magazines); a collage of things in their own lives that they are grateful for or the things that matter most to them, or a collage of seasonal joys (foods, things in nature, things the children associate with a particular season). Or you could write the word 'Simplicity' in the centre of the sheet, and people could stick images that make them think of simplicity around the edge as a border.

*Resources: old magazines, large sheet of paper (or one sheet for each person), scissors (enough for everyone), paper glue.*

4. **Bread making zone:** Bread making - you can just do it in the time, if you make small bread rolls and bake them while notices are being read! You can prepare the ingredients on a tray before the session. Cover the tray with a cloth – pull it off like a magic trick, ..'and now to make some bread !'.

The supermarket loaf could be made into a quick bread and butter pudding for sharing at the next meeting.

*(For recipe and resources needed see Sheet 4.C).*

## Reflect

Order is an important part of simplicity; so even if you don't usually tidy up with the children as an integral part of the children's meeting, allow time to do so this time. When everything has been calmly put back in its place, then gather quietly in a circle again. If you wish, ask one or more of the children's meeting to share something of what they have done or thought about with the adult meeting.

## Ongoing activity

### Posters, power & change

This diagram of the slave ship Brookes was produced in 1789, two years after the formation of the committee to abolish the slave trade. The diagram shows a cross-section of the ship with 482 slaves crammed in. It speaks for itself concerning the conditions in which the slaves were held on the voyage from Africa to the West Indies. Many slaves died from disease brought on by the overcrowding and terrible conditions. The original diagram was produced in Plymouth, and then turned into a poster by Thomas Clarkson and members of the abolition committee. They took great care not to exaggerate: the number 482 was the minimum number – at times the Brookes carried up to 740 slaves. The abolition committee did their utmost to publicise the diagram, and it appeared in newspapers, books and pamphlets. They also printed over 7000 copies as posters, which were hung on the walls of homes and pubs all over England. In an era before photography, such posters were the only way of passing on images, and made a great impression. People were horrified at this picture, and this contributed to the public swing towards abolition of the slave trade. (See *Ongoing activity* – see *Sheets 4.E & 4.F*)

## Review

The review can happen at the time or later – maybe by yourself or with others. Some useful questions for the use of volunteers to look back over and learn from the session include:

Have children been able to participate in their own way? What went well and why? Has each child been able to reflect, even a little, on something about simplicity? What is there for you to learn from this session? What might you do differently another time?

## Links to other organisations and resources

[www.quaker.org.uk/cyp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/cyp) and click on Database of Ideas.

[www.quaker.org.uk/library/1807](http://www.quaker.org.uk/library/1807) Resources on Quakers and slave trade abolition.

<http://emes.Quaker.eu.org/documents/filesamong-friends-98.pdf>

[www.progressio.org.uk/livesimply](http://www.progressio.org.uk/livesimply) Interesting Catholic website; see CAFOD below.

[www.saintmichael.contactbox.co.uk/meditations/childhood.htm](http://www.saintmichael.contactbox.co.uk/meditations/childhood.htm) Useful background.

[www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk) Click on news and events and follow link to livesimply.

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Website: [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk)

## References & other resources

The Bible:  
Matthew 6.22

Linking with the wider meeting - each time you do one of the simplicity activities why not think about using it in an all age meeting for worship or simply as a shared activity- the haiku respond activity might be very good for this.

The next children's work issue of 'Journeys in the spirit' will focus on the testimony to equality and will be distributed on July 1st

# Journeys in the Spirit



## Children

### Sheet 4.A Respond Worship sharing and writing haiku

#### Writing haiku

About the time that Quakerism was starting in this country, there was a poet in Japan called Basho. Pictured below is a painting of him. Basho invented a special kind of poem called a haiku: a tiny poem filled with a love of nature. He spent his life close to nature. His attitude to nature was humble, selfless, and deeply respectful.

Basho told his followers that the experience the poem was based on was more important than fancy or clever language. The poet should be absorbed in nature. The poet should not show off in the poem. He told them to aim for simplicity with elegance in expressing the "haiku moment," the truth of the original noticing.

Basho went to visit the site of a famous battle, high on the moors, and found the place. There was nothing there, of course, except the hillside and tall moorland grasses, singed brown by the sun. He wrote this poem, which you can read first in Japanese, then in exact English word-equivalent, then in English poetic translations:

natsu-gusa ya / tsuwamono-domo-ga / yume no ato  
summer grasses (!) / strong ones' / dreams' site

All that remains of  
Those brave warriors' dreamings –  
These summer grasses.

Summer grasses,  
All that remains  
Of soldiers' dreams  
(trans. Stryk)



Count the syllables in the Japanese. (A syllable is the smallest complete unit of sound in a word. To-day has two; to-mo-rraw has three; yes-ter-day has three; now has one). Now count the syllables in each of the English translations. One matches the Japanese in line-length, and the other does not.

The Japanese syllable "ya" is a "cutting word." In these versions it is translated as an exclamation mark, or a dash, or a comma. It splits the poem into two sections.

Natsu-gusa, "summer grasses," is the season-word. A traditional haiku always had a season-word. Now you know the basic elements of the form: three lines, seventeen syllables, a "cut" or "break" splitting the poem into a one-line and a two-line unit (usually), and a season-word.

Read the following selection of haiku and choose two or three with the children that particularly appeal to you. You can find a much larger selection of haiku at [http://www.haiku.insouthsea.co.uk/teachbasho\\_pri3.htm](http://www.haiku.insouthsea.co.uk/teachbasho_pri3.htm) Note down what the qualities are that you like about them. (They don't all have exactly 17 syllables – don't worry too much!)

Note that each has a word letting you know which time of year it is (autumn wind, dragonfly, snowballs, spring rain, spring cleaning, snowflakes, honey bee, skylark – each is associated with a particular season).

With what kind of voice  
would the spider cry  
in the autumn wind?  
(Basho)

A dragonfly, trying to –  
oops, hang on to the upside  
of a blade of grass  
(Basho)

The puppy too  
they pelt with snowballs  
till he scampers off!  
(Issa)

Spring rain –  
everything becomes  
more lovely  
(Lady Chiyo-ni)

Continued...

# Journeys in the Spirit



## Children

### Sheet 4.B Respond Worship sharing and writing haiku

Do this! Do that!  
Spring cleaning  
Mom's in a bad mood  
(Matt Hunt, age 11)

Snowflakes falling  
watching from my  
window  
sipping hot chocolate  
(Emily Wiseman, age 9)

The honey bee,  
Buzz, buzz, buzz,  
Travelling from flower  
to flower  
(Fiona - Age 8)

I can hear the  
skylark  
But I cannot see it  
That is strange  
(Raphaella - Age 8)

**Everything in haiku is in the present.** You might get reference to a memory or a dream, but the poem is always firmly based in an immediate experience and written in the present tense. The poems do not cover a wide time-span. They happen in an instant, which is now. You must not try and write one that tells us about planting the bulbs, and then seeing the hyacinths weeks later.

The haiku that are considered the most beautiful have images that refer to universal oppositions: something in movement and something still; something massive and something delicate; something natural and something human made; a living thing and an inanimate one; warmth and chill; something clear and something hazy. Or they might put together more subtle combinations that are beautiful in their contrast: a sound and a smell; a feeling and an object; loneliness in company. Look for these lovely qualities.

**Try to write some haiku.** You know enough now to get launched. Some suggestions:

- Write about some perception that has stuck in your memory as a vivid picture or a significant moment associated with a particular place.
- Go for a walk by yourself and observe the weather, the trees, the birds and anything else.
- Look at familiar little things through a magnifying glass: the movement of an insect or worm, earth, wood, the skin of your hand, etc.
- Write a haiku structured on two smells, two sounds, or any combination of two sense impressions.
- See if you get an idea about a contrast of big and small, rising and falling, delicate and unyielding etc. – but don't try too hard! If it is not based on an observation or experience it will sound contrived.

Don't write about an idea or a thought. Don't use any abstract nouns. Keep it simple and concrete. Stick to accurate observations. You may use seventeen syllables exactly, or, as in some of the examples given here, fewer than seventeen syllables. Have fun! Now share your haiku with some readers and ask them what they see. If they are confused, or see something quite different to what was in your mind, you need to revise the poem to achieve the effect you seek. If they respond enthusiastically, you have got an early hit!

#### With the Children's meeting:

After introducing the form of haiku and discussing the poems provided, invite the children to try to write their own. In twenty minutes they may well produce three or four new poems. Make sure you leave some time to share at least one from every person before the end of the children's meeting. Make this time like worship sharing; leave time after each haiku for reflection.

#### For follow-up sessions:

- **A haiku-walk** (known in Japan as a ginko): a rubbish tip can be as good as a beauty spot, but make sure that everyone is looking closely, touching things, listening and smelling, noting details, thinking of comparisons, looking at the sky as well as the ground.
- **Display:** Haiku lend themselves very well to visual display work with the younger children, accompanied by drawings or simple calligraphy.
- **Consider reading your haiku aloud to the adult meeting:** haiku need longish pauses between poems; they respond very well to percussion accompaniment, perhaps with the addition of one or two simple haunting notes on a pipe or flute.

# Journeys in the Spirit



## Children

### Sheet 4.C

#### Respond Making a simple folded zig-zag book

- Cut an A3 or A4 sheet of paper in half lengthways.
- If using A3, cut each half in half again lengthways to give 4 long strips of paper.
- Fold one strip in half and turn each half back on itself, creasing the folds back to make a zig-zag.
- You can keep it as simple as this, or you can add covers of card or construction paper: cut two A7 (one-eighth of a sheet of A4) rectangles from light card. The card can be plain or patterned, or the children can decorate it. Glue one piece of card to the front of the zig-zag and one to the back.



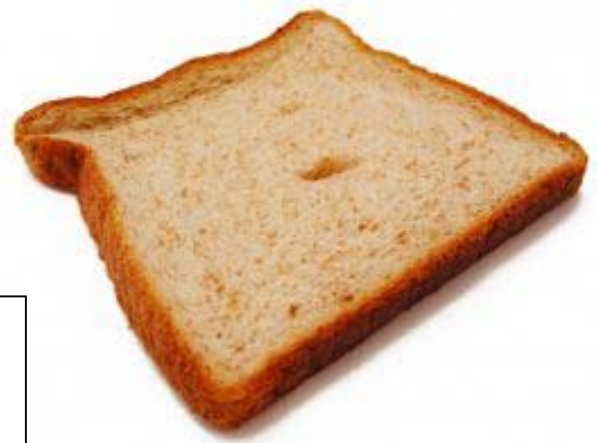
- If the children want to keep the pages private, centre ½ metre of thin ribbon between the card and the back of the zig-zag before pressing them together. This will be used to tie the book closed once the glue has dried.



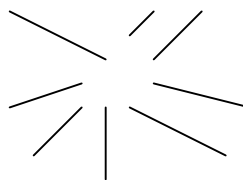
- Invite the children to draw or write or cut and stick pictures of things for which they are grateful on the inner pages of the book.

Resources: There are instructions at [www.makingbooks.com/accordion.pdf](http://www.makingbooks.com/accordion.pdf)

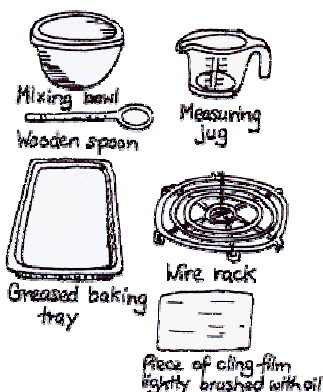
#### Engage Loaf pictures for the spidergram



A spidergram example



#### Respond Recipe for rolls



# Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 4.D Respond Making a box

1. Fold square of paper in half and half again

Fold corners into middle.

This gives a square pattern

2. Fold each corner to the line as shown. This will give the line pattern shown here – press hard

(Remember – each time you fold you will then unfold to see what you have done.)

3. Fold each corner to the 2<sup>nd</sup> fold

4. Cut long the lines as shown

5. Fold along the cut lines and then fold these side flaps into the middle with the flaps down & meeting in the centre

6. When the two sides are folded as above they will then make two sides of the box. Now bring these two end pieces together and fold the larger flap over to secure it into place. Glue is good! To make a lid use card 1cm bigger on one side – not all sides. MAKE A PRACTICE ONE OUT OF A SQUARE OF PLAIN PAPER FIRST – THIS WAY YOU CAN MESS AROUND WITH HOW YOU DO IT AND IT WON'T MATTER. IT DOES WORK!



# Journeys in the Spirit

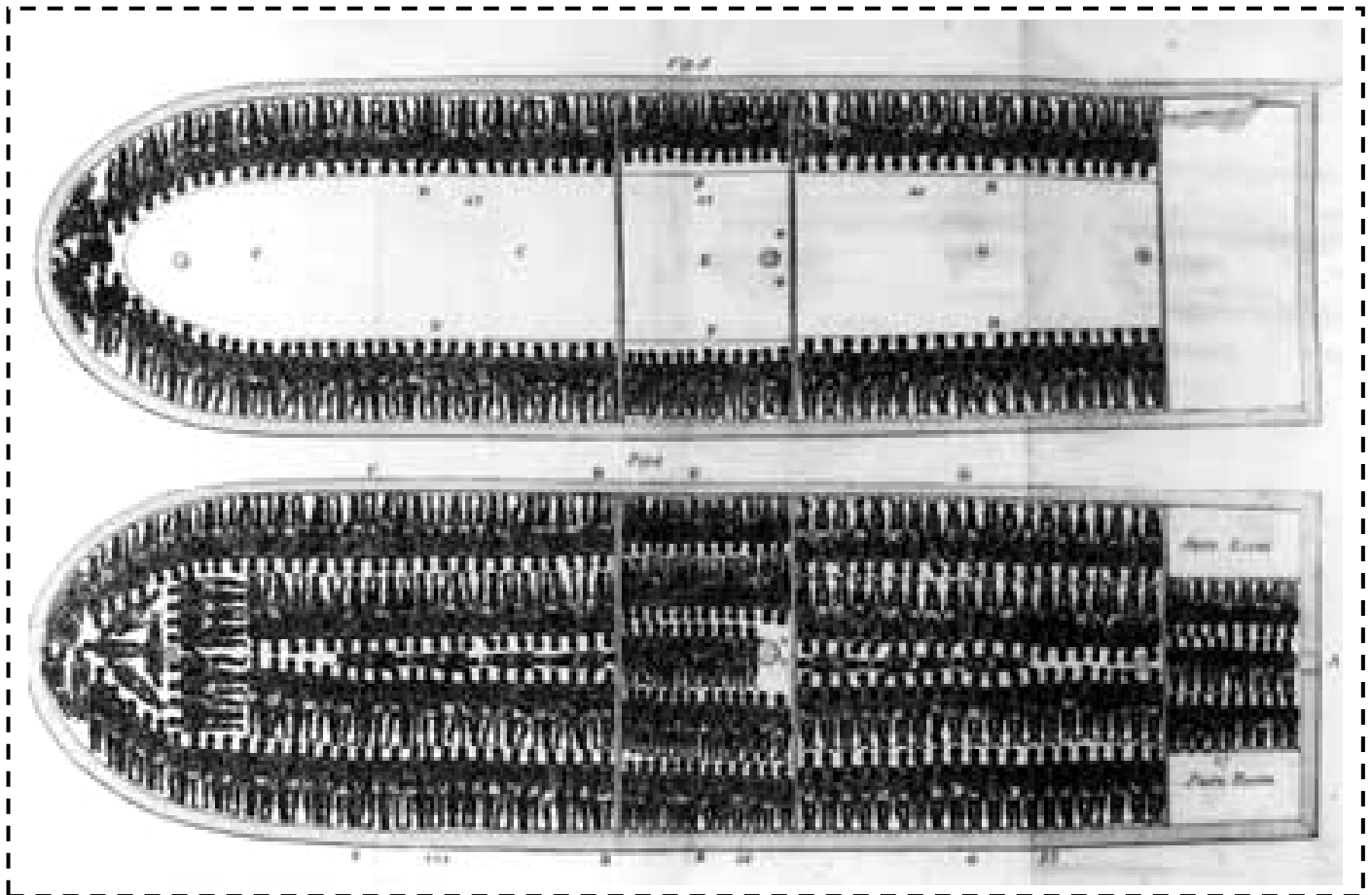
Children



Sheet 4E

Ongoing activity

A Quaker printed poster 1789



## What to do with this poster.

- Reiterate a little of the history - (see *Ongoing Activity back page of this issue of Journeys in the Spirit*) - then ask:
    - 'I wonder what you could make a poster about?'
    - 'It might be about slavery then or now – it might be about something else you would like to stop or make better in the world. This could be something in your town or village or city; in your school or, it might be about something that is happening in the world that you see in the newspapers, on television.'
    - 'Think for a little bit.'
    - 'Do you have any questions?'
    - 'You could start making it now; you could finish it now or use a computer at home, if you have one, to help you.' The sheet overleaf provides a framework for the poster to be drawn, painted or stuck in.
    - When the group needs to finish bring the children back together to share, if they want to, what has been done. Ask the questions, 'Where would you put your poster? Where could lots of people see it? Who would you have to ask? Who could be asked in meeting to help with this?'
- (Think about contacting local papers about this activity; check with parents if a photo is asked for.)**

# Journeys in the Spirit

Children

Sheet 4 F

Ongoing Activity



What would your poster be?

A large, empty rectangular area defined by a thick, black dashed line. This area is intended for children to draw their poster.