# **New economy reading group programme**

# **Session plan: Booklet 4 – money, banks and finance**

*A note on how to use these session plans:*

This plan is written for session facilitator(s) rather than for the whole group.

Facilitators are the people hosting and running the meeting. They do not need any expertise whatsoever on economics. They will also take part in all meeting activities where possible.

This plan is intended as a guide to help you run useful sessions. If parts of the plan are not relevant to your group, then feel free to discard or change them! Do whatever works best for your group.

**Agenda outline**

*This plan contains different options for how to structure the session. There are some recommended introductory and closing activities. You can pick and mix activities from the middle ‘exploratory’ section. There are also optional ‘reflection on action’ activities if you think your group wishes to explore the practical steps that they can take out in the world to build the new economy in relation to work and business structures.*

*Below are three example ‘agendas’ which contain difficult combinations of the activities listed. You can take inspiration from these agendas, or compile a different agenda which best suits your group.*

**Example 1:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Activity** | **Timings** |
| Introduction | 1. Welcome | 5 mins |
| 3. Introduction | 5 mins |
| 4. Check in | 10 mins |
| 5. Recap from last session | 5 mins |
| Exploration | 6. Worship sharing | 30 mins |
| *Tea break* | 10 mins |
| 9. My finances audit | 10 mins |
| 10. Examples and inspiration | 15 mins |
| Action | 11. How can we uphold and promote more ethical finance? | 20 mins |
| Closing | 12. Closing | 10 mins |

Total time: 2 hours

**Example 2:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Activity** | **Timings** |
| Introduction | 1. Welcome | 5 mins |
| 3. Introduction | 5 mins |
| 4. Check in | 15 mins |
| 5. Recap from last session | 5 mins |
| Exploration | 6. Worship sharing | 30 mins |
| *Tea break* | 10 mins |
| 8. Questions for discussion | 30 mins |
| Action | 11. How can we uphold / promote more ethical finance? | 15 mins |
| Closing | 12. Closing | 5 mins |

Total time: 2 hours

**Example 3:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Activity** | **Timings** |
| Introduction | 1. Welcome | 5 mins |
| 2. Silence/worship | 5 mins |
| 3. Introduction | 5 mins |
| 4. Check in | 10 mins |
| 5. Recap from last session | 5 mins |
| Exploration | 7. Word flower | 20 mins |
| *Tea break* | 15 mins |
| 8. Questions for discussion | 30 mins |
| 9. My finances audit | 15 mins |
| Action | 11. How can we uphold / promote more ethical finance? | 15 mins |
| Closing | 12. Closing | 5 |

Total time: 2 hours 10 mins

## Materials needed

Tea, coffee / refreshments (if you decide you want them)

Flip chart paper if you are doing activities 8, 10 and 12.

Optional: Handout sheet for activity 6 (see appendix)

Paper copies of Booklet 4: *Money, banks and finance in the new economy*

Paper copies of *Principles for a new economy* (optional)

## Session plan

**Introductory activities**

1. **Welcome and introduction (3 minutes – not including worship time)**

You may want to offer people tea and coffee as they arrive. Make sure everyone has a comfortable place to sit. Chairs should be arranged in a single circle.

At the start, thank everyone for coming, introduce yourself if anyone doesn’t know you and begin the silence / worship.

1. **Silence / worship (optional)**
2. **Introduction to the session and housekeeping (5 minutes)**

Welcome everyone, and thank all those involved in organising the session. If there is anyone new in the room (who wasn’t at the first session), suggest that everyone in the room goes round the circle and introduces themselves briefly (saying their name and one brief detail, such as where they’re from).

Once this is done, outline the agenda for today (see agenda outline above). Explain that the aim of the session is to have a chance to discuss some of the ideas in the fourth new economy booklet, *Money, Banks and Finance in the new economy.*

It is assumed that people will have this booklet in advance.

If there is anyone new in the room (who wasn’t at the previous sessions), emphasise again that no prior economic knowledge whatsoever is necessary and that you want everyone to feel welcome, even if they don’t have experience of discussing subjects like this. You can suggest that if anyone thinks they might have practical difficulty reading the booklets they can talk to you after the session to think of ways to work around this. Large print copies of the booklet are available from Friends House (email [neweconomy@quaker.org.uk](mailto:neweconomy@quaker.org.uk)).

***A record of discussion***

Some meetings have decided to keep notes of their discussion, in order to record their responses to the ideas in the booklets, and add ideas of their own. Redlands meeting in Bristol is also collating local examples of people, organisations and groups building the ‘new economy’. If your group has found examples of case studies related to ethical banks, credit unions, alternative currencies, LETS or timebanks in the area, we’d love to hear about these. You can share examples by sending them to us at [neweconomy@quaker.org.uk](mailto:neweconomy@quaker.org.uk) or share them on our private online new economy forum on Loomio: [www.loomio.org/invitations/adfc4d5c2f5c9b416cf2](http://www.loomio.org/invitations/adfc4d5c2f5c9b416cf2)

You may want to propose to the group that your reading group could also keep records or produce some kind of response to the session. If so, you could arrange at this point for someone to take notes or write up the session.

**Exploratory activities**

1. **Check in (10 – 20 minutes)**

Ask everyone to go round and feedback briefly on how they found the booklet, including any questions they have relating to its content. You could add these questions to notes about the session (if you’re keeping them). You may wish to ask participants to limit their feedback to one or two minutes each (see facilitation tips).

1. **Reflection on last session (5 – 15 mins)**

* Recap briefly what you discussed in the last session (5 mins max – don’t get in to discussion about any of the specific issues)
* If anyone committed to specific action from the last session (e.g. asking the meeting clerk about the energy supplier) invite them to feed back what they did and how it went.
* Ask if anyone else has made changes or taken any action around their energy supplier since the last session.

1. **Worship sharing (optional) (30 – 60 minutes)**

See accompanying guide to worship sharing in the email.

Prompts for contemplation could be:

* Share your responses to the booklet
* Share your response to the subject in light of Quaker testimony

But feel free to choose your own prompts or ways of framing the worship.

1. **Word flower: Open exploration of the themes of the session (optional) (20 – 35 mins)**

This activity will use something called a ‘wordflower’. Divide into groups of between 3 and 5 people (aim, ideally, to have 3 groups in total).

Each group gets given a sheet of flip chart paper and are given one theme word: banking, money or finance.

At the centre of the paper they write their theme word, in a circle (which will form the centre of a flower).

The groups then have 10 – 20 minutes to discuss their feelings and thoughts about this word. Tell the groups that this can be very open – it doesn’t just have to focus on the particular content of the booklets. They can share their experiences, questions, views, feelings and associations with the word. As group participants share, each new item should be recorded in a separate petal around the central word.

After the discussions, you can get the groups to feedback what they discussed with the rest of the group using their wordflower. Alternatively, you can pin the wordflowers around the room with blue tack or lay them on tables and give everyone 5 minutes to circulate and read what other groups have written.

Reflection (5–10 mins): After this activity you can ask the group how they found the activity and if anything surprised them.

Alternatively, you can get people to pair up with someone who wasn’t in their group and reflect for 5 minutes on how they found the activity and if anything surprised them. Then you can ask pairs to feed back on anything they shared for 5 minutes as a whole group.

1. **Questions for discussion (optional) (15 – 90 minutes)**

Read out the questions that are included in the blue boxes in the booklet (see list in appendix) or distribute print outs of the appendix to participants. Ask participants to identify any questions that they would like to discuss.

Group participants could break into pairs or small groups to discuss questions and then feed back to the wider group.

Or you can work through the questions identified as a whole group. In this case, ask that Friends be mindful of the balance of participation (see facilitation tips also included in the email).

1. **My finances audit (optional) 15-25 mins**

Give each participant a blank sheet of paper and make sure everyone has a pen. Tell them that this activity is a chance to reflect on their own finances, but they’ll be working alone and they won’t be required to share the information with anyone if they don’t want to.

Read out the following instructions to the group. Ask them to make notes on their sheet of paper.

1. List down the banks, building societies or credit unions that you hold accounts with, or own shares in.
2. Put a star next to any of these institutions that you have ethical concerns about.
3. If you have concerns about any of your accounts, list below what they are or any outstanding questions you have about these institutions or the accounts your hold.
4. List down any barriers to you finding out the answers or moving your money.
5. List down anything that could help or support you in finding out the answer to these questions or moving your money.

*Optional: you can close this activity with a few minutes silence*

Ask participants to break into pairs and reflect on how they found that activity. Did anything surprise them?

Bring the group back together and ask if anyone has resolved to take any action as a result of the reflection.

Remind participants about the web based resource **Your Faith Your Finance**. A guide to money, faith and ethics produced by Quaker Peace and Social Witness in partnership with ECCR. **www.yourfaithyourfinance.org**

1. **Examples and inspiration (optional) (10-20 mins)**

A chance for participants to share examples of ethical banks, credit unions, local time banks, LETS or alternative currencies that they know about and reflect on the examples in the booklet.

Divide the group into smaller groups (5 people max) for this discussion:

Question for discussion: Which real-life examples from the booklet most inspired Friends? Do people know of other organisations locally which are contributing towards a new way of saving, borrowing and exchanging?

After discussions, get people to feedback to the whole group. Jot down any organisations on a board or flip chart paper.

*(optional)* See activity 10. for a follow up action related to these examples.

**Reflections on action**

1. **How can we uphold and promote more ethical finance?**

*Option 1: Action*

This exercise encourages people to reflect on how they can uphold and promote more ethical ways of saving, lending, borrowing and investing in their local meeting.

Whole group discussion or divide the group based on participants’ local meetings:

What bank(s) do(es) our meeting use? Do we think it’s ethical? If not, what are the barriers to the meeting changing its bank?

Is this something the reading group could take action on? [You can record plans by drawing a table like the one below]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Action* | *Who?* | *When by?* |
| *e.g. Talk to Treasurer about banking* | *e.g. Rosie* | *e.g. next reading group meeting* |

*Option 2: group discussion*

Ask the group to divide into small groups (3-4) and reflect on how they could uphold, support and celebrate any progressive organisations mentioned earlier.

W*hole group feedback:*

Ask for one representative from each group to briefly feedback on the discussion in their group and the ideas they have for how to uphold, support and celebrate local organisations. You can jot down these ideas on a flip chart.

**Closing activities**

**12. Closing (5 – 10 minutes)**

Thank everyone for coming.

Announce who will be facilitating the next session (or arrange someone to facilitate if it hasn’t yet been arranged).

Remind everyone / confirm / arrange the date for the next session.

Remind everyone to download a copy of the next new economy booklet 5 The Role of Markets in the new economy. It will be made available on the website late April. Copies are available from www.quaker.org.uk/neweconomy. If you need to order paper copies of the booklets, you can do so by emailing neweconomy@quaker.org.uk.

Invite group members to join the online discussion space, available at:

www.bit.ly/new-economy-discussion. Emphasise that it is not compulsory! The contact person can send the link to those people who are interested.

*Optional evaluation:* go round the circle and ask each participant to say one thing they will be taking away from the session and one thing they will be leaving behind.

**Closing reflection**

*Optional:* Closing reading. Read something related to economics and/or social change that inspires you (see some suggestions below).

**Closing silence / worship.**

**Suggestions for closing reading:**

From *Clarissa Pinkola Estes*– **We were made for these times**

“Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to help another soul, to assist some portion of this poor suffering world, will help immensely. It is not given to us to know which acts or by whom, will cause the critical mass to tip toward an enduring good.

What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts, adding, adding to, adding more, continuing. We know that it does not take everyone on Earth to bring justice and peace, but only a small, determined group who will not give up during the first, second, or hundredth gale.

One of the most calming and powerful actions you can do to intervene in a stormy world is to stand up and show your soul. Soul on deck shines like gold in dark times. The light of the soul throws sparks, can send up flares, builds signal fires, causes proper matters to catch fire. To display the lantern of soul in shadowy times like these - to be fierce and to show mercy toward others; both are acts of immense bravery and greatest necessity.

Struggling souls catch light from other souls who are fully lit and willing to show it. If you would help to calm the tumult, this is one of the strongest things you can do.

There will always be times when you feel discouraged. I too have felt despair many times in my life, but I do not keep a chair for it. I will not entertain it. It is not allowed to eat from my plate.

The reason is this: In my uttermost bones I know something, as do you. It is that there can be no despair when you remember why you came to Earth, who you serve, and who sent you here. The good words we say and the good deeds we do are not ours. They are the words and deeds of the One who brought us here. In that spirit, I hope you will write this on your wall: When a great ship is in harbour and moored, it is safe, there can be no doubt. But that is not what great ships are built for.”

**The Peace of Wild Things**

*Wendell Berry*

When despair for the world grows in me

and I wake in the night at the least sound

in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,

I go and lie down where the wood drake

rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things

who do not tax their lives with forethought

of grief. I come into the presence of still water.

And I feel above me the day-blind stars

waiting with their light. For a time

I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

## Sheet to accompany activity 6

**Discussion questions from booklet 4:**

1. Do you think it’s right that commercial banks have the power to create money?
2. How do you feel about the topic of money? Does it interest you? Does it perplex you?
3. Why do you think money creation is so rarely mentioned in public debate?
4. Does your area have a local currency, timebank or LETS scheme? Do you have any direct experience of these alternative forms of exchange?
5. Barclays Bank and Lloyds were both founded by Quakers. What would a Quaker bank of the 21st century look like?
6. Think about the way you manage your financial affairs. In what ways do these support a sustainable, fair economy? In what ways do they support the status quo?
7. To what extent dose your meeting include ethical considerations when dealing with its money?