



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition Issue 50 April 2011



Dealing with Conflict: *Advices & queries 32 & 36*

Getting ready

This issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* children's edition focuses on *Advices and Queries 32 and 36*. These are challenging advices, dealing with concepts such as prejudice, forgiveness, reconciliation and empathy. They look at our approach to conflict both as individuals and as Quakers. Working with conflict is both reflective and active. It takes us deeply inside ourselves in the silence, recognising 'that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars', but also the seeds of destructive conflict in ourselves. It also leads us to consider how we may be active in resolving conflict in our individual lives and the wider community. Advice 36 looks at how we act towards someone who is passionate about an issue, even though we may not share that passion ourselves.

These are difficult themes, and yet children and young people will have their own experiences of conflict – through sibling rivalry, falling out with friends and witnessing or even being part of bullying behaviour. They may have been involved in sorting out an argument between friends, or be aware of initiatives such as playground pals or peer mediators in school. They may also be familiar with stories where people like Martin Luther King have stood up for a cause they believe in, whilst facing prejudice and violence.

In preparing to use these materials, take time to reflect on your own attitudes towards and experience with conflict. What can you bring to the session that will aid understanding, whilst allowing children the space to explore their own feelings, attitudes and spirituality?

Try to create a welcoming and calming atmosphere for the session. It may also be useful to consider dynamics in the group. Are there any tensions you are aware of that may affect how you introduce the themes and how can these be taken into account?

Gather

Place chairs in a circle, with a large bowl of water in the middle. Have some quiet music playing in the background. On entering the room, give each child a pebble to hold and ask them to sit in the circle quietly, then introduce a 'go around'. Ask the children to think of times when they have had arguments or fallen out with a friend or a member of their family. What happens, what do people say or do, and how does it make them feel? Say that we're not going to name or talk about particular people or events, but that you would like them to concentrate on how falling out with other people or having arguments makes them feel. Give the children some time to reflect, then go around the circle, naming one feeling, and dropping their pebble into the water. Words might include: 'angry', 'hurt', 'like I'm going to explode'..... You can draw attention to the ripples caused by the pebbles in the water. Feelings cause ripples too – and they can be either negative or positive ones. Explain that you are going to look at some of these feelings, and what can be done about them in a good way.

"Journeys in the Spirit" offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children and young people.

This children's work edition comes out monthly. It offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with 5 –12 year olds in a Quaker setting.

It provides opportunities for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of worship in partnership on our shared journey in the spirit.

Underpinning references

Isaac Penington, 1667: "Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness, and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, & helping one another up with a tender hand."

Engage

Exploring the *Advices & queries*:

Start by exploring *Advices & queries* 32 and 36 in child-friendly language. *Advices & queries* 32 may be better for younger children and 36 for the older age-range. Wording for sharing these with children is suggested below. Once the text has been read out, explore it by using the questions given after each passage:

Advices and queries 32: 'When you fall out with someone, look at how you are feeling. Stop and think. Be quiet. Ask yourself: 'How do I feel? – angry, hurt inside, upset? How do I see the other person: is this fair? How did I behave? Am I partly to blame? What can I do to make things better for myself, for the other person, and for everyone?'

Questions that could be asked include:

- 'How do you feel when you've fallen out with a friend?'
- 'How do you behave?'
- 'What happens next?'
- 'Do you think you could behave differently?'
- 'Have you ever helped to solve an argument?'
- 'What did you do?'
- 'How did it feel?'



Advices & queries 36: 'Can you accept that a friend may want different things from yourself, and that their ways of doing things may be different to your own? Can you put your own wishes and opinions to one side to help them?'

Questions that could be asked include:

- 'What do we mean by prejudice?' – explain a little if it seems difficult.
- 'Can you think of examples?'
- 'How do you think we can break down prejudice?'
- 'Do you belong to a group (e.g. friendship group, class council or team)?'
- 'What happens when you have to make a decision as a group? How are the wishes of different people taken into account?'

Working with stories:

'Red Riding Hood' and the 'Three Little Pigs' are children's stories that can be used for looking at traditional 'villains' in a different way. The story 'The Mole who thought it was none of his Business' considers revenge and forgiveness; and the beautiful fable 'Jonathan Livingston Seagull' examines how those who dare to be different can be ostracised by the society they belong to. On *Additional Resource 50.A* there is information about each of these. There is also an alternative version of the 'Red Riding Hood' story on *Additional Resource 50.B*. and questions to aid discussion and reflection on *Additional Resource 50.B* – see side bar.

Looking at Prejudice with older children:

It's a good idea to start off with an 'ideas or mind storm'. Ask the children: 'What do we mean by prejudice?' – again you may need to give a little help. Do a 'mind map' on a large sheet of paper.

You can follow this up by working with the pictures see *Additional Resource 50.C* – have enough copied for everybody. This will help children to know that we each see things from different perspectives, and can react accordingly. There are additional activities for older children on *Additional Resource 50.D*

References & other resources

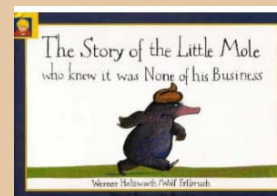
Advices & queries:

1.32 and 1.36

Quaker faith and practice:

24.54, and 24.57 – also 1.18 and 1.26

Stories available from the Quaker Bookshop and Resources Centre:



Additional Resources 50.A, 50.B, 50.C and 50.D can be found at:

www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

References & other resources

Advices & queries 1.17:

“Think it possible that you may be mistaken”

“Let us see what love can do” – **William Penn** based on Paul’s Letter to the Romans chapter 12 in the *New Testament of the Bible*

There are some mediation techniques on *Additional Resource 50.E* for using with older children when following up to stories

Additional Resources 50.E can be found at: www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

Respond

Exploring Advices & queries - working with stories:

Encourage the children to listen to one another, and to share their thoughts and feelings about your chosen story. Now provide age-appropriate opportunities for them to explore the theme further. Depending on the size of the group and the ages of the children, they may decide to work alone, in pairs or in groups. Some ways of responding to the stories include:

- Create a drawing, collage or comic strip to represent the story.
- Create a mini-drama of one of the stories to present to Meeting, using puppets or role-play. Simple puppets can be made out of card and lollipop sticks, or out of socks. See *Journeys in the Spirit, Children’s Work Edition Issue 1* at www.quaker.org.uk/journeys/archive-children.
- Make posters with slogans – try to see things from the other person’s perspective, and to deal with conflict positively. The posters generated for Quaker Week 2010 can be used as a way to look at stereotypes and prejudices. See *Journeys in the Spirit Children’s Work Edition Issue 4* at www.quaker.org.uk/journeys/archive-children.

Exploring Advices & queries - follow on from stories:

Encourage the children to share their experiences of conflict, and how they can be active in resolving it. One way of doing this is suggested below:

- Do a go-around, starting with: “A good way I know of to resolve arguments is” (e.g. saying sorry, listening to the other person...)
- The children work in pairs or individually, and write or draw a simple conflict situation on a piece of paper – e.g. “I fall out with my brother when he takes my toys without asking”; “I get really annoyed when people jump the dinner queue.” Tell them it’s important that they don’t name people. They then fold up their piece of paper and place it in a hat.
- Now pass the hat around, and ask the children to pick out a situation and read it out. (If they get their own, they have to put it back!)
- The group works together to explore how that situation could be resolved in a positive way.

Exploring Advices & queries - designing a questionnaire:

This activity may be more appropriate for older children, but it could also be done in mixed-age groups. Tell the children that they are going to act as reporters, and talk to people in their Meeting about how they deal with conflict – also what issues they feel particularly strongly about and how they feel supported by the Meeting. Say that first they are going to work out some questions, and later they can interview Friends and ask them to tell their stories. Possible questions are:

- What makes you annoyed?
- What do you do when something someone says or does gets you hurt or annoyed? What happens then? How would you like to react?
- What issues are you involved in as a Quaker? Do you feel supported by the Meeting?

Interviews could be recorded, if Friends are willing. This could be an on-going project, and could involve the children creating a scrap-book with some of the stories and experiences of older Friends. This could be a good opportunity to help the children feel involved in the life of the wider Meeting.

Reflect

At the end of your time together, come back together in a circle to share any thoughts and feelings about the session.

If it feels right, you can re-read the child-friendly versions of *Advices and queries* 32 & 36 – or ask one of the group to do so.

Go around the circle, and share:

- One thing I've enjoyed about this session,
- One thing I like about this group, and
- One thing I've learnt about sorting out conflict.

Decide together what you would like to share with the adults in Meeting. This could be your 'Top Tips for Dealing with Conflict' – or a story, cartoon or poster.

Finish with a time of quiet.

As this may have been quite a difficult session, it may be a good idea to end on a high note. One way of doing this is to build a 'positive pyramid'. One person puts their hand into the middle of the circle and says one positive or nice word to describe the group, the next person follows suit, placing their hand on top of the person's who has just spoken. When all hands are in the middle, lower the 'pyramid', then send it up to the ceiling with a big cheer!

Review

Reviewing can happen at the time or later, and may be particularly helpful where a series of activities is planned around the same themes. Some useful questions to consider are:

- What went well, and why?
- What didn't go so well, and why?
- Is there anything that could have been done better?
- Did everyone participate and have fun?
- Was everyone able to learn and to contribute something?
- How well were the children able to think about and reflect on *Advices and queries* 32 & 36?
- How could the themes be further developed in future sessions?

This issue was written by Jane Harries and edited by Chris Nickolay and Howard Nurden. The Topical activity was written by Chris Nickolay.

The next children's issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* is **Issue 51** and is about *Advices and Queries* 33 (*being aware of discrimination and helping make a just, kind society*) and is available on May 2nd. **Issue 52** begins **Series 6, More Quaker Stories**, and is about Jack Hoyland, a Quaker close to Gandhi and a maker of small bears and is available on June 1st. **Issue 52** is about George Fox and is available on July 1st.

Materials available online are:

Current issue additional resources sheets

An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting

Links to other resources and information

A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship

A topical activity – making a hare shaped gift box for Easter.

Also a 'How to use *Journeys in the Spirit*' guide; a link to special issues; an archive of previous issues; a discussion forum and a link to the *Journeys in the Spirit* Youth edition.

www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren

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Children's work

Additional resource 50.A

Engage

Working with stories

Stories that look at prejudice, revenge, forgiveness and how we are with those who appear different:

'The Wolf's Story: What Really Happened to Little Red Riding Hood' by Toby Forward, and 'The True Story of the Three Little Pigs' as told by A. Wolf to Jon Scieszka.

These stories give the wolf's version of events. In the second story, for instance, as Alexander T. Wolf explains, he was just minding his own business, making his granny a cake, when he realized he didn't have enough sugar. He innocently went from house to house to house (one made of straw, one of sticks, and one of bricks) asking to borrow a cup of sugar. Could he help it if he had a bad cold, causing him to sneeze gigantic, gale-force sneezes? Could he help it if pigs these days use shabby construction materials? And after the pigs had been ever-so-accidentally killed, well, who can blame him for having a snack?

After reading this or the alternative Red Riding Hood story on *Additional Resource 50.B*, you could ask and talk about the following questions:

Is the wolf guilty? Do you believe him? Why or why not? Can we ever trust wolves?

The Story of the Little Mole Who Knew it Was None of His Business by Werner Holzwarth

A terrible catastrophe befalls mole one morning. It looks a little like a sausage, and the worst thing is that it lands right on his head. Mole sets out to find who has left their 'business' on his head. He asks all the animals and eventually the flies tell him the dog is the culprit. He finds Basil, the butcher's dog and climbs on to his kennel and 'pling' – a tiny black sausage lands right on top of the dog's head'. Satisfied mole gets on with his day. After reading this story, you could ask and talk about the following questions:

What was mole feeling? Can we justify his feelings? How could we persuade mole to let go of his feelings? Was mole being reasonable? What might happen now? How could mole have acted instead?

Jonathan Livingston Seagull – a Story by Richard Bach:

This is a story about a very special gull. For most gulls it is not flying that matters, but eating. But Jonathan is different. His passion is flying – as fast and perfectly as he can. Misunderstood and outlawed by his flock, he continues to follow his dream. He becomes an instructor for other gulls and learns the meaning of love and kindness. After reading this story, you could ask and talk about the following questions:

Why does the gull flock send Jonathan away? Could the flock have behaved differently? What could they have done? Why does Jonathan choose to return to the gull colony? What do you think is the main message of the story?

Stories available from the Quaker Bookshop and Resources Centre 0207 663 1030

www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-centre



Journeys in the Spirit



Children's work

Additional resource 50.B

Engage Working with stories - Little Red Riding Hood

Once upon a time there was a wolf, and that wolf is me. I got caught in the biggest pickle of my life. It all started with this little girl and her grandmother. So I was walking through the village one day and noticed that there was a pig loose and running around in front of this house. Being the kind wolf that I am, I did not want the person living at this house to not know that their pig was loose. So I went up to the door and rang the door bell. An old lady answered the door. Before I could even get out a word, this old woman began screaming at the top of her lungs. Of course, this drew everyone's attention over to this old lady's house. So I gently shoved the old lady into her house and entered the house after her. Once we were in the house I thought that I would be able to explain myself to her, but no! This old lady just kept yelling and yelling. I had never heard such shrieking in my entire life. I was so scared that someone was going to come over and get me, thinking that I was hurting this old lady. So acting out of fright I ate the old lady. I didn't know what else to do. I wasn't hungry at all, but I ate her for the sake of my own life.

After I had heard this old lady yell so loud, I had a headache. So I decided that I would take a little nap. I was off in dream world when all of a sudden I heard a knock on the door. Being frightened of what to do I did the first thing that came to my mind. I grabbed the old woman's clothes and stuck them on and then jumped back into bed. I thought that I could trick whoever was at the door that I was this old woman. Now that I was prepared, I told the person to come in. To my surprise the



guest was just a little girl. She said, "Hello, grandmother. I have brought you some custard." I told the little girl thank you and then told her to go away. However, like most little children this little girl started asking me questions. She went on and on with things like "what big eyes you have" and "what big ears you have." I kept trying to think of responses, but I was running out of things to say. Just like the old woman, the little girl would not quit talking. Finally the little girl said, "What big teeth you have." Not knowing how to respond to the little girl and not wanting a yelling session to begin again, I found that the easiest thing to do was to eat the little girl. I felt terrible, but I think there was no other way.

After all this mess, my terrible happening turned into a story by the village folk. Except these people told the story in a way that made me into an evil villain. This story has ruined my life. I can't even show my face in the village anymore and it ruined my weekly poker game. So I am setting the story straight. I was the victim in all of this mess.

- **What do you think of the story? Do you believe what the wolf is saying? Why? Why not?**
- **Do wolves always tell lies and behave badly? Can you think of anyone you know who behaves and is treated like the wolf?**



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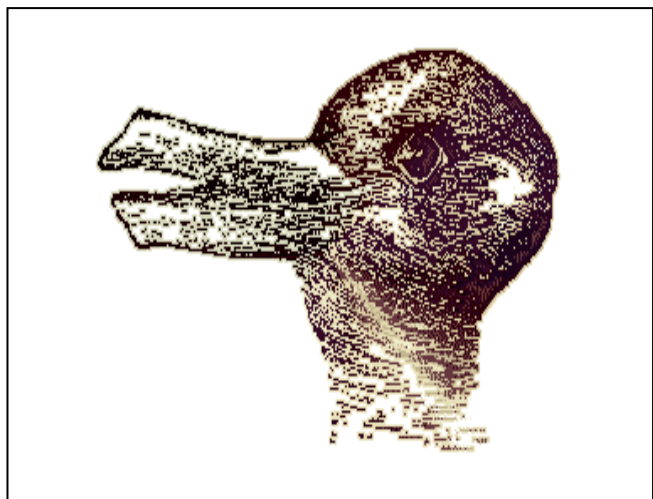


Children's work Additional resource 50.C

Engage Looking at prejudice with older children

Make enough copies of the pictures below for the children to look at them in pairs. Give a copy of one of the pictures to each pair, and ask – what do you see in the picture? Give the children a minute to look at the pictures in silence – without talking to one another. They then share with their partner what they can see.

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Come back into the larger group and discuss:

- What did you see in the pictures? Did you see different things?
- What might influence you to see one thing rather than another?
- Can you think of an example in real life where you have been misled by first impressions (e.g. a new teacher, a new pupil in your class, etc.)?
- What can we do to avoid prejudice?



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Children's work Additional Resource 50.D

Engage Looking at prejudice with older children

As a further consideration of how we deal with conflict or challenging situations there is the question, for older children, of how we as Quakers support those in our Meetings who act under concern, even if we find their stance difficult or challenging.

This could be explored by considering some real-life stories – such as those of Lindis Percy or Helen Steven. Here are simple outlines of parts of their stories. Tell the stories, and then discuss questions such as:

'What do you think about it?'

'How did what this Friend did make you feel?'

'How do you think your Meeting would react to a Member acting in such a way?'

'As Quakers, what can we do to support one another when we are acting under concern?'



This is Lindis Percy, a Quaker. She climbed the gates of Buckingham Palace when George Bush the President of the United States of America visited London. She was saying he was not welcome because of what he had done to start and carry on with the war in Iraq. For more about Lindis and what else she and others do look at:

<http://www.caab.org.uk>



Helen Steven was one of several people who paddled canoes on a Scottish Loch to try to stop the nuclear submarine, Trident. The canoe was tiny and the submarine was huge and she was terrified. Here is a link to a short film about similar actions – just to give an idea of scale:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Scottish-CND/44967583790> Below is what she said in Court.

In this photo she is with Ellen Moxley receiving an award from the Gandhi Foundation. See *Journeys in the Spirit Children's work edition issue 10* at www.quaker.org.uk/journeys/archive-children for the story of a boat ride to Trident taken by Ellen and others.

Quaker faith & practice 24.27 – Helen Steven's defence statement regarding her act of public protest in entering Faslane Submarine Base.

I do not wish to deny that on April 4th, the anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King, I was inside the Faslane Submarine Base, and that I was there as a deliberate act. However, I pled guilty to the charges because had I done otherwise I would have been guilty of far greater crimes against my conscience and against humanity.

If I may, I would like to outline very briefly the reasons for so acting, not so much as mitigation of guilt, but rather as a declaration of intent, for as long as those bases remain, I must continue to act as my conscience guides.

My charge is that I entered a protected area without authority or permission. My claim is that I had authority - the authority of my Christian conviction that a gospel of love cannot be defended by the threatened annihilation of millions of innocent people. It can never be morally right to use these ghastly weapons at any time, whether first, or as unthinkable retaliation after we ourselves are doomed.

I acted also with the authority of the nameless millions dying of starvation now because we choose to spend £11.5 billion on Trident whilst a child dies every 15 seconds.

I am further authorised by my 13-year-old Vietnamese god-daughter whose guardian I am. She was adopted and brought to Scotland to take her away from the unspeakable horror of the Vietnam war. If all that I have done is to bring her closer to the nuclear holocaust, I stand convicted by her of the most cynical inhumanity.

I am charged under an Act giving control and disposal of land to the Queen, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, the Commons assembled in Parliament and eventually the Secretary of State. I believe the world is God's creation. This beautiful, delicate world in all its infinite wonder is threatened with extinction. That to me is blasphemy.

And so, out of love, love of my god-daughter, love of my world, I had to act. If I see that base at Faslane as morally wrong and against my deepest convictions - as wrong as the gas chambers of Auschwitz, as wrong as the deliberate starvation of children - then by keeping silent, I condone what goes on there.

On April 4th, I made a choice. I chose to create the dream of another way. My only crime is not working hard enough, or long enough, or soon enough towards the fulfillment of the dream. If my actions were a crime, then I am guilty.

Helen Steven, 1984



Journeys in the Spirit



Children's work

Additional resource 50.E

Respond

Activities to help children practice
conflict resolution

Circle-time: Start off by going round the circle and saying: 'My name is and what's important to me is

Naming feelings: In a circle, discuss the following questions:

- What makes me angry?
- How angry am I on a scale of 1 to 10 when 1 is not angry at all and 10 is the most angry you can be?
- What do you do when you feel angry about the situation you have described?
- Is this a good way of reacting? What could you do instead?

Active Listening: Introduce the SARAH technique

Stop talking.

Active listening – this means concentrating on listening.

Repeat back what was said.

Accept the other's feelings.

Help the other person to list some choices – what could they do next?

Ask the children to work in pairs. Ask each child to think of something (an experience or a problem) that they would like to share with their partner. The children take turns in listening to one another, using the SARAH technique. Afterwards, they should come back together as a group and discuss – How did it feel?

'I' statements: When someone does or says something that hurts or annoys you, one effective way of dealing with it is to use 'I' statements. An example is given below:

When ('I get left out of games')

I feel ('upset, lonely, angry....')

Because ('I hate being on my own'; 'I feel really stupid')

What I would like is ('for you to include me'.)

In pairs, ask the children to think of conflict situations that arise in their family or with friends. One person takes the role of the person who feels upset and describes it using 'I' statements and the other person responds also using 'I' statements – 'when you said....I felt' or 'when I have been....' Did it work? What happened? Also, if there is time, ask when may doing this not be successful?

Affirmation: It's important to finish off on a positive note. There are simple ways of doing this. One is just to pass a smile around the circle.

Some of the above ideas are from Let's Mediate: A Teachers' Guide to Peer Support and Conflict Resolution Skills for all Ages (Lucky Duck Books) 'by Hilary Stacey and Pat Robinson.

Books available from the Quaker Bookshop and Resources Centre 0207 663 1030 www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-centre