Grandfather Gandhi’s Spinning Wheel

As Grandfather Gandhi worked his spinning wheel, he told his grandson Arun how anger can strike like lightning and split a living tree in two. Anger can also be channeled, transformed, Grandfather Gandhi said, and shed light like a lamp.

What will you choose today? Will your anger become Lightning or Lamp?

Build Grandfather Gandhi’s Spinning Wheel and as it spins, think about what has angered you.

Can you think of a way to transform that anger into change?

1. Gather scissors, a glue stick, 4 feet of white cotton string or yarn, and something to poke a hole with (the pointy end of scissors, a compass, sharpened pencil, etc.). Markers or crayons are optional.

2. Copy or print this sheet on stiff card stock paper.

3. Cut out the two wheels below. Glue them back to back, with the writing facing out, and the dots in the center of the wheel lined up. Color the wheels if you choose.

4. With an adult present, carefully poke a hole throughout the joined wheels at the two dots in the center. Make the holes big enough for your string to easily pass through the holes. You now have a Spinning Wheel.

5. Cut 4 feet of string. Thread the string through the holes. Thread in the same direction so that when you hold the wheel in your hand, the string hangs below the wheel.

6. Pull the looped string through the wheel so the wheel sits in the middle of the looped string.

7. Hold the looped string taut between your two hands. Spin the wheel forward in a motion similar to a jump rope. This should wrap the string around itself.

8. Once the string on both sides of the wheel is twisted, pull the string tight to get the wheel spinning. It will take a little practice to get it just right.

9. Once you have the hang of how your Spinning Wheel works, you’ll be able to keep it going as long as you want by letting your hands go in and out with the rhythm of the wheel. Spin and consider, lightning or lamp?

This activity is to accompany a reading of the picture book GRANDFATHER GANDHI by Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus, illustrated by Evan Turk (Simon & Schuster).