

Journeys in the Spirit

Children

Sheet 11.A Getting Ready Children of prisoners zone



More information to help talk with children

Children are not just affected by the imprisonment itself; the times before and after a jail sentence can also affect children greatly. Remember that not all children experience all of the below effects, but that they do all happen and are worth considering. The notes below are for provoking and developing discussion, rather than to be read out at the start of the talk.

Arrest: This can be very scary, especially if done at night and without warning. Parents may not be given the opportunity to explain to children what is happening or make arrangements for their care, and may not be allowed to leave notes for absent children.

Trial: Court proceedings are very child-unfriendly. Children may be forbidden from attending court, while the language and procedure in court is often archaic and not easily understood. Children may continue to hope that their parent will be acquitted until the last minute, meaning that a guilty verdict can be a big shock.

Pre-trial detention (remand prisoners): Having a parent put in prison before trial has most of the problems of sentenced prisoners, with added problems including being banned from seeing the prisoner (for example if the child is a witness in the case).

Visiting imprisoned parents: This can be fraught with difficulties including getting time off school or (for older children or those taking the children to prison) work; finding transport to prison (many prisons are in remote areas) and keeping children occupied during the journey; going through security checks including sniffer dogs and metal detectors/scanners; unfriendly or unsmiling staff; grey and unappealing waiting rooms or meeting rooms; a lack of privacy during visits; being unable to touch the prisoner (if there is a non-contact visit); children getting bored if you can just talk to the prisoner for an hour.

Staying in touch with an imprisoned parent: Writing and telephoning are the main ways this happens. However, telephone usage is often very limited for prisoners and there may be little time to speak to each family member.

Carers: Children may have to have a new carer when a parent goes into prison (especially if a mother goes in – they are more often the sole or primary carer for children). They may go to other relatives, friends, neighbours, or into state or foster care. Brothers and sisters may also be separated from each other.

School: If children move home, they may need to move school. If other children or teachers find out about a parent being imprisoned, the child could be bullied, but also many children are afraid to say anything because of the negative stigma attached to being the child of a prisoner. Behaviour or academic performance may suffer because of the unhappiness or disruption caused by parental imprisonment.

Friends: Some friends may be cruel or insufficiently sensitive when they know a child has an imprisoned parent, or may break confidences. If a child moves home or school, their friendship group (on whom they may rely for support) may change.

Parent leaving prison: When a parent leaves prison, they may not appreciate that a child has grown up or changed, especially if there was a long sentence. The child may have become closer to other people (such as alternative carers) during the imprisonment that can be difficult for everyone. The children may also have unrealistic expectations of what life or the parent will be like after the prison sentence finishes.

One important message to get across is that children are affected by the imprisonment of a parent : they are the hidden victims of a prison sentence. Yet their rights and needs are often ignored.

What can we all, as Quakers, do to help?

Make a link to Quakers Stephen Grellett & Elizabeth Fry and prison reform.

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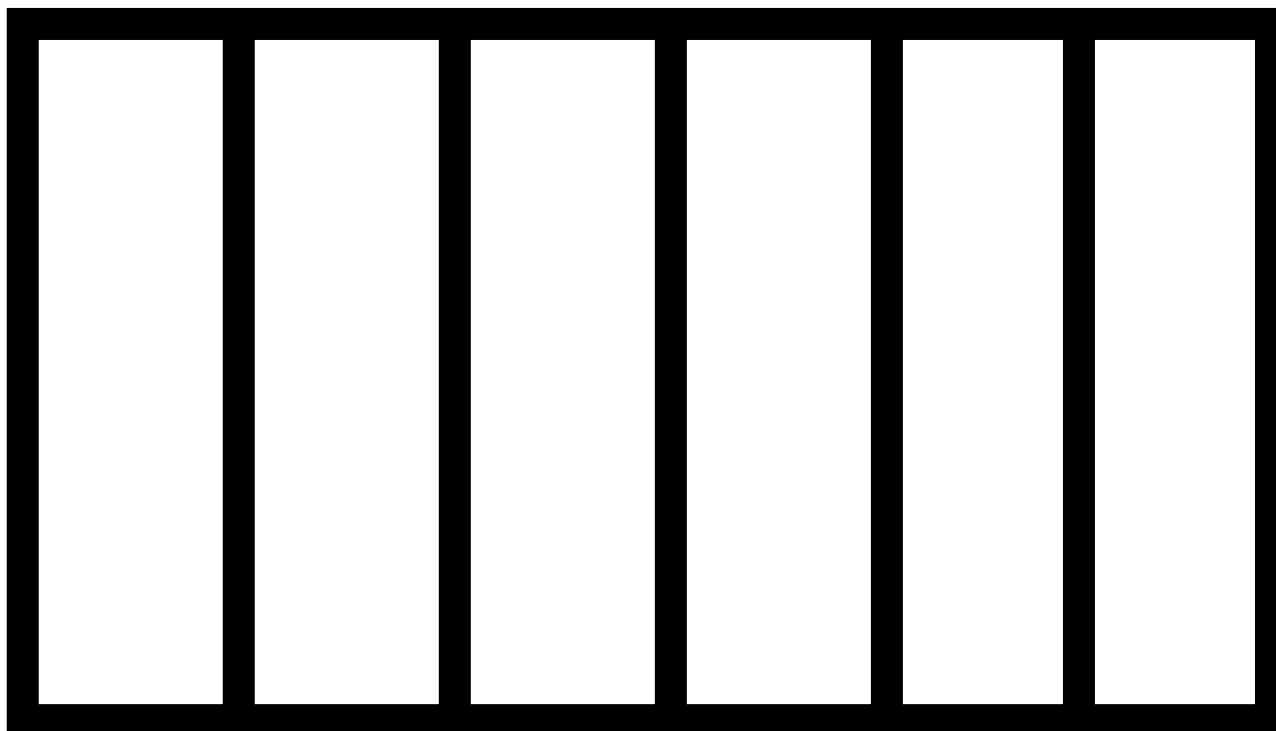
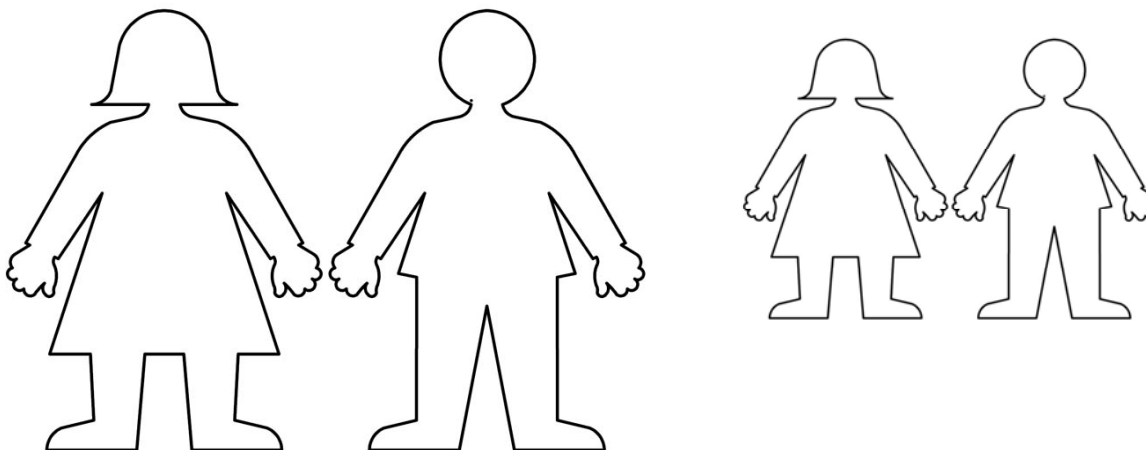


Children

Sheet 11.B

Engage

Children of Prisoners zone



A way to engage with this issue: You will need a piece of cereal box card, lolly sticks, drinks stirrers or short pieces of garden cane, PVA glue or a glue stick, scissors, a craft or 'Stanley' knife and a piece of light coloured cloth. Cut out the figures above and stick them on to card. Cut out the 'prison bars' shape as a whole and then cut out the white spaces – it might be easier to do this after you have stuck the whole shape onto card.

When everybody in the group is sitting, say, "we are going to talk about prisons and how Quaker help people in prison." *Bring out the 'prison bars' and lay them on the cloth.* Say, "Here are some prison bars. Sometimes, in countries all around the world, people are sent to prison" *Move one of the adult figures behind the bars.* Sometimes they have children. *Bring a child figure next to the bars.* Say, "Sometimes the children have to stay with other people whilst their mum or dad is in prison; sometimes they are in prison with them." *Move one of the child figures behind the bars.* Ask if anybody has any questions. Now ask 'wondering questions'. For example: "I wonder what the children inside might feel like? I wonder what children outside might feel like? I wonder how their mum or dad feels? Welcome any answer. People are free to answer or not.

When you feel this is complete move onto the corresponding Respond activities.

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Sheet 11.C

Engage

Landmine zone



1. Here is a picture about war



2. After the war lots of little bombs were left in the ground. Here is a picture of some.



3. Here is a child who is sad. A landmine hurt her friend.



4. Here is a child who picked up a bomb. He is hurt.



5. Here is a doctor who helps children who have been hurt

Thank you to UNICEF for allowing us to use these images from their video 'Silent shout' www.unicef.org/silentshout



6. Here is a school that the sad child and her hurt friend go to

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Sheet 11.D

Respond

Landmines zone

Here is a story. It is about a family of farmers in a poor country somewhere in the world. It is sad. *Read quite slowly.*

There is a family of farmers. Their life is hard and they are very poor. In their country there was a war a long time ago and even after the war ended, many little bombs, landmines, were left in the ground.

One day there is a cry from the fields. Everybody rushes to where it came from. One of the family, a young man, is crying – he is hurt. He has stepped on a landmine while ploughing the field and it has hurt him very badly.

He is carried to hospital. The doctors save his life but, because he is hurt so badly, he cannot be a farmer anymore – he will need lots of looking after by his family. Here are more stories about each of his family:

Dad. Gets up early every day to work on the farm and does not go to bed until very late. He works very hard in the fields. Dad earns enough to feed everybody and save a little bit. He is getting older and can't work as much now. Dad hoped his son would take over the farm. The cost of taking his son to hospital has used up all his money, and worse, his son cannot take over the farm. Dad will have to keep working for much longer. He will have to teach the younger son to run the farm.

Mum. Works in the fields, cooks, washes and does the housework. Mum works longer each day than everyone. The oldest son had been doing more of the heavy work in the fields so she could relax a bit more. Now she will have to keep doing all the work she did before and help to nurse her hurt son.

Grandma. An old lady, in the last few years she has been able to stop working on the farm and really enjoy having a rest. Now she will have to do lots of the housework, as well as help to nurse her grandson.

Young brother. Aged 11. He has been going to school for the last five years and loves it. His Mum and Dad had big hopes that he would finish school and get a good job and help the family. Now he has to leave school, work in the fields and, later, take over from his Dad.

Younger sister Aged 18 years. She is in love and was going to be married in a few months, to the son of another farmer. Weddings cost a lot - the family had been saving for this. The money has now been spent on saving her brother's life. She also has to help on the farm. If she got married she would move away to her husband's home.

After reading this story in Children's Meeting or in an all age Meeting ask:

I wonder, who is the landmine victim, who has been hurt?

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Sheet 11.E Respond Conscientious objection zone

Quaker United Nations badges to cut out and use:



Respond who owns ideas zone

Cooking 'pills' or peppermint creams:

Ingredients:

500g icing sugar

4 tablespoons condensed milk or water

oil of peppermint

Green food colouring (optional)

Plain chocolate (optional)

Instructions:

Sift the icing sugar into a bowl and stir in the condensed milk until the mixture is smooth, add three drops of oil of peppermint and knead it into the mixture until the flavour is thoroughly mixed through.

Add more oil of peppermint a drop at a time and work it through the mixture until you achieve the strength of flavour you prefer.

Take half the mixture and roll it out on a board dusted with icing sugar to the desired thickness and then cut to size and shape with small pastry cutters or a knife.

Take the remaining half of the mixture and work a drop of green colouring into and then roll out and cut. Leave in a cool place to set.

Dipping in chocolate:

Once the creams are set break the chocolate into a bowl. Heat some water in a saucepan over a low heat until it just begins to bubble. Stand the bowl over the saucepan over a low heat, stir chocolate with a wooden spoon until it completely melts. Turn off the heat and move the bowl onto a mat. Take a peppermint cream carefully and dip it into the chocolate so that half of it is coated. Place on a sheet of greaseproof paper to set.

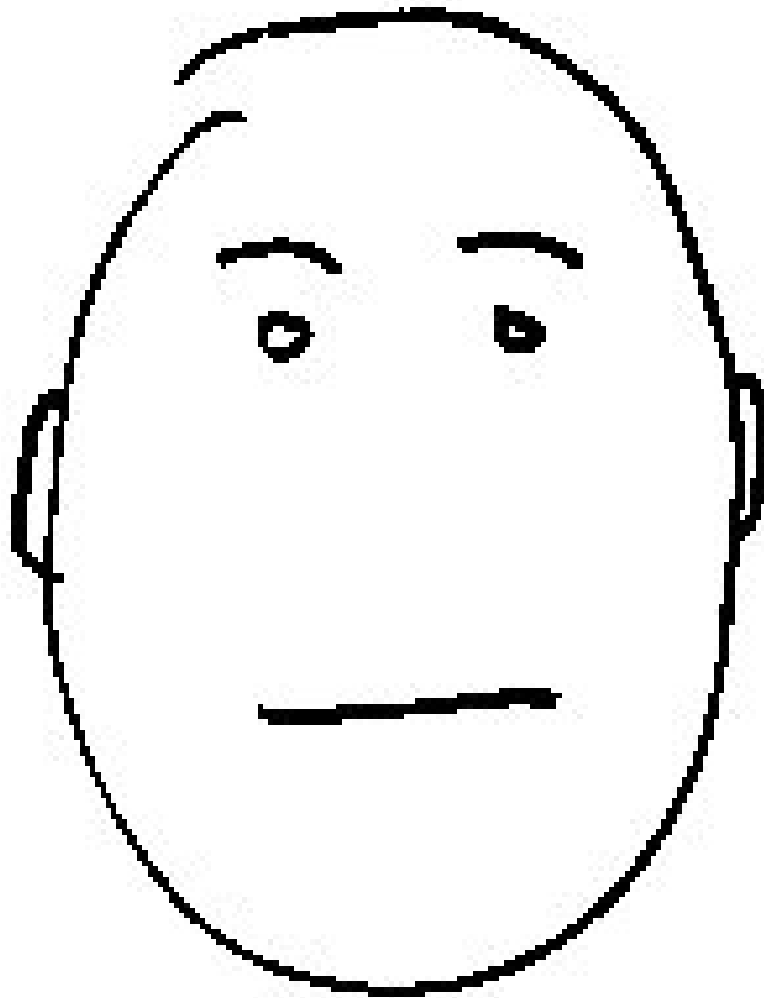
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Sheet 11.F

Ongoing activity

What is Yearly Meeting?



You will need: A copy of the face shape on card for everyone, pencils, scissors, green gardening canes (about 1 ft long each), masking tape, markers or crayons, optional - pens, crayons, PVA glue, glitter, sequins, coloured tissue paper.

- First explain Britain Yearly Meeting, its purpose and history – see Ongoing Activity notes on the main Journeys in the Spirit pages.
- Working on their own everyone decorates and colours in their face. This can be as simple or elaborate as you like or is appropriate for the group.
- Everyone draws or writes or doodles something about them that identifies them – it could be something they like doing, where they were born,
- On the back everyone draws or writes or doodles something that is in their heart that they would like to share with other Quakers.
- Everyone tapes their face to a green garden cane with the face side facing outwards.
- People then walk round introducing themselves and showing their faces to each other.
- People should share in pairs or in threes what is in their heart that they would like to share.
- End with some quiet time for reflection and to give people the opportunity to open their hearts to God.