



Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition March 2013 Issue 73



When is it right to break the rules?

Getting ready

This series of Journeys in the Spirit looks at some difficult questions and issues. Here we offer ways to explore a question which is very relevant to children of all ages: When is it right to break the rules?

Children live within boundaries set by rules, at home, at school, in the playground and on the street, even in their Quaker Meeting. They also have their own unwritten rules which change as they develop, from not walking on lines on the pavement to not telling about things that upset them: the monster in the wardrobe, the bully in the classroom.

This topic offers children an opportunity to discuss in a safe place whether rules are always good, what to do when they, or someone else, breaks the rule, and when it is right to break a rule.



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

Welcome each child into the circle, and ask them, and any adult, to say their names if there are people in the group who do not know each other. Ask each of them to say something about their week, mentioning a special occasion.

When they are settled help them to gather within the context of worship, using a simple meditation activity such as listening to a short phrase or sentence, lighting a candle or visualising a drop of water falling into a still pool. Take as long as possible over this exercise rather than rush through it to get to the topic.



Underpinning references

“Speak truth to power...”

American Friends Service Committee 1955 and also a principle of the British civil service

Engage

Rules and me.

Spend some time talking about rules – the things that say what it is not alright, safe or allowed to do. Put out the pictures from *Additional Resource 73.A* – ask children what rules or situations linked to rules they think the pictures show or are about. This part of the session should be fun for the children, as they are talking from their own experience and should have a lot of ideas to share. Questions you might ask include:

- What rules do you have at home? Are there different rules for younger or older sisters, brothers and adults? What happens if someone breaks a rule?
- Are there rules about walking, using public transport or driving to school? Why are these important?
- What school rules can you mention? Do all schools have the same rules?
- What would happen if there were no rules in games and sports?
- What about unwritten rules? - for example - don't tell; treat a girl differently from a boy; share even when you don't want to. Do you know any others?
- Which rules are hard to keep? I wonder why? Are there any rules you would change if you could?

When you feel that the discussion has come to a natural end, move on to one of the stories written or suggested below.

Jesus the rule-breaker.

There are a wealth of stories in the Bible depicting Jesus as a rebel and a challenger of authority, particularly in Mark's Gospel. *Mark 3 1-6* tells the story of Jesus, the man with the damaged arm and people called Pharisees - they were a group whose job was to make sure the rules in the Old Testament of the Bible were kept..

Jesus went into a synagogue where he saw a man. Something had damaged his hand. The Pharisees wanted a reason to say that Jesus was not obeying the law. So they watched him to see if he would cure on God's rest day. Jesus said to the man with the bad hand, 'Come here.' And Jesus asked the Pharisees, 'Does the law allow us to do good things on God's rest day or to do bad things? Does it allow us to save life or to kill?' But they would not answer. Jesus looked round at them in anger. He was very upset because their hearts were so hard. He said to the man, 'Reach out your hand.' So the man reached out his hand, and it became well again. It was quite as good as his other hand. The Pharisees went out and they immediately talked with people who worked for the King, Herod. They tried to decide how to stop or get rid of Jesus.

There are two rules in the Old Testament about working on the Sabbath, the rest day for the Jews. One says: 'Keep the Sabbath day holy that day you should not do any work' - *Exodus 20 8-10*. The other says: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' - *Leviticus 18.19*. Which of these rules was more important for the Pharisees? Which was more important for Jesus? Why?

Quaker rule-breakers.

Journeys in the Spirit has stories of a number of Quakers, of different ages, who broke rules and sometimes the law. Choose one, tell the story and discuss how they broke rules. For example:

The children of Reading Meeting - issue 7. When their meeting was closed down and their parents put in prison, children and young people carried on meeting.

www.quaker.org.uk/files/Journeys-in-the-Spirit-Children-Sep-07-No-7-addtional-sheets.pdf

John Woolman - issue 36. When John was a teenager he wouldn't help someone finish their Will because it included giving a slave to somebody.

www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/Journeys-issue-36-main.pdf

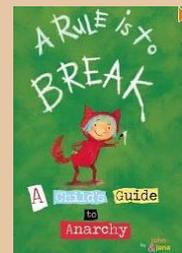
References & other resources

Two rules in the Bible.

Jesus talked about two 'golden rules'. The first is to love God with all your heart, and the second is to love your neighbour as yourself - *Matthew ch.22 v.36-39*.

How easy do you think it might be to keep these two rules?

Child's guide to anarchy



ISBN-10:
1933149256;

Available from the
Quaker Bookshop

0207 663 1030
[www.quaker.org.uk/
shop](http://www.quaker.org.uk/shop)

*Additional
Resource 73.A* can
be found at:

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

References & other resources



Lindis Percy
climbs the gates

<http://familycrafts.about.com>

This website gave the activity on *Additional Resource 73.C*. It has masses of very accessible ideas and you can subscribe.

Additional Resources 73.B and 73.C can be found at:
www.quaker.org.uk/resources-children

Engage continued.....

Luke Cock - issue 38. Luke was a butcher. He cheated when he weighed meat for his customers – they were angry with him. But when he stopped doing it his wife was very angry with him because he didn't make so much money.

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/Journeys-issue-38-main-final.pdf>

Betsy Gurney (Elizabeth Fry) – issue 35. When she was a teenager she wore purple boots with red laces to meeting for worship because she didn't like dull, grey Quaker clothes.

www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/Journeys-issue-35-additional-resources.pdf

Benjamin West – issue 27. Ben's mum and dad wouldn't let him paint – even though he was quite good. Ben got coloured powders from friends and made a brush from cat's hairs.

www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/Journeys-in-the-Spirit-Children-No-27.pdf

Lindis Percy. Lindis is nearly seventy years old. Lindis has been arrested five hundred times and gone to prison fifteen times but she continues to campaign undeterred. Under the banner of the Campaign for the Accountability of American Airbases she still demonstrated every Tuesday outside the base at Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire. She is a mother of three, a worker in the National Health Service, and a Quaker. She also got caught climbing the gates of Buckingham Palace to protest against war. See picture in the sidebar.

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/Issue-50-additional-resources-final.pdf>

Ducks in trouble. On *Additional Resource 73.B* there are three true stories about how a family helped some ducks and broke some rules when they did it. These might help children explore questions about breaking small rules – this might help younger children think about when it is OK to break rules and why.

Respond

Rules and me. Ask the children if there is a rule or something that happens in their school, street or town or village that they think is wrong or unfair or that hurts people or other creatures or parts of nature. You might need to help with the thinking about this. Ask what they could do to stop or change this without hurting other people or things. Get them to plan – work out what they want to say, make signs or think of something silly to do that makes the point but makes people laugh too. Ask them to think about what rules they might break to try to get something unfair or wrong changed? Is it something that they could, with the help of Meeting as a whole, actually take on?

Jesus the rule-breaker. Ask children to imagine that they are one of the people in the story – Jesus, the man with the paralysed hand, a Pharisee or one of the crowd. Tell children to close their eyes and now ask questions like – if you imagine you are this person what do you see....what do you hear....what do you feel? After a short while ask everybody to open their eyes and talk about what they saw, heard and felt. Work out together how they might tell this story to everybody else in meeting – this would need to be a prearranged session. Signs could be made with the names and maybe pictures of different characters that children could wear.

Quaker rule-breakers. If you have told one or more of the stories from previous issues of *Journeys in the Spirit* go on to choose a Respond activity from the same issue. If you have talked about Lindis Percy an adult from Meeting could be asked to play the part of Lindis and answer questions posed by the children. There is lots about her on the web –search 'Lindis Percy'.

Ducks in trouble. Ask what rules the family broke. Talk about what children might have done to help someone or something that meant breaking a rule – even small – in school, at home or when shopping or out playing. See

Reflect

It is very important for the children to recognise that people who break rules often have a good reason to do so. Rules are there for a purpose, so breaking them should not be a thoughtless act. Think about what can happen when you break a rule for what you believe is a very good reason.

Reflect together on this amended Advice and queries 35:

Listen to the rules and laws but let your first job be to think about God's purposes. If you feel you have to break a rule or law think really carefully. Ask your meeting for the prayerful support to help you choose the right thing to do.



Quaker Meeting at the Occupy camp outside St Pauls

Review

How well do you feel the children understood the underlying implications of the topic?

Did they respond easily to the first section, speaking from their own experiences?

Were there any examples that you were able to develop and discuss more fully?

Was there an opportunity to discuss non-violent action as a way to change rules?

What might you do differently another time?

How did you feel?

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

Issue 74 will look at the question, 'How can I talk about being a Quaker?' Available from 2 April 2013.

Issue 75 will explore very difficult questions about using animals in science. Available from 1 May 2013.

Issue 76 is the first in the new series looking at six different feelings. The first in this series offers way to think about and explore sadness. Available from 3 June 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 – this time about food banks in this country.

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