



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition July 2013 Issue 77



Five feelings: talking about anger

Getting ready

Anger is an emotion most of us will experience regularly in our lives. It is said that it is very important that children experience strong emotions whilst growing up in order to learn to live with them and become emotionally competent individuals. To try to prevent children from encountering strong emotions, be they on the happy or angry side of the scale, can deprive a child of valuable and essential aspects of growing up.

The word anger has many shades of meaning, like trouble, annoyance, bother, irritation, rage, furiousness and wrath. These aspects of anger show that the sources of anger can be seen differently. For some of us one and the same source might not even evoke anger.

So what lies at the core of feeling anger?

It might be described as an individual reacting to being, or seeming to be, offended, wronged, subjected to injustice or suffering from a perception of ones own incapability.

Anger can lead to either constructive or destructive forms of coping and looking backwards as well as ahead. This issue offers various ways to look at anger and work with it. Please look at the group of children you are working with – what activity or approach will suit them best?

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.

Gather

Meeting in a circle and welcoming everybody can support gathering in mind and body – it is good to be together. Say that today we are all going to be talking and doing things about anger and being angry.

It is worth listening to people's first responses to the topic of anger. Ask, 'what do you think or feel when you hear the word anger?' Use a "talking-pebble" so that everyone apart from the person holding the pebble listens.

Alternatively, lay down cut out mood faces from *Additional Resource 77.A* – you could stick them on card. Ask children to choose one which shows how they feel today. Ask each person, if they want to, to try to make a face like the one they have chosen – can the others guess which it is? Then ask people, if they want to, to say a bit about why they chose the picture they did. Now ask the question, 'what do you think or feel when you hear the word anger?'



Underpinning references

Come regularly to meeting for worship **even when you are angry**, depressed, tired or spiritually cold. In the silence ask for and accept the prayerful support of others joined with you in worship. Try to find a spiritual wholeness, which encompasses suffering as well as thankfulness and joy. Prayer, springing from a deep place in the heart, may bring healing and unity as nothing else can.
A&Q 1.02.10 (part)

Engage

When I prepared this issue the song ‘*Singing for our lives – we are a gentle angry people*’ – see *Additional Resource 77.B* - was persistently singing and humming in my mind. It became a focal point for my thinking about anger. But before you play the song to the children’s meeting, continue and extend the conversation about anger that already started in the Gather activities.

Talking about anger. Ask children the question, ‘what makes you angry?’ You might say some things that cause you to feel angry. Don’t just say things about ‘the world’, say something personal, maybe even quite trivial. Give children time to speak before you do. Go on to ask the questions, ‘what do you do when you are angry?’ and ‘what would you like to do when you are feeling angry?’. Listen carefully and acknowledge what is said. Join in the conversation without dominating it. It is possible that a child may have a current issue about which they are angry. If this appears to be so then one of the adults might need to listen to her or him a bit more.

We are a gentle angry people. *Resources needed:* A copy of the song ‘*Singing for our lives*’ or youtube films of Holly Near singing - see sidebar for where to buy or download to a memory stick for example; a laptop or other device for playing the song or showing the youtube films – unless your meeting house has internet access; a copy or copies of the song words from *Additional Resource 77.B*

When you judge the conversation is complete go on to say that you are going to play a song (or show a short film or two). Introduce the song or film by saying that it was written by someone called Holly Near about some things that happened that upset lots of people and made many angry. For older children you could explain that the incident was the murder of Harvey Milk and Mayor Moscone in a homophobic killing in 1978.

The lyrics of the song open up two lines of thought – “*gentle angry people*” - is it at all possible to be angry in a gentle way? “*We are singing for our lives*” – how can singing help save or change lives? These are questions that can be explored with the children. The suggestion here is that you concentrate on the first of the two questions. But first some singing!



If there are musicians in the children’s meeting or in the meeting maybe they can be asked to bring an instrument to accompany the song – if they feel confident or skilled enough. Read the words of the song out loud – you will probably find that the tune comes into your mind as you read. Give word sheets to the children who you know can read. Be bold – say let’s try and sing the song. Sing the first two lines a couple of times and encourage the children to join in. Keep it going until it feels confident and strong (hopefully!). Let yourself, and encourage the children, to get into the swing of it. Don’t worry about perfection – fun and sharing singing is the point.

Now say, ‘I wonder, how could you be gentle and angry at the same time? Wait for any responses. Have examples of your own – introduce your ideas with the phrase, ‘could it be like...?’ Ask something like, ‘I wonder how you could be cross with someone without shouting or making them feel horrible? How could you turn anger into something helpful that changes things that are wrong? How could you stop bad things happening and be gentle at the same time?’



References & other resources

Holly Near’s web page:

www.hollynear.com/and_still.html

where you can purchase the song as a download.

Here you can listen to the song:

<http://music.peacefuluprising.org/track/singing-for-our-lives>

Here you can watch Holly singing. In the last youtube film Holly says more about what the song means.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAQkVjJzRnE>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1--Tr2qgN0>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbXq0oU5osg>

The book ‘**Volcano in my tummy**’ is very good for helping children think and talk about their anger. Available from the Quaker Bookshop
020 7663 1030

Additional Resource 77.B can be found at:
www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

Respond

References & other resources

In a song by Simon and Garfunkel it says:
“*And the sign said
- ‘the words of the prophets are written on the subway walls and tenement halls and whispered in the sound of silence’*”

This is actually a reference to the Bible: Daniel 5.23-25 – when writing appeared on a wall.

On *Additional Resource 77.E* there is a simple outline of what one father did in 1907-1908 because his children argued a lot when playing. It involved the creation of a board game.



There is also a suggestion for an easy board game to play.

Additional Resources 77.C, 77. D and 77.E can be found at: www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

Talking about anger. When the conversation about being ‘gentle and angry’ is finished give children a copy each of *Additional Resource 77.C*. Ask children, if they can, to draw a picture in one of the spaces on the sheet, of what they are like when they are angry. Also ask them, when this is done, to draw another picture of when they are gentle or peaceful. They can write next to their pictures if they want to describe their picture. Children can show each other their pictures and talk about them if they want to.

We are a gentle angry people. This is an opportunity for everybody to make up their own verses to the song ‘*Singing for our lives*’. You really don’t need to be a musician to do this. Just enjoy the togetherness of playing with ideas and a simple tune.

Say to the children that you are all going to write some of your own words for the song that they just heard or saw performed. Say that almost all of the verses in the song are about something in the world or between people that could make people angry – being young and old; people of different colours or countries; being parents; being children; being gay; being against war. Ask children to remember what they said made them angry. Sing or say one of the verses of the song again. Say to the children that what they are going to do, and you can help, is to think of just a few words for the first line of two – the second line is always going to be ‘*and we are singing, singing for our lives*’. So, if their sibling or dad makes them angry the line could be:

We are a brother and sister all together *and we are....* **or:**
We are a dad and a daughter together *and we are*

If there was anger about something in the world – treatment of animals or there being war, for example, then the line could be:

We are all creatures living on the earth *and we are* **or:**
We are people living peacefully together *and we are...*

The best way to do this is to just start talking about what might be written and see what comes out. You will probably find that you all come up with ideas that fit quite quickly. The challenge will be, if possible, to make sure that everybody has a chance to say what they want and complete it. When you think it is as complete as possible have a sing through.

Painting about anger. *Resources for this session: large black flip chart felt pens; ready mixed black paint; a variety of paint brushes of different sizes; white A4 paper; big sheets of paper – flip chart sized if possible; plastic sheets for the floor; copies of pictures of graffiti on Additional Resource 77.D.*

The pictures on *Additional Resource 77.D* are about things that some people get angry about. The pictures are also beautiful and well made. They are angry and gentle at the same time. Put out copies of the pictures for children to look at. Ask what they think they are about – you might have to be ready to answer questions. Do they like them? Say something about them being angry and gentle at the same time.

Ask the children, ‘if you could make a very big poster or picture about something in the world that makes you angry or upset what would it be?’ Talk about children’s ideas. Ask children to draw on an A4 piece of paper what their idea might look like. Say that final pictures could be for display inside or outside the Meeting House (if they are clear enough).

Spread out plastic sheets on the floor, put out big sheets of paper, pens, paints and brushes. Children can begin making their poster or picture when they are ready and know what it is they are doing. Help will very likely be needed with this and mess will be made. When they are done everybody can walk around and look at the pictures or posters.

Reflect

Anger and us

Give enough time to come together as a group before the end of children's meeting. When everyone is settled ask if anyone has anything they would like to say about what everyone has been doing together. After listening read this paraphrase of a *Advices and Queries* quote

'Come regularly to meeting for worship even when you are angry... In the quiet ask for and accept the prayers of other people in meeting for worship. If you are cross or upset let the quiet and stillness wrap up, hold carefully, all of your feelings – crossness and happiness together. Let meeting for worship help you feel safe.'

See if you can sing the *'Singing for our lives'* song for the rest of meeting. If new verses have been written for the song and it is going to be sung to the rest of meeting another short practice might be a good idea. If there is time singing the song together anyway will round off children's meeting and possibly give a feeling of togetherness.

Review

Why not read this before you start! ...and... think about the following before planning, coming back to these thoughts afterwards:

Did everybody have the space, physically as well as mentally, they needed?

Was the group able to develop a supportive atmosphere to hold strong emotions in the light?

Could a sense of togetherness and supporting each other to turn anger into a positive power be sensed? Sometimes a meeting suddenly becomes this special... be open to the spirit!

If something doesn't quite work out – don't be angry - at times it is good to change a set-up during a session and follow the path your group needs to be taking.

This issue was written by Beate Dehnen and edited by Chris Nickolay and Howard Nurden. Chris Nickolay wrote the Topical activity.

Issue 78 will offer ways to think and talk about love. Available from 1 August 2013.

Issue 79 will be about the feeling of fear and how to talk about and deal with it. Available from 2 September 2013.

Issue 80 will offer ways to think about happiness. Available from 1 October 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 children in Germany who stopped a friend being deported.

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

Go to:

www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren and choose from the range of links in the sidebar.

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Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 77.A



Gather

Mood faces





Journeys in the Spirit



Children's work

Additional resources 77.B

Engage

Singing for our lives

Holly Near, American singer, wrote and performs this song *Singing for our lives*.

I. We are a gen - tle, an - gry peo - ple, and we are
sing - ing, sing - ing for our lives. We are a gen - tle, an - gry
peo - ple, and we are sing - ing, sing - ing for our lives.

1. we are a gentle angry people
and we are singing, singing for our lives
2. we are a land of many colours
and we are singing, singing for our lives
3. we are weavers of new patterns
and we are weaving, weaving for our lives
4. we are young and old together
and we are singing, singing for our lives

5. we are gay and straight together
and we are singing, singing for our lives
6. we are ones who care for children
we are caring, caring for their lives
7. we are builders of new visions
and we are building, building for our lives
8. we are an anti-nuclear people
and we are singing, singing for our lives^o
9. we are a justice-seeking people
and we are singing, singing for our lives^o
10. we are a peaceful loving people
and we are singing, singing for our lives
11. we are a gentle angry people
and we are singing, singing for our lives
12. we are the few who speak for many
and, if you listen, it may save your life

Singing for our lives, music from "Sing in the Spirit, a book of Quaker songs" 2005
Birmingham: Leaveners Press with additional verses marked ^o from other sources.



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 77.C

Respond

Talking about anger



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Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 77.D

Respond

Banksy's and other graffiti



Child labour



Children - in our world



Environment

This wall is in Palestine/Israel



Is there hope?



Environmental issues – rising water



Journeys in the Spirit



Children's work

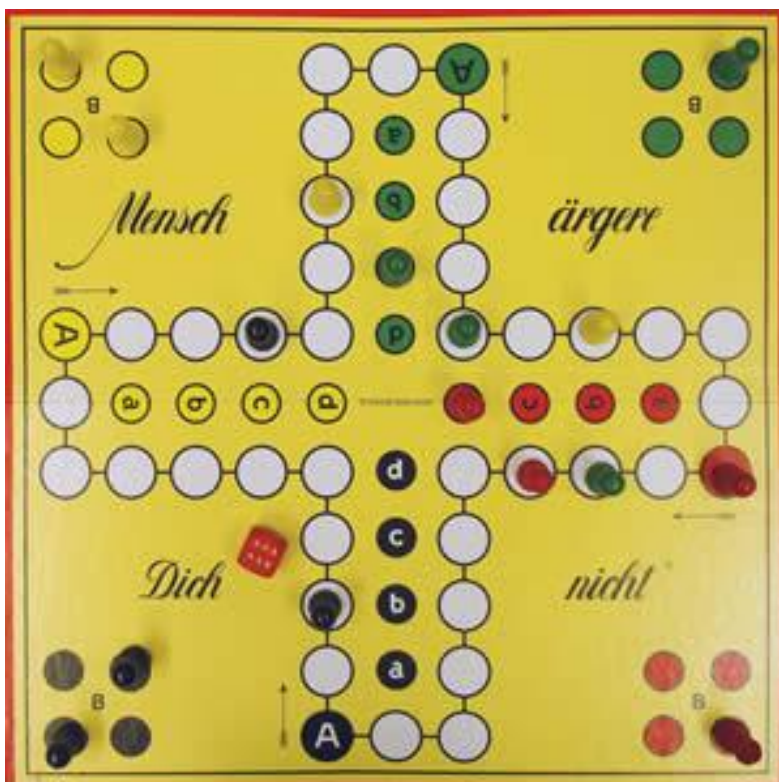
Additional resources 77.E

Respond

A board game idea



"Do not get annoyed" is what the words mean on this stamp. The stamp was issued to commemorate the game, made in the early 1900s, by a German dad who wanted to help his children play with out arguing. 70 million copies of the game were sold. This is what the game looked like:



How is it playing in our families?

Do we find it easy to play together and not become angry?

The **board** can be downloaded here:

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mensch_%C3%A4rger_dich_nicht_006.jpg

Copy and paste it into a Word document so that you make it larger

You will need four plastic or wooden pieces for each of four players in four colours and a dice. The rules are essentially the same as for the game 'Ludo' and the board is almost identical. If you don't have a set someone in meeting is bound to have one – just ask. Have a games session in children's meeting playing a variety of board games – no arguing allowed!