# New economy reading group programme

# Session plan: leading a meeting for discernment

*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 markets and public/private provisioning.*

*This session is designed to move you into taking action using our shared discernment process. This may require extra set up for your group in appointing someone to clerk for the group.*

*We ask that people come with their hearts and minds prepared, ready to consider what may be being asked of them, your group and your meeting. Other considerations such as time, energy and skill should also be considered in making any decisions or plans for the future.*

**Example:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Activity** | **Timings** |
| Introduction | 1. Welcome | 5 mins |
| 2. Introductions | 5 mins |
| Exploration | 3. Worship sharing | 30 mins |
| 4. Drawing out common threads | 15 mins |
| *Tea break* | 5 mins |
| 5. Meeting for discernment | 30 mins |
| Action | 7. Planning your activity | 20 mins |
| Closing | 9.Closing | 10 mins |

Total time: 2 hours

## Materials needed

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

Paper copies of each of the 7 booklets.

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

Print outs of project planning document (optional)

Flipchart paper and pens

Candle, or something to centre around.

Copies of Quaker faith and practice and advice and queries.

## Session plan

**Introductory activities**

1. **Welcome (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.

***Silence / worship (optional)***

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

1. **Introduction to the session and housekeeping (5 minutes)**

Welcome everyone, and thank all those involved in organising the session, previous sessions and their contributions commitment and energy to the group so far. If there is anyone new in the room (who wasn’t at previous sessions), 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 discern together what action or activity your group may take on going forward.

It is assumed that people will have looked at the seven booklets 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. If your group has found examples of spiritually led new economy practices, 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: <https://www.loomio.org/invitations/adfc4d5c2f5c9b416cf2>

For this session you may want to have someone appointed to clerk your meeting for discernment or business meeting.

You may want to continue any record keeping or responses to the sessions that you may have been doing previously. Or, you may feel that any minute that comes out of your worship is enough of a record for this session.

**Exploratory activities**

1. **Worship sharing (30 minutes)**

See accompanying guide to worship sharing in the email.

Prompts for contemplation could be:

* Share your responses to which issue or booklet you have been more drawn to or interested in exploring more. Is this common across the group?
* Consider how the booklets and suggested activities relate to Quaker testimony.

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

1. **Draw out common threads (15 minutes)**

From your worship sharing, draw out the common threads. Explore where there was unity and differences in understanding or energy. You could map this onto a flipchart after the worship sharing, or add people’s responses to a sheet as they are speaking, and see what the commonalities were at the end.

1. **Meeting for discernment (30)**

Move the worship into a business meeting for your group to consider what you may take forward. Some of your group may come with clear ideas of projects or initiatives to start off join in with. Allow these to be shared, but don’t move into responding or planning at this stage. Try and draw out the interests, passions skills and interests in the group, and look for where there is commonalities, unity or possibilities for moving forward on these things.

When considering activity that could be taken you may want to bear in mind the different building blocks for creating change outlined in booklet 7:

* Understanding ourselves - why we are called to do this work and how do we understand our role?
* Building the alternative – demonstrating another way of existing.
* Confronting the old – challenging existing systems through action.
* Building the movement – supporting the right kind of leadership for this work.
* Changing the Story – Who is speaking and what are they saying?

You may find part of Minute 36 from Yearly Meeting 2015 helpful to share with the group in this time:

*[…} We ask Friends and meetings to engage with the evil of social and economic injustice which creates a world in which the wrong things are valued. To do this requires owning and upholding the work that is already being done by Friends and in our name; helping to fund that work as generously as possible; and becoming involved in however small a way. For ourselves we need to find some action however simple to do now*

*[…] We must remember that what makes the real difference is not adding further to the words in the world but being and living out the new social order, testing our leadings together and trusting to our Quaker processes, ‘opening ourselves to the Light to guide us in each small step’.*

Towards the end ask that whoever is clerking this worship tries to draw this into a shared minute for your group, agreed by those in the meeting.

When it feels right, and the minute is agreed, draw the meeting for business to a close.

1. **Planning your activity (20 minutes)**

If there is a clear idea or direction and there is a lot of energy in the room, then make use of the project planning document below.

Or

As a group look at what next steps you may have to take to see the minute made become alive.

* consider, how it connects into your wider local or area meeting
* Identify actions for people within your group
* Map out people who you hope to reach out to in your wider community.

**Closing activities**

**7. Closing (10 minutes)**

Thank everyone for coming.

This is the final session plan, and the set of 7 booklets is also now complete, so you have made it to the end of the New Economy reading group! However, your group may still wish to continue in some form, and you may want to explore this briefly toward the end of this meeting. Did you want to keep meeting as a group? Is it going to be a group for learning, or moving to action or activity? Is it going to consist of the same people or draw in or going out to others from your meeting or wider community?

Copies of the new booklet 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](http://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.

**Project Planning**

Is your group already at the stage of wanting to take action? If they are, feel free to run through this project plan together or use it as a chance to go away and think about what you’d like to do together as part of the next phase of the new economy project.

**PROJECT NAME** *What will you call this project?*

**VISION** *What will you see as a result of this project achieving its goal?*

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION** *What activities will you engage in that work with how you understand change to happen?*

**NEED AND CONTEXT** *What is your understanding of the problem?*

**PURPOSE**

**PARTNERS + ALLIES** *Who will you work with / need to work with to build power?*

**TEAM –** *Who is committed to doing this work with you?*

**NEXT STEPS –** *What are the first five things you are going to do next ?*

1.

2.

3.

**CHALLENGES** *– what can get in your way that may prevent you doing this work?*