



# Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition January 2013 Issue 71



## What about violence?

### Getting ready

This series of journeys in the Spirit looks at some of the difficult questions and issues. The questions most of us would probably rather avoid.

This issue looks at our understanding and feelings about violence. We cope with peace, pacifism and the gentle side of our nature. We have many thoughts and ideas of how to explore this with children but looking at violence is more problematic. Yet we live in a violent world.

At school, children often have to cope with bullying. Some children witness domestic violence at home. Children are exposed to images of violence in the stories they read, the films and cartoons they see and the news they hear about. The line between fantasy and reality quickly becomes blurred and confusing.

The activities here explore what violence means, why and how it affects people and what makes people violent. More difficult here are some thoughts on how we may deal with violence and look to find that of God in us all.

This issue contains some challenging stories and images as a necessary part of looking at the difficult question of violence. You may need to adjust some of the language according to the age of the children in your group. You might want to say that you are going to be talking about some things that even adults find hard – you could then add that everybody has to listen to and look after each other especially carefully.

### Gather

**Prepare the room by setting out chairs and have any resources you need for the activities you have chosen**

Have ready the pictures of violence on the *Additional Resources 71.A*.

Begin by asking everyone in the group to say their names, especially if there are people in the group who do not know each other. Perhaps they could also say what their favourite book or film is.

Lay out the pictures on the floor or table and explain you want them to look at the images in silence for a minute or two.

Now move on to the preparatory session, see *Engage*, that follows on from this and should be done before any of the other activities. This is to ensure the children understand what is meant by violence.

*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.

### Key concept

Anger is a feeling, an emotion that we all feel at times.

There are many ways of dealing with anger. Anger is OK.

Violence and abuse is behaviour. It hurts others and ourselves, and sometimes property.

It is learned and unlearned and it is **never** OK.

# Engage

## Preparatory session

The key concept that underpins all the activities in this issue is this:

*Anger is a feeling – an emotion and one all of us feel. There are many ways of dealing with anger. Anger is O.K.*

*Violence and abuse is behaviour. It hurts others, ourselves and sometimes property. It is learned and unlearned. It is never O.K.*

Now talk with the children about the pictures. See *Additional Resource 71.A*; ask the following questions to encourage discussion

Do you know what each picture is about? Do you like these pictures? How do they make you feel?

Perhaps the pictures make us feel sad, uncomfortable or even frightened. Explain that we describe what is happening in the pictures as violence.

Violence can be physical such as hitting, bullying, beating and it can be emotional such as shouting, swearing or making someone do something they do not want to do. Encourage the children to share their understanding of violence – and what violence is.

When you feel the discussion has come to a natural conclusion move on to one of the following activities.

## Bible story *Additional Resource 71.B*

This is the story of the People of God (Israelites) who were forced to leave their land and go to Egypt. There were terrible acts of violence in some Bible stories.

You may be know this story as a Godly Play story and prefer to use it as such if you have the equipment. If not, this is an adaptation of the Godly play story with easily obtained resources. Tell the story from *Additional Resource 71.B*.

You will need a tray, a small amount of sand, some small wooden figures or some simple ones made from cardboard, and a piece of blue material cut in half for the divided sea. After the story go to the Bible story within Respond on the next page.

## Domestic abuse *Additional Resource 71.C*

This is an ordinary story of what happens to many children. Domestic abuse is often not talked about and children suffer alone. The aim of the session is to draw out the difference between anger and violence. There are examples of anger that are OK and there is violence in the father's actions. There is also some violence, for example, in the computer games and aggression at football matches that is acceptable. Read the story on *Additional Resource 71.C*. After the story go to Domestic Abuse within Respond on the next page.

## Are you a volcano?

This exercise comes from a book called "A volcano in my tummy". It explores what happens when anger might be expressed in unacceptable ways. See sidebar for details. Look at Lesson 3 – it is about Craig's angry day – move on to talk about anger and when it becomes violence.

## Group violence

The story told in the all age worship is about violence on a greater scale and the distress, fear, injury and even death caused by the explosion of a bomb. Read the story. People in this story become angry and with good reason and this again is very acceptable. But when anger leads to acts of violence that deliberately hurt and even kill people it is not OK. The story and the all age worship are available with the other online resources – see sidebar.

## References & other resources

### Bible story

Exodus

Ch11- 15 to v21

### A Volcano in my Tummy

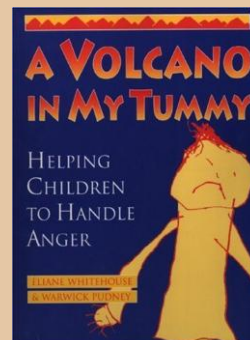
Helping children to handle anger

Elaine Whitehouse and Warwick Pudney.

New Society Publishers

ISBN:

0-86571-349-9



*Additional Resource 71.A, 71.B, 71.C and Simple plan for all age worship can be found at:*

[www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children](http://www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children)

## References & other resources

“We believe in overcoming evil with good. We must speak and act from our own inner light to the inner light in all others as Jesus did..... Causing deliberate hurt to another person because that suffering is thought to be of benefit in itself, we believe is not a Christian response.

Punishment in this sense not only harms the punished but degrades those who inflict it, and it is a barrier to the working of God’s love within us”.

**QF&P 23.102**

**Q F & P** Advices and Queries 42:

“Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.”

# Respond

## Bible Story

After you have read the story ask some open questions like: Ask some questions like – *I wonder which part of this story you like the best; which part you think is most important; which part might be like something about your life; is there any part of the story you could leave out and still have all the story you need.*’

After this conversation seems complete use the following questions and invitations to think and talk:

What were the terrible, violent things that happened to people? Draw out how the people of God were made to obey the Pharaoh – they were slaves, the violence of the first born sons dying, the army coming after the people of God and the drowning of the Pharaoh’s army.

Talk about how violent things happened to “good” people and “bad” people. That nobody benefits from the use of violence.

Act out the story using the props as in the picture. Children could do this in groups of two or three. Others can draw pictures illustrating the story. Some children might like to talk more about what happens in the story.

## Domestic abuse

Have a few minutes of quiet after you have finished to let the children take in the impact of the story.

Ask them what they think about the story and what it must feel like to be Emily. Be aware that there may be children who have witnessed domestic abuse or know someone who has.

Talk about the people in the story who feel angry and that is ok. When does anger become violence?

You could do smiles and frowns chart. Under smiles list the feelings that are good or acceptable. Under frowns the actions that are not acceptable. It is fine for Daniel to poke Emily a bit in fun. It is ok for Daniel to play with his computer games – the violence here is fantasy. It is not ok for Dad to hit Mum. Let any conversation go on as long as it feels natural and engaged. Have a choice of activities available for children to choose – pencils and paper, a quiet place to sit, books to read with gentle stories, colouring pens, pastels and paper, a tray of sand and some simple figures.

## Are you a volcano?

This book is a very good resource for exploring anger with children. Lesson 3 looks at the difference between anger and violence. You could read the story. You can use the volcano diagram (photocopy the page) for the children to write or draw on. They can use it to record times when they have felt angry and wanted to “hit out” or been frightened by someone else’s anger or violence.



## Reflect

Towards the end of the session have some time for the children to ask questions. There may be issues that have arisen as a result of the subject and children may need clarification if there are things they have not understood.

There are sensitive issues dealt with in this edition and there may be children affected by them such as bullying or domestic abuse. Children may want to share their own feelings. Have time to do this. Think about having an additional volunteer in this session in case a child needs one to one support.

If you feel there are things from the session that have affected the children in any way it would be advisable to speak with the parent collecting the child at the end of the session.

Ask the children if they would like to share with the adults what you have been doing in Children's Meeting. Decide what everyone wants to share with the rest of meeting and how best to do this.

End with a short time of stillness together.

## Review

The review can happen at the time or later but volunteers may well feel they need to speak to someone immediately after the session, especially if there have been issues around violence that have personally affected the children.

It is probably a good idea to let parents know the theme of the children's meeting in advance in case there are questions or comment they want to address to the volunteer. Children may want to continue discussions with their parent after the session.

For yourself reflect on how the session went. Did the children participate well? Do you feel they have a better understanding of violence and its impact on others? Are there things you might have done differently? There may be issues to take to children's committee for further discussion.

**This issue was written by Madeleine Harding and edited by Chris Nickolay and Howard Nurden. Chris Nickolay wrote the Topical activity.**

**Issue 72** will be the second in the new series. It will explore questions about *Other religions – are they too different from us?* Available from 1 February 2013.

**Issue 73** will explore questions about *When is it OK to break the rules?* Available from 1 March 2013.

**Issue 74** will look at the question, 'How can I talk about being a Quaker?' Available from 1 April 2013.

## Materials available online are:

Current issue additional Resources Sheets

An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting

A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship

A topical activity – about looking forward in the new year

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.

All these are available at:

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

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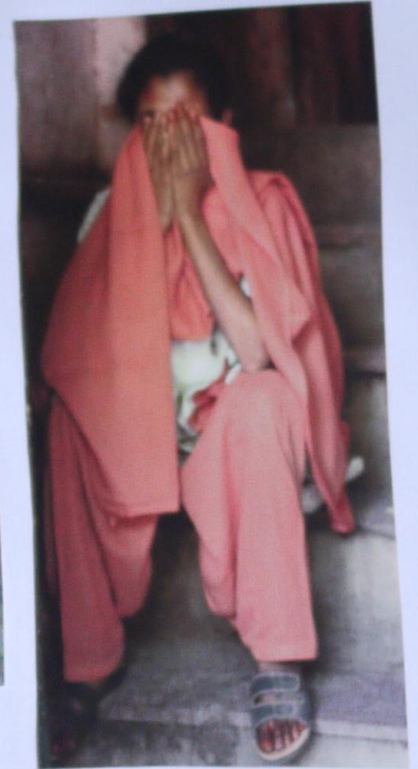
# Journeys in the Spirit

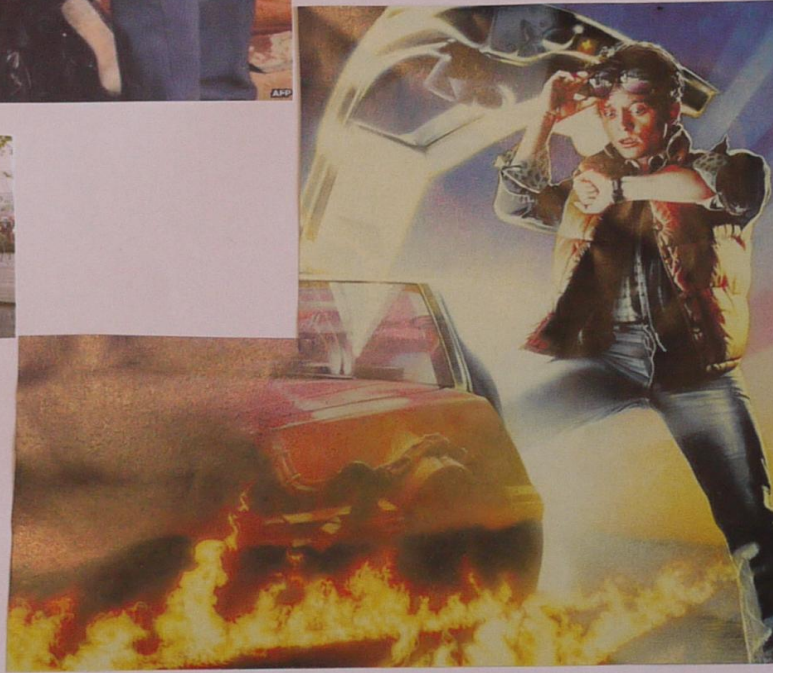
Children's work

Additional resources 71.A

Gather and Engage

Pictures of violence







# Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 71.B

Engage

Bible story - Exodus



## Exodus Chapters Ch.11-15v21

Tell the Exodus story in language that the children can understand.

The story takes place in the desert that is a dangerous place. There is no food or water and nothing grows in the desert. When the wind blows the desert changes shape so people lose their way.

The people of God were living in a part of the desert where the rains did not fall so nothing would grow. The crops wouldn't grow so people had no food. The children were hungry and the mothers were sad. So the people had to leave and travel across the desert to a land called Egypt.

It was a long journey and took many days. Eventually they reached Egypt. The king who ruled this land was called the Pharaoh.

When the people arrived they found there was food and work and they were happy to start with. But the Pharaoh was a wicked man. He made the people obey him and do everything he said. They were his slaves and he treated them cruelly.

Moses, who was one of the people of God, was brave and kept asking the Pharaoh to let the people go but the Pharaoh always said "NO"

Then many strange things started to happen in the land of Egypt. The oldest boy child in all the families, including the Pharaoh's family, died. But the boys in the families of the people of God did not die. Their God was looking after them even though they had had a terrible time.

Eventually the Pharaoh let them go but it was a trick. As they traveled towards the sea they felt the ground begin to shake. The Pharaoh's army was coming after them. They could hear the beating of the horses' hooves and the rumbling of the chariots. Pharaoh's army pushed the people towards the sea. They were very frightened and thought they would all die. But God was looking after them and told Moses to take the people through the water. The water parted for them to let them through. Then as the Pharaoh's army came after them the waters closed over them so they were all drowned.

The people were so happy to get to the other side to safety. They rejoiced and gave thanks. In fact they were so happy they all danced for joy.







# Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 71.C

Engage

Domestic abuse



This story is about an ordinary family. Emily is eight years old and lives at home with her Mum, Dad and ten year old brother Daniel.

Emily loves her family, even her brother who can sometimes be very annoying. He teases Emily and pokes her a bit. But other times they play happily together. She shows Daniel how to make friendship bracelets and he shows Emily how to play his computer game.

Dad works hard all day at his office, but at weekends he takes Emily and Daniel out to see a film or to the park. He takes Daniel to the football match. Emily doesn't go – she doesn't like all the shouting or when the footballers appear to attack each other. She stays at home with Mum and sometimes they visit Grandma and Grandpa or go shopping.

One day Emily comes home from school to find Dad is home early. He is sitting at the kitchen table reading the paper. Dad says hello to Emily but goes on reading the paper.

"Where is mummy?" asks Emily

In the living room Emily finds Mum sitting quietly, looking out into the garden. She turns as Emily comes into the room and smiles, but her face has a sad look. Emily thinks she has been crying.

"Are you alright mummy?" asks Emily

"Yes", says Mum "I fell and hurt my arm".

Emily sees that Mum's arm is red and bruised. Emily carefully gives mum a big hug; and asks Mum to help with her reading homework.

Emily worries about Mum. Sometimes she hears Dad shouting at Mum and they argue. She doesn't like to talk to anyone about it.

One evening Emily hears loud voices coming from the kitchen. Dad is shouting. The kitchen door is ajar and Emily peeks into the kitchen. Dad is shouting and angry and then he lifts his hand and hits Mum on the side of her face.

Emily runs upstairs to her room and shuts the door. She sits on her bed and she is shaking. She has a horrid feeling in her tummy – a bit like butterflies and feeling sick at the same time. She hears a door slam and all goes quiet. All she can hear is the sound of Daniel's computer game – lots of "pows" and "bangs" and shooting noises.

Eventually Emily creeps downstairs. Mum is in the kitchen. Her face is red and swollen. Emily asks what has happened and Mum says she fell.

Emily whispers, "I saw Dad hit you".

Mum looks alarmed and says that Dad was angry but didn't mean to hurt her.

Mum and Emily sit together on the sofa in the living room. Mum puts an arm round Emily and she snuggles into Mum. They say nothing for a long while until Mum says to Emily to get ready for bed.

Later still Dad comes home. Again Emily creeps downstairs in her pyjamas. Dad is sitting in the armchair. He too looks sad. Emily climbs onto his knee and gives him a hug – she doesn't know what else to do but this feels right. After a bit she looks up at Dad – there is a tear rolling down his cheek.

They sit together for a while longer then Emily asks Dad to read a bedtime story.

She hopes the shouting and hitting will stop but she still loves her Dad.