

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Issue 31

September 2009



Children

Burundi stories

This children's work edition of "Journeys in the Spirit" comes out monthly. It offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children aged 4 –12 years in a Quaker setting. It is offered with the intention of providing an opportunity for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of worship in 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. To offer a balanced session you should aim to do something from each section. 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.

Underpinning each issue is the idea that there are four directions to our spiritual journey. **Inwards** to ourselves; **outwards** to others; **upwards** (or even further inwards?) towards 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.



The fifth in the 'Our Quaker stories' series. May 2009 – August 2010.

Getting ready

The theme in this issue grows out of Quaker work in Burundi – a country the size of Belgium in the middle of Africa. Look at *Sheet 31.A for maps and on Sheet 31.B* for a picture of a Friends Church in Kibimba, in the centre of Burundi which is where Quakers from America first started work in 1934.

Beyond conflict, peace. That's the message in Burundi as the country, damaged by forty years of ethnic conflict, terrible fighting, seeks lasting peace – now a real prospect. Quaker peace workers don't try to "bring peace" – they help local people realise their own visions for a peaceful future. Enabling dialogue is critical to restoring peace, and our peace workers support these efforts. As peace takes hold, refugees can return to Burundi from neighbouring countries – and community groups need to be ready to help them adapt to a new, peaceful Burundi, laying down old hostilities and finding new ways to relate to one another. The aim is to help this small country complete its transition to peace, so that it can be a beacon of hope to its troubled neighbours.

This is how Quaker peace workers are helping to rebuild societies in Burundi where two one-year peace workers work alongside the American Friends Service Committee to support local peace builders including Friends Evangelical Church of Burundi and other local groups who are trying to build stability in the country.

Underpinning references

John 8:7 "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her"

QF+P 20:68 "What matters is that we care enough to talk to each other"

Matthew 7:1 Judge not that you be not judged?

Gather

Have one Friend to welcome everyone coming at the door. Somebody else sits on the floor ready for worship. Have a picture on the floor of a hippo partially submerged in water. Have a candle, the light in us all, ready to light. When everyone is settled light the candle – everybody be still for a little while. Say something like: 'today we are going to hear some things about a country called Burundi. Here are some words written by a Quaker from Burundi': (*simplify these as appropriate*).



"Conflict, (*fighting*) is like a hippopotamus. When you see a hippopotamus in Lake Tanganyika, a big lake, What do you see? A very small part of its back, its ears and some of its head. Most of the hippopotamus is hidden under the water. When we see two people or two groups fighting, we are only seeing a part of their conflict (*what is happening*). We see people hitting each other, burning houses or firing guns. However, most of the real fight cannot be seen. The real fight is usually a collection of hidden things which cause us to act angrily but which we don't easily speak about." Slightly amended quote from 'Unlocking Horns' a Burundi peace work manual.

Just say the words and leave them in the quiet. After the worship is ended you could say, 'I wonder if you have any thoughts or questions about what I just read.'

Engage

Begin finding out about Burundi by looking at and using the globe and maps on *Sheet 31.A*. You could also draw a big outline map of Africa to help you with this – maybe even a huge map that people sit on or around. Prepare it in advance. Make sure everybody has an idea of where our country is in relation to Burundi.

Where a river is born.

- Start by asking if anybody has heard of the River Nile. Ask if anybody knows where the River Nile is?
- Point to where the River Nile joins the Mediterranean Sea in Egypt. Does anybody know what Egypt is famous for?
- Ask where do people think the River Nile starts as a little river? Does it go as far South as Sudan – point to Sudan. Does anyone know anything about Sudan?
- Does it go as far South as Uganda – point to Uganda. Does anyone know anything about Uganda?
- Does it go as far South as Rwanda – does anyone know anything about Rwanda?

In fact this huge river, the Nile comes to Egypt all the way from Burundi! Burundi is small but it has 8 million people living there. You could measure the distance from Burundi to the Mediterranean on a map using a cut out UK.

Burundi stories.

On *Sheets 31.B & 31.C* there are stories and activities that focus on Burundi with thoughts and ideas about home and what it means, about feelings of anger, sadness, being frightened, feeling and sharing joy, forgiving, forgetting and fighting. These set the scene for activities in Respond.

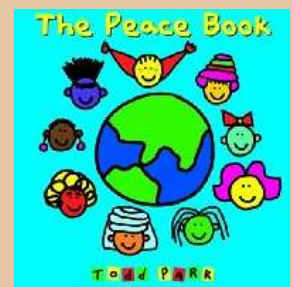
References & other resources

We "(Christians) must be the leaders in reconciliation and forgiveness, refusing to believe the myth that violence is inevitable."

"In the end (final analysis), only forgiveness will heal the wounds and stop the violence. Those of us who believe in God know that when we have peace in our hearts and are reconciled with God and with ourselves, peace will overflow to our neighbors and even to the rest of God's creation."

David Niyonzima and Lon Fendall. (*Unlocking Horns: Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Burundi*; Barclay Press 2001).

Note: this is not the peace manual described in the text



Positive and hopeful messages of peace – very simple pictures and text for under 6's.

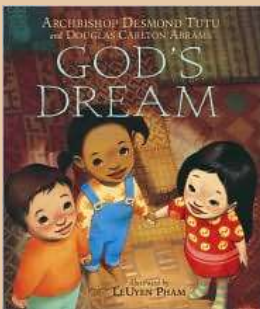
Todd Parr

ISBN: 9780316043496

References

“Participants were asked to write on pieces of paper the obstacles to their own ability to escape the cycle of violence – their anger, their doubts, their loss. Then each person was to consider these challenges, and as they felt empowered to do so, to throw them on the ground and liberate themselves from them. So that the 20 participants were sitting in a circle around perhaps 80 or 100 crumpled scraps of paper, the collected pain, cynicism, uncertainty, and powerlessness of a community. And finally these scraps were gathered and burned in a small pile, releasing them in a rising chimney of smoke. This simple symbolism of this was powerful. I watched in particular one participant who turned a scrap of paper over and over in his hand, past the point that facilitators suggested that we might be done, the pull of its weight on his soul turning over and over in his mind, until he was finally able to cast it off.”

‘Trauma Healing in Rurengera.’ Posted under All Quiet on the Quaker Front – see resources on Page 4.



Talks about forgiveness – good for younger children.

Desmond Tutu & Douglas Carter Abrams
ISBN 9781406318197

Respond

Hippopotamus.

Have sheets of paper with a blue or green wavy line drawn across, landscape way round, about two thirds of the way up the page. Everybody draws or is helped to draw a hippo in the water. Write the word ‘fight’ or ‘angry’ on the bit of the hippo above the water. Now ask everybody to think and talk about what might make people fight or get angry with someone else or lots of different people – things they might find it hard to say or talk about. Write or draw them on the lower part of the sheet. Invite people to say what they have drawn or written – if they want to.

Forget & forgive.

- Have 10 big individual letters F,O,R,G,E,T,G,I,V and E. See *Sheet 31.D*. If you are working with a group of older children you could split them into pairs, each with these ten letters.
- Spread them on a flat surface so that every one can see them.
- What words can people see? Hopefully you can see the words forgive and forget. Arrange the letters so the “for” sits beside both “give” and “get”.
- Looking first at “give” and “get” ask if people think these words are opposites? It might be that not everyone agrees. Ask which feels like more fun: giving to or getting? What about if it is giving or getting a piece of chocolate, or a football? In football though, if no-one passes the ball, can a team win? If everyone just tries to get the ball for themselves then a team is not very strong.
- Now look again at the words “forgive” and “forget”. What do these mean? Are these words opposites? When people do wrong – if someone is hurt by it, or embarrassed by it – sometimes we want to forget about it. But if we forget, then the same thing might happen again.
- Talking together, try to think of some times when you or your friends have been hurt or upset. If you can remember it, then you probably haven’t forgotten it. Do you think this might be an opportunity to forgive?
- In silence, try to think of times when you or your friends might have hurt or upset somebody else, even if it was by accident. Would you like it if they would forgive you for what you did?

Also, have a look at the activity in the side bar. Can you adapt this for your children’s meeting? The topic could be – ‘things I do or have done that hurt or upset people that I don’t want to do again.’

Two more stories.

The ‘Peace Book’ and ‘God’s Dream’ – see side bar on this page and page 2 - are good for exploring issues of peace and forgiveness with younger children.



Burundi sunset - www.quakerfront.com

See www.quakerfront.com
Look at blog for July 4th and arguments about getting and giving goats.



Reflect

Remember how in the exercise everyone was angry at the people around them. In life sometimes the people we hurt the most often are the people who are closest to us. Sometimes this might be by mistake. Sometimes this might be because we are angry, and they are the closest people to us at the time.

In the quiet think about: 'We can all do something wrong at some time so ask yourself:

- People like me sometimes get things wrong; have I upset anyone recently so that I should ask for forgiveness from them?
- People like my friends sometimes get things wrong; do I have friends who hurt or upset me that I should be prepared to forgive now?

If you are able to, play music from one of the **Youtube** links in the sidebar at the close of children's meeting. Drumming is very important in Burundi.

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 her or his thoughts and feelings about Burundi, peace, forgiveness and forgetting? What is there for you to learn from this session? What might you do differently another time?

Topical activity

Climate change – children's voices

On November 4th in Friends House in London there is a special gathering of people from the United Nations and lots of different churches and religions. The meeting is called: **Climate change - we can change**. This is organised by Quakers. It would be good if every person there has a card from a child on their seat. The idea is that the card will offer encouragement and hope to the person reading it. It can remind every adult of the importance of sorting out climate change for every child. Thinking about climate change can be scary - sorting it out is difficult – hopefully the cards will be a small support that people will keep with them. See *Sheet 31.E* for a simple template of card outlines for copying.

Links to other organisations and resources

www.quaker.org.uk/cyp and click Resources and then Ideas Store

www.quakerfront.com/ - American Quaker web pages and blog about Burundi

www.fwaborundi.com – Friends Women's Association – active in Burundi

www.un.org/children/conflict/english/Burundi - UN information

<http://tinyurl.com/burundi-home> - a film from the Red Cross about returning to Burundi. View the Real Media stream 80kbs – 240 kbs version.

www.quaker.org.uk/journal-letters - Journal letters by UK Quakers in Burundi

This issue was written by Ian Brightwell and edited by Chris Nickolay. Alison Prout & Chris Nickolay devised the topical activity.

The next children's issue of Journeys in the Spirit, Issue 32, October 1st looks at stories from one Quaker family; Issue 33, November 2nd looks at how to tell our stories about knowing God in each of us; Issue 34 looks at stories of Quakers in Bolivia.

References & other resources

Drumming is hugely important in Burundi:



Have a look and listen:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wMpwygcL-g>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iecVcVsmrnY&feature=related>

"You don't listen to these drums with your ears, you listen with your heartbeat," said the Bureau Chief of the United Nations Information Centre in Burundi, Beatrice Nibogora:

http://www.unicef.org/info/bycountry/burundi_39331.html

What could your Meeting do as all ages together?

'Forget & forgive' could be done altogether as the first part of a Meeting for Worship.

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Journeys in the Spirit

Children




Sheet 31.A

Engage

Where is Burundi and where are we?


United Kingdom

Africa




Burundi

River Nile



Source of the Nile



The diagram illustrates the geographical location of Burundi. It starts with a globe where an arrow points to the continent of Africa. A second arrow points from Africa to a map of the African continent, where a red star marks Burundi and an arrow points to the Nile River basin. A third arrow points from the Nile basin to a detailed map of Burundi, which shows Lake Tanganyika, Lake Nyasa, and the Source of the Nile. The detailed map includes a legend for roads (Primary, all-weather and Secondary, natural surface), airfields, and ports, and a scale bar.

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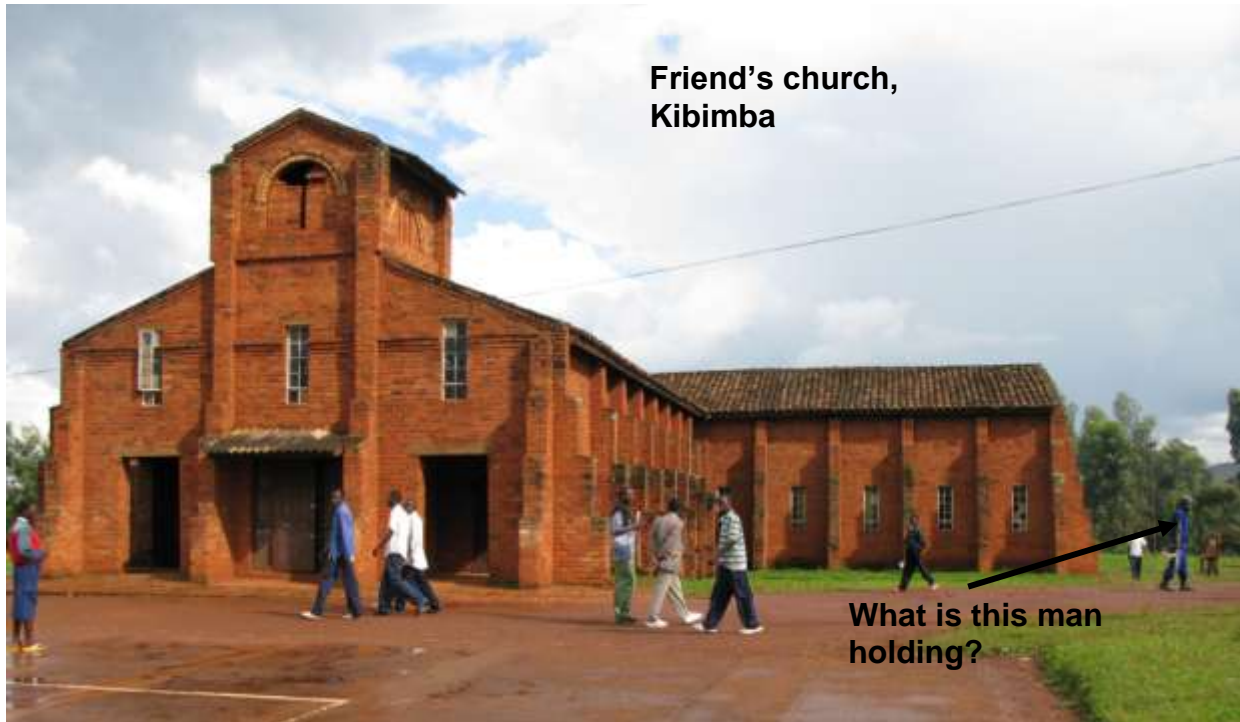
Children



Sheet 31.B

Engage

Burundi stories



**Friend's church,
Kibimba**

What is this man holding?

At times in Burundi there has been a lot of terrible fighting and violence. Some people left their homes and the land that they farmed because they were attacked or they were afraid. Some families moved to different countries and lived there until recently, waiting for peace for 10 or 20 or 30 years, before they could go back to the land they still called home.

Some children in these families only know home because of what their parents or older brothers and sisters have told them. This is either because they were too young to remember leaving or were not even born yet!

If you can access the internet in the children's meeting go to <http://tinyurl.com/burundi-home> for a short film (13 mins) from the International Committee of the Red Cross about some children and young people going home to Burundi. It's very positive. Use the Real Media stream 80kbs–240kbs version – it's smaller and quicker to access.

Ask everybody to sit in silence and imagine if you lived somewhere very different to where you live now. Imagine if you had never lived at "home" before but had only been told about it by older people in your family. What do you think people would have told you about where you live now? Can you imagine going to your "home" for the first time now, and seeing it for the first time?

After a little time discussing this get people into pairs with paper and drawing and colouring things. Each person then tells the other about their home, what they like about it, what it looks like – each person tries to draw or write what the other tells them. You could have big letters spelling out home to draw or write in.

HOME

Journeys in the Spirit

Children



Sheet 31.C

Burundi stories continued

When people fled their homes in Burundi, they often ran away in fear. Many people saw friends and members of their family being hurt or killed by soldiers or by neighbours. Many people suffered. It was not only the people who fled to other countries. Often families would move a short distance to an area where they felt more protected. There were times when neighbours fought with neighbours. Many people moved, and are now trying to move back. Now that the armies that were fighting in Burundi have made peace, families are moving back home. Some children are seeing their “homes” for the first time. Some families have been away for so long that now other people are living where they (or their parents) used to live. It can be difficult to prove exactly what land you owned if you have not been there for 30 years.

Think for a moment if your family had been away from home for a long, long time. Think about moving back. What do you think you might feel? Joy? Excitement? Happiness? Anything else?

Remember why it was that you ran away though? If you ran away from your neighbours, now that everybody is moving back home, who do you think your neighbours would be?

Can you imagine how you would feel? If you felt fear before, what do you think you would feel now?

- Now, stand up slowly and silently and imagine the people next to you are your enemies.
- Without talking look angrily at the people closest to you.
- Now slowly walk away from them.
- When you get to the edge of the room stay facing away from people.
- In silence for a moment imagine your enemies had hurt you.
- Walk slowly back to where you were before, and as you walk back, think about how you feel.
- Think about the joy of returning. But think also about the anger and fear of before.

If you had really been hurt or upset by the people next to you do you think in the one minute you were away from them you would be able to forget that they hurt you? Do you think if a neighbour had killed people in your family, that even after 30 years you would be able to forget that they had done that?.

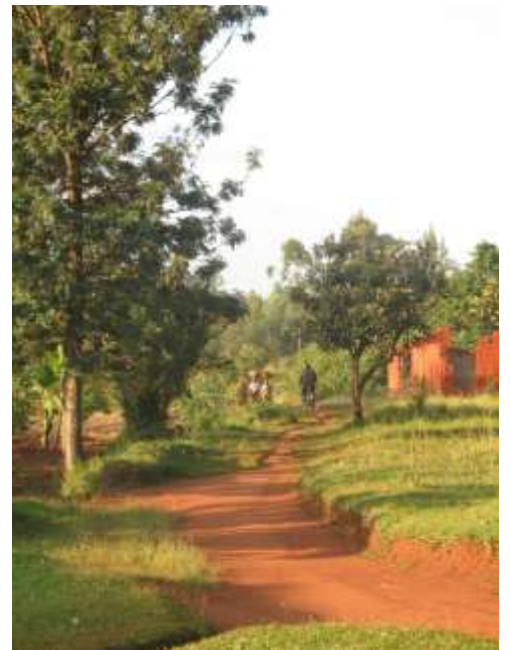
Think about forgiving and forgetting. If you want to live at peace in your “home” area and your neighbours want to live in theirs too, do you think it is more important to forget past wrongs or to forgive people for them?

Try the exercise again. This time, when you return try “getting” something from an enemy, maybe just get some of the space they were standing in. Does this bring peace?

Try the exercise again, but this time when you return, try “giving” something nice, even if it is just a smile, or a welcoming hug or a hand shake. How does this make you feel? Often people find it very hard to forgive but when they do, they find it makes them very happy too.

Talk now to some of your “enemies”. How did they feel when you tried to “get” something? How did they feel when you tried to “give” something?

I suggested giving a hug or a smile. Did anyone come up with other things to give in the exercise? What about in real life? If there is someone you have hurt or upset in real life, what do you think you could give them? Does it depend on who the person is?



Journeys in the Spirit

Children



Sheet 31.D

Respond

Forget and forgive

FOR

GET

GIVE

Journeys in the Spirit



Children

Sheet 31.E Topical activity Climate change – **children's voices**

This is a template for 3 cards. Copy as many as you like onto card. The dotted line is a fold line. Once folded the front, back and insides can be decorated and written on in whatever way each child chooses. Talk carefully about what the card is for – it is to be a simple gift to lots of people working hard to help our planet get better and be a good place for every creature, person, plant and tree. We need at least **500** cards. Very little children may need help. Please send cards to: CYP, Friends House, 173 – 177 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ.
