

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward



Youth Edition

Issue 32

October 2017

Ending Hunger

The youth edition of Journeys in the Spirit provides a range of ideas to use with 12–18 year olds in a Quaker context. It offers activities for one-off sessions or weekends and comes out three times a year. Some suggestions are made about age suitability. Timings are not stated, as this will depend on the group and how the activities are used. Each issue explores a theme.

Journeys in the Spirit 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. There are four directions to our spiritual journey: inwards to ourselves; outwards to others; upwards (or is it further inwards?) towards the deeper mystery; downwards to the world we live in.



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The theme for this issue

For many children in the UK, hunger is a daily concern. How does hunger impact children? Why are children going hungry in this country? What can we do to prevent this?

Hunger is the outcome of a broken system. One in which parents and young people work, but their wages are still too low to afford life's essentials such as rent, travel and food. Quakers are committed to ending hunger by mending this broken system.

This issue looks at how we can protect societies most vulnerable. We will also look at the forces at play that are increasing the number of children going hungry, and how we can take action to stop this.

At the time of publication Quakers in Britain are working together in a coalition with partners as part of the End UK Hunger campaign. See www.endhungeruk.org.

Using the material

This resource intends to be usable with older and younger generations, encouraging sharing and working together on activities that will enable a shared journey as a community.

This material can be used to facilitate activities to link the meeting's provisions for young people aged between 12 and 18 with the wider meeting. This material is written to be suitable to use by the meeting as a set of community activities (for all children aged 12 onwards).

In planning for this you should think about involving young people and members of the meeting in your planning. Think carefully about the timing of the planning and implementation of this, so that all groups are to be involved.



Gathering Points

Big wind blows

The aim of this exercise is to help the group feel comfortable in taking risks in front of each other. It will support them to have more open and honest conversations about the topic to come. For this icebreaker game you'll need to set up your chairs in a circle facing inwards. Make sure there is one less chair than there are players.

Select one player to start off in the middle. They must begin by calling out "The big wind blows". The rest of the group must respond "What does it blow?" Then the middle player can say some kind of conditional statement like "everyone with white socks" or "everyone under the age of 13". All the players that fit into that category must get up and switch chairs with another player. This allows a chance for the middle player to steal a chair also. Once everyone has finished switching as quickly as possible, there will be one player left stuck in the middle. Then the process repeats!

Facilitators play a role in pushing the group to take greater risk, in particular by encouraging the group to share more personal or adventurous conditional statements. The statements should be true for the individuals saying them. In particular, you can encourage statements on theme such as "The big wind blows for those who received free school meals" (if this is applicable to you), or "The big wind blows for those who have experienced hunger".

If playing with a larger group it can become difficult for everyone to hear what the person in the middle is saying, so it might be wise to have a cordless microphone or a megaphone to use. Alternatively you could have someone else with a microphone outside of the circle calling the instructions out.

Teeth Teeth

Everyone sits in a circle. Each player chooses a fruit or vegetable. Player A says their fruit/vegetable, then the player's fruit/vegetable that they want to pass it on to... i.e. Player A says "Strawberry strawberry, broccoli broccoli" player B says "broccoli broccoli, carrot carrot"... and so on.

What makes this game interesting is that you can't show your teeth at any point (which you do by pulling your lips over your teeth). If you do happen to show your teeth and get caught by anyone, you alert the group by screaming "teeth teeth" and flapping your arms at the player like wings (making sure you don't show your teeth in the process!). Depending on how you want to play, you can do elimination or points lost when teeth are shown.

If this gets too easy, suggest that individuals play while holding onto their tongue or something else to make it harder.

Played with the right group of people, this is an absolutely hilarious game. By substituting vegetables with names, this could become a good way of learning people's names too.



Starting Points

Comfort Zones

Talking about hunger and poverty, particularly when we are the ones impacted by it, can leave us feeling shame and embarrassment. There is still stigma attached to children receiving free school meals or accessing food banks. This exercise is to help participants explore these feelings of shame, guilt and discomfort when discussing issues of hunger. It should support participants to recognise when these feelings come up, and to explore some of the misconceptions behind why people go hungry. In particular with this exercise, we are trying to challenge the concept of “benefit scroungers” or “free loaders”.

For this exercise you'll need a rope or masking tape to mark out a circle on the floor. The inner circle represents our comfort zone. The outside represents our discomfort. Read a quote and invite participants to go to the area on the floor that represents how they feel. For the quotes go to www.quaker.org.uk/resources-youth, scroll down to 'Resources for current issue' and select “Comfort Zones”. After you've suggested three or four, open it up to the group to suggest their own. The statements begin by saying “I'm in my comfort zone when” and then it can be flipped to “I'm outside my comfort zone when.....” Do this for up to 10-15 minutes giving enough time to explore why the group may be in or outside the circle. Explore the perceptions of hunger without judgement.

True or false

For the quiz questions and answers go www.quaker.org.uk/resources-youth, scroll down to 'Resources for current issue' and select “True or false”. This exercise is a simple quiz to encourage the group to become more aware of the hunger situation in the UK. You will need to print a copy of the quiz questions for yourself, and then read out the questions. Suggest the young people get into twos or three to answer the questions, writing their answers on a sheet as you read the questions.

Take the group through the 10 questions and then go through the answers. Spend time after the quiz to discuss what they have learnt. Was there anything surprising? Was there anything upsetting? How did they feel?

Spectrum lines

This is another exercise to help dispel some myths around hunger and poverty. It will also help participants explore the causes of hunger in the UK today. For this exercise you will need to clear the room and write “Agree” and “Disagree” on a sheet at each end of the room. Gather the group in the centre of the room. Read out the statements that you will find at www.quaker.org.uk/resources-youth, scrolling down to 'Resources for current issue' and selecting “Spectrum Lines”. Give time for them to decide whether they agree or disagree with the statements.

Once the group have settled, welcome responses as to why people are standing where they are standing on the spectrum (some may heavily agree, some may heavily disagree, others may be unsure). Keep a check on those who speak and encourage some of the quieter participants to share their thoughts. Welcome disagreements and discussion.



Reflection Points

Quotes for compassion

The aim of this activity is for the group to start to explore the impact of hunger on individuals. For the quotes go to www.quaker.org.uk/resources-youth, scroll down to 'Resources for current issue' and select "Quotes for compassion". Use the print outs of each quote and place them on the wall.

Participants should circulate around the room reading the quotes in silence (or have someone read them to them quietly). After a while, gather the group together and ask them to stand by the:

- Quote that was most surprising to them
- Quote that was challenging to read
- Quote that they felt deeply about

Have time for participants to share what they felt about the respective quotes with the group.

Who can help?

The aim of this activity is for the group to explore different groups in society and their responsibilities in ending hunger. It is a chance to understand the role of charities, government and individuals through group learning. Begin handing out the name cards for each group to different people. For a copy of the name cards and statements go to www.quaker.org.uk/resources-youth scroll down to 'Resources for current issue' and select "Who can help?" Once everyone is clear about who they are, start reading from the statements list. After each statement, ask the group to reflect on who might be able to make this happen. If disagreements arise, allow them to be aired. In some cases where there may be uncertainty or confusion, ask the group to identify the question they need to answer in order to complete the activity. Attempt to answer the question or come back to it later.



Action points

Multi-faith and meal times

The aim of this activity is for meetings to work together on a shared project to help end hunger in the UK alongside a local faith group. It will be a chance for us to reach out and understand that other communities support those who are impacted by hunger. Many faith communities organise their own or collectively support food banks and lunch clubs. Take some time to identify who you would like to connect with, and contact them to organise a visit. Visits can involve supporting them in their food aid programme or joining together in shared worship space. Some examples include:

- Mosques running food banks for their community
- Sikh Gurdwara's opening their Langar hall to vulnerable community members
- Churches and community halls running lunch clubs during the summer holiday
- Volunteering in the Jewish community to support those impacted by hunger
- Outreach programmes such as the Sikh Welfare Awareness Team

If you hold an existing relationship with a local faith group, explore a collaborative project in which the group can support a food programme together. This may be by helping support a series of meal clubs, encouraging donations to your meeting house, or joining in on a campaign action that focuses on your local authorities. Ensure there is time and space to share in the spiritual nature of this work.



Listening points

Food for thought

The aim of this activity is for participants in the group to think about the experience of people living in hunger, and accessing food banks.

Read the poem “Food for thought” that you can find at www.quaker.org.uk/resources-youth, scrolling down to ‘Resources for current issue’ and selecting “Food for thought”.

Ask the group the following questions:

- What feelings emerge for you when listening to this poem?
- What feelings do you think the writer had whilst writing the poem?
- Do you know someone who volunteers at a food bank? What is their experience?
- Have you ever donated to a food bank or are thinking about donating? Why?

At this point, welcome any other thoughts about the use of food banks and our role in supporting those who face hunger. Try to connect this to Quakerism and the Equality Testimony. It may also be worth exploring other faiths such as Islam and Sikhism and their actions here.

Towards the end of the conversation you may reach a point where the group begins to question the sustainability and long-term impact of increased use of food banks. If not, encourage this through questions around who is responsible to support people in hunger.



Viewing Points

Short film

Show the following short film *Britain isn't eating* produced by the Royal Court Theatre, accessible through www.theguardian.com/society/2014/dec/08/jack-monroe-feeding-britain-food-banks. Afterwards discuss how people felt when they were watching this.

I Daniel Blake

Watch with the group the *I Daniel Blake* (certificate 12) a full length film about food banks in Britain. A preview to this can be found at www.theguardian.com/film/video/2016/jun/15/i-daniel-blake-trailer-ken-loach-palme-dor-winner-video the full film can be bought or downloaded.

After the film, have some time to reflect on both the films. Explore

1. What message does the first film leave you with?
2. How does the way people using food banks differ between the two?
3. Do the films change your opinion of people using food banks?
4. Who has the power the change the situation for people using food banks?



Talking points

Kitchen table café

The aim of this activity is to facilitate a group conversation around the causes of hunger and food poverty in Britain, using a 'world café' style facilitation.

Create a set of "stations" with tables and chairs within the room. You can go as far as setting up the furniture in the style of a kitchen table at home (paper table cloth, glasses, flowers, mats as well as marker pens or crayons). On each table identify a driver of food poverty and hunger, such as:

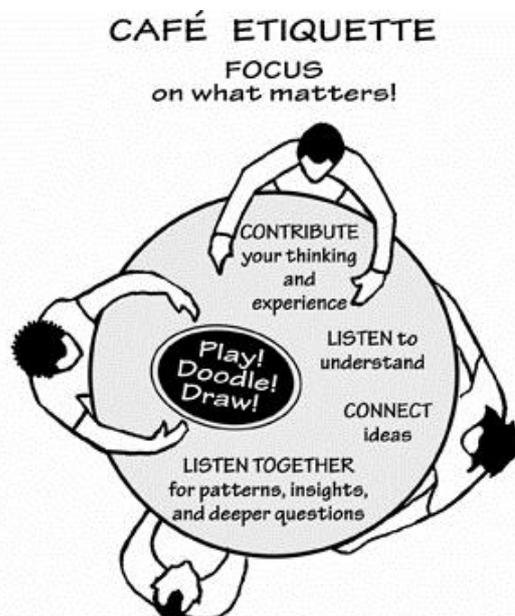
- Low wages and precarious work
- Delayed social welfare payments
- Sanctions from social welfare
- High rent fuel bills
- High food prices

Locate a facilitator on each table to help take notes. Split the participants into groups for each table. Give ten minutes to for each group to explore how the factor on their table impacts hunger. Use the following questions to guide you:

1. What causes this scenario to exist?
2. What impact does it have on those who are hungry?
3. Who has the power to change this?
4. How can we support them in this change?

At the end of each ten minutes, rotate the groups so that at the end everyone has sat on each of the tables. The table facilitator should take the first minute to update everyone on the previous conversation as an introduction. To complete the exercise, ask the facilitators of the tables to share a condensed reflection of the conversation.

Give the group a minute at the end to reflect in pairs on what they learnt during that exercise.





Worship points

Reflect and give voice

The aim of this activity is to explore worship with other communities committed to ending hunger through delivering food programmes or campaigns that tackle poverty issues in the UK. Hold an open meeting for worship at a shared event. This could be before or after a meal club, outside a food bank or as a campaign action next to a local authority or a job centre building. Invite others to join, particularly other faith groups or if the relationship is there, those that are impacted by hunger.



Ending Points

Letters to imaginary friends

The aim of this activity is to encourage each person in the group to make a commitment to ending hunger. Share blank post cards around the group and ensure everyone has a pen. Begin by sitting in silence to reflect on the activities they have been engaged while exploring this issue. After a few minutes, invite everyone to write a short postcard to an imaginary friend who has been impacted by hunger. Ask them to make a commitment to that friend to say what they will do to help end hunger in the UK. You can make some suggestions, or giving an example of what your commitment is.

Some suggestions for the types of commitments include:

- Donating to a local food bank by collecting food at school
- Designing a poster that informs people about the statistics for hunger in the UK
- Writing a letter to your local MP about your concerns about hunger in the UK
- Asking your school how they are supporting children during the summer holidays
- Donating to your local lunch club

Visions

The aim of this activity is to encourage the group to collectively share in a vision of a UK free of hunger. What would it look like?

Hand out flipchart paper and pens to groups of four or five. Ask participants to draw a series of images that express this vision by using the following prompts:

- Where would families get their food from? What kind of food would they get?
- What would the school lunch hall look like? Who will be eating there and what will they be eating?
- What would the meal at the dinner table look like? Who would be eating together? What would they be eating?
- Write some words on your paper to describe the feelings that exist in this vision.

At the end of the session, have some time for each group to share what their image is trying to represent. Encourage them to talk about the broader picture beyond the plate of food that relates to income inequality such as good wages, being able to afford rent payments, being fed at school, and having access to food during the holiday.

Review

This suggestion should be used with those who participated in the activities; it can also be used for the facilitation team to reflect what they have done.

Traffic lights: Put a green, yellow and red piece of paper on the floor. Draw up a list of the activities that you have undertaken and ask each participant to decide which colour they would assign to each activity based on how much they learnt and enjoyed it. Red is not at all, yellow is yes, but with improvements, and green is yes completely. Try to collect suggestions of improvements to activities from each participant.

Identify what people are going to do as a result of your deliberations.

Additional resources & links

Defending our social security system

As part of thinking about economic issues, you can access some useful information about the social security system and views on how we can campaign for a more just support system for those facing poverty and discrimination.

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/economic-justice/social-security>

Economic Issues podcast

There is a short podcast relating to economic concerns, which explores the issue of hunger, inequality and social security.

<https://soundcloud.com/qwitness/14-economic-inequality>

You can contact

economicjustice@quaker.org.uk for more information about the things raised in this issue.

Links to other organisations

Trussell Trust:

Up to date information relating to hunger in the UK and the rise of food banks
www.trusselltrust.org

End Hunger UK:

Quaker coalition partners who are collectively organising campaign events to end hunger in the UK. Useful for up to date actions
www.endhungeruk.org/

Oxfam:

Projects and campaigns that support people in poverty in the UK
www.oxfam.org.uk/what-we-do/issues-we-work-on/poverty-in-the-uk

JRCT:

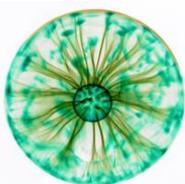
Useful approaches to thinking about poverty reduction in the UK
www.jrf.org.uk/solve-uk-poverty

This issue

This issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* Youth Edition was written by Gurpreet Bola. The editor was Howard Nurden. With thanks to all Friends House staff who contributed to this resource by providing suggested activities and additional resources.

Next issue

The next issue of *Journeys in the Spirit* Youth Edition will explore the issues surrounding world migration and it will be sent out on 12 February 2018.



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