



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition September 2013 Issue 79



Five feelings – talking about fear

Getting ready

This issue looks at the difficult and sometimes complex issue of fear. Fear is a primitive emotion. For animals fear is the feeling that stimulates the production of adrenalin that helps the animal to flee from the danger. This is fear in its simplest form. It can be much more complex. We often have fears that are deep-seated and very real but we cannot necessarily understand where they come from.

Why for example are so many people afraid of spiders? They don't harm us, but are intelligent, fascinating creatures!

This issue helps children to:

- Explore their fears and perhaps understand and accept them a little better.
- It also looks at how fear affects us. Our worst fears may go back to something that happened to us in the past.
- It looks at how we can face up to our fears and overcome them
- Does being a Quaker bring comfort and help us not to feel afraid?

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 comments they want to address to the volunteer. Children may want to continue discussions with their parent after the session.

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

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

Have ready the pictures/images of fear on the *Resources Sheet 79.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 can say something they have done this week.

Lay out the pictures which are from a book – *“What scares me & what I do about it”* and ask the children to look at them for a few moments. It is not essential to have the book (*see side bar*) but would be very useful for this theme and for children to look at.

Give the children time to talk about the pictures – perhaps to say why they feel any of the images are scary or remind them of their fears. Move on to the first activity in Engage.

Underpinning references

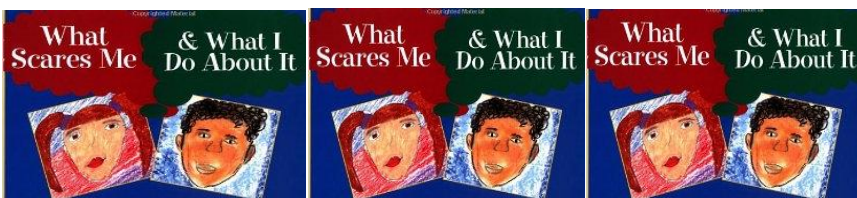
What Scares Me & What I Do About It

Stories and pictures by Sunday School Kids

Edited by Jeff Kunkel

ISBN 0-8066-4558-X

Additional Resource 79.A can be found at: www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children



Engage

1. This first exercise might be useful to work through before the other activities.

Having looked at the pictures and images in Gather and talked a bit about what the children are afraid of, move on to think about what happens when they feel frightened.

- Perhaps they cry
- They might feel shaky
- Sometimes their breathing gets faster or heavier
- They might feel their heart beating faster or thumping in their chest
- Sometimes the palms of the hands or the brow feel sweaty

Ask how they feel when they are frightened.

So feeling frightened is not a good feeling. What might help?

- Someone to sit beside us
- A hug
- Some gentle, kind words
- A comforting toy
- A warm drink

Now move on to one of the exercises below

2. What can we do with our fears?

Read the story – “Little Mouse’s Big Book of Fears” (see sidebar). This may seem like a book for very young children but it addresses the important point that fear is subjective. The mouse is small and afraid of lots of things and yet human beings are often afraid of mice. Why is this? There is no single answer to this question but a good starting point for discussing their fears. This is a great book and such fun and hopefully there will be lots in the story that children will identify with. Older children will enjoy learning about the long words at the top of the page that describe the different types of fears/phobias.

3. Looking at how others have coped with their fears.

For younger children tell the familiar story of how the shepherds in the fields were very afraid when an angel came to tell them of the birth of Jesus. Or another simple story is “Run” by Sue Farraby and Fabiano Fiorin – what happens when our imagination gets the better of us. (See sidebar)

For older children use the story by Michael Foreman called “War Game – Village Green to No-man’s Land” (see sidebar). This is a story of the First World War. It is quite a long story so may need to be read over a couple of weeks. The first part tells of the change from the comforts of home to the horrors of war torn France and Belgium. The second part tells of what happened one Christmas in the trenches. It is a powerful book and doesn’t shy away from the realities of war and the fear it brings.

Two traditional stories that could also be interesting to use about fear are *Red Riding Hood* and *Hansel and Gretel*.



References & other resources

“Little Mouse’s Big Book of Fears” by Emily Gravett

Published by Macmillan

ISBN 978-0-230-01619-4



“Run” by Sue Ferraby and Fabiano Fiorin.

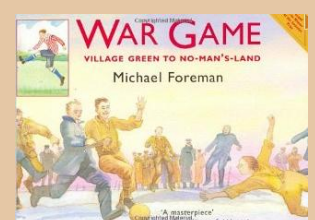
Published by Franklin Watts
ISBN 0-7496-4705-1.



“War Game – Village Green to No-mans Land” by Michael Morpurgo.

Published by Pavilion Children’s.

ISBN 978-1-84365-089-8

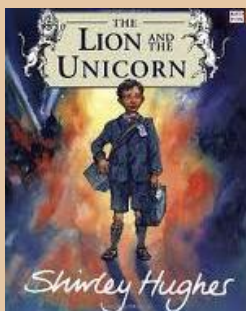


References & other resources

“The Lion and the Unicorn” by Shirley Hughes

Published by Red Fox

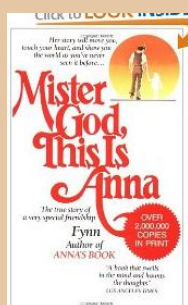
ISBN 978-0-099-25608-3



“Mister God, this is Anna” – the true story of a very special friendship by Fynn

Published by Harper Collins.co.uk

ISBN 978-0-00-720202-7



Additional Resources and Simple plan for all age worship can be found at:

www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

Respond

1. Relaxation

In this issue there is much talk about what our fears are. It is also important to think about what may help - some strategies to cope with our fears. Below is a simple relaxation that the children can learn and use whenever they feel frightened or upset.

- Sit comfortably.
- Breathe in slowly and breathe out slowly. Do this three times then breathe normally.
- Repeat again.

This is very simple but effective.

A phrase that can be used by people of any age is, “I have my fear but I am not my fear.” Offer this phrase to children to say out loud or quietly to themselves.

2. What can we do with our fears? Resources for this activity are white A4 paper, drawing and colouring pencils, small boxes (available in arts and crafts or handicraft shops), sellotape.

If you have read “*Little Mouse’s Big Book of Fears*” or another story encourage the children to talk about their fears. Give the children a drawing of a spider’s web, as on the first page of “*Little Mouse’s Big Book of Fears*”. Ask children to write down or draw their fears in the spaces of the web. They could just as easily do this on a piece of paper. Remember fears are feelings and sometimes cannot be expressed in words. Maybe a pattern, colour or even just describe the feeling they get when they are afraid (see exercise in Gather).

Then ask the children to fold up their fears into a small parcel and put them into a box. When all the fears are in the box sellotape the box with lots of tape (let the children help) so that the fears can’t escape.

Discuss what you do with the box. The children may say throw it away or put it in a cupboard and that is what you must do.

3. Looking at how others have coped with fears

For both younger and older children introduce the theme of fear, (as in Gather), ensure everyone has time to share something of their fears.

Younger or older children could use play-dough to make shapes or models of things that they are frightened of – see *Resources Sheet 79.B* for a picture of some made in Edinburgh Meeting.

Older children might like to work with a journal (see *Journeys in the Spirit* issue 43, *Resources Sheet 43.D* at <http://tinyurl.com/kqbav7v>). It sometimes helps to write down our feelings – our fears and worries. Again fear is a feeling so it may not be words that go into the journal. They can take their journals away with them and use them whenever they want. Remember what goes into a journal is private and not necessarily to be shared.

All age worship

This is an additional sheet, (see *side bar for link*). This all age worship worked very well in Edinburgh Meeting and people felt the theme truly spoke to all ages. It can provide an opportunity for Friends in Meeting to share their journey and something, even small, of their difficulties or struggles.



Reflect

Have some time at the end of the session for children to ask questions. There may still be things they want to share about their fears. It is important that the children are not left with feelings they are struggling with.

The issue only deals with fear at a fairly superficial level as it is not appropriate to delve too deeply and there may not be time. However this session may have raised sensitive issues for some children.

When dealing with feelings we must be aware that we don't always know what is going on in the minds of children, or indeed outside the Quaker environment.

Ask the children if there is anything from the session they want to share with the adults about what they have been doing in Children's Meeting. Decide what everyone wants to share and how best to do this.

Once they have had time to talk it might be a good idea to do something light hearted like a simple game.

Finish with some stillness



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 children have been upset after talking about their fears.

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 comments 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 the children are better able to cope with their fears?
- Are there things you might have done differently?
- Are there issues to take to children's committee?

This issue was written by Madeleine Harding and edited by Chris Nickolay and Howard Nurden. Chris Nickolay, Karl Gibbs and Paul Parker worked on the Topical activity.

Issue 80 will offer ways to think about happiness. Available from 1 October 2013.

Issue 81 will offer ways to think and talk about jealousy. Available from 1 November 2013.

Issue 82 will offer ways to think and talk about grief. Available from 2 December 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 how children can be part of the review of *Quaker Faith and Practice*.

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

Published by Children & Young People's Staff Team, Quaker Life

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Journeys in the Spirit



Children's work

Additional resources 79.A

Gather

Pictures of fear

Nightmares Scare Me

"I was on the Screaming Eagle once, and the roller coaster was broken and kept going around and around—it wouldn't stop! I yelled, 'Help!' This is a picture of me having a nightmare about that roller coaster ride."

—Ashley Cummins, age 8



picture by Ashley Cummins, age 8



picture by Audrey Huetteman, age 9

"This is me having a nightmare about a pink robot, which is trying to shoot me with his gun."

—Audrey Huetteman, age 9

The Dark Scares Me

"I get scared of the dark, especially if I'm alone. Dark shadows on the wall scare me, too, because they move and look like ghosts."

—Alexandria Friske, age 9



picture by Alexandria Friske, age 9



picture by Paige Cummins, age 6

"This is a picture of me in my bed. The dark scares me because I can't see anything, but I can hear lots of noises—things that go thump, and I don't know what is making the thump."

—Paige Cummins, age 6

Bullies Scare Me

"Bullies scare me because they are much bigger than me, and they can hurt me or take my lunch money."

—Alysha Rhodes, age 9



picture by Alexandria Friske, age 9

"I get scared by boys ganging up on me."

—Alexandria Friske, age 9



picture by Alysha Rhodes, age 9

Terrorists Scare Me

"Terrorists are people who hate us and want to kill us. This drawing shows the Twin Towers in New York being attacked by terrorists with airplanes. The buildings are on fire. People are jumping out of windows with parachutes, and a fireman is trying to put out the fire."

—Nicky Reed, age 8

"I cried when I heard about the attacks, because everyone in the airplanes and lots of people in the buildings got killed. It's sad and scary, because this might happen again and other people will get killed."

—Kayla Huetteeman, age 7



picture by Nicky Reed, age 8



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resources 79.B

Respond

Play dough modelling



A recipe for Play-dough

250g plain flour, 50g salt, 140 mls water, 1-2 tablespoons cooking oil, food colouring (optional)

Mix everything together to consistency that can be easily moulded but not too wet.

This activity can be used with all ages and is also particularly good for younger children.

Give each person a lump of play-dough. Ask them to think about what they are frightened of – perhaps from the conversations in Gather.

Now suggest the children to squeeze the play-dough then knead it and then poke it.

Now suggest the children change their fear into something they like or makes them feel safe or happy. E.g. if they are afraid of the dark they might make a candle. If they are afraid of nightmares they could make something from a nice dream.

It might be helpful to have paper and pens to hand in case children want to write or draw instead. A variety of different materials enables children to choose how they can best express themselves.



Playdough – things that frighten me