

# Sharing our journeys

Exploring Quaker spirituality with young people and adults



**Simon Best and Paul Levy**

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Materials in this pack can be reproduced or copied freely for use in Quaker meetings and other groups.

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Simon Best and Paul Levy

# Introduction

As Quakers we are co-disciples and fellow pilgrims on individual and shared spiritual and religious journeys. Our spiritual journeys are not like any other voyage we might make. We don't stop travelling spiritually; we may journey into the unknown; we can go in different directions and sometimes we find ourselves going back on ourselves.

Sharing our spiritual journeys with others and travelling alongside them can be a powerful, encouraging and enabling experience for us and for those who share their journeys with us and who we share ours with.

Exploring our spiritual journeys is about asking questions such as: 'What do I want to be?', 'Who do I want to be?', 'What sort of people do I want in my life as friends and partners?', 'What kind of society do I want to live in?', 'What are my values?', 'What is valuable to me?', 'What inspires me?', 'What is love?', 'What is hope?'.

People, whatever their age, are interested in spiritual things: this may include an interest in exploring what God is, in meditation, environmental awareness, campaigning for social justice or fair trade. All these provide an opportunity for exploring spirituality. It is important to acknowledge that people's values, beliefs and relationships with other people and with groups they belong to, are part of their spirituality, and that spirituality is something that can be very real, rather than something necessarily transcendental or simply belief in God.

Spirituality is about our core beliefs and values, about what is central to us and our life. It is also about developing our identity and sense of self worth. All of these things are key aspects of being in Quaker community with other people.

Undertaking this work in mixed-age groups can give young people a sense of identity in their communities and give adults that are part of those communities a better understanding of the young people and of how to communicate with and empower them. Hopefully, this will in turn strengthen inter-generational links with the potential to give young Friends a greater voice in the Religious Society of Friends and to be fully part of the Society now and in the future. It is important that young Friends are given opportunities to explore their spirituality and their Quakerism in order to give them grounding for practical involvement and service in the Religious Society of Friends.

There are young Friends who identify themselves as Quakers but don't go to meeting; there are also young people that don't have the opportunity to attend local link groups, Yearly Meeting, summer schools or similar events. It is important therefore that this work is done in local meetings as well as at a regional and national level.

It is the responsibility of all Friends to foster the spiritual growth of children and young people, and to nurture their Quaker faith. Some meetings struggle to connect with young Friends, to understand their needs and to meet them. Many young Friends do not have the words to express the spiritual experiences they have had. The activities

# Introduction

in this pack encourage and enable them to articulate the experiential dimension of their Quaker faith.

## Aims of this pack

The aims of this pack are to:

- give young Quakers (aged 12 to 18) and adult Friends the opportunity to explore their spirituality in a Quaker context, and to discover by sharing together what Quakerism means to them and to other people
- enable young Quakers and adult Friends to share their own spiritual journeys and to think about and articulate their ideas, values and beliefs
- create opportunities for Friends of all ages to listen to each other, to learn and grow together in ways that will strengthen local meetings, Quaker groups and the yearly meeting as all-age worshipping communities.

## About this pack

This pack contains a variety of activities for groups which enable people to explore their spirituality, their beliefs and their thoughts and feelings about Quakerism.

There are four sections: Exploring spirituality; Exploring God; Exploring Quakerism and Exploring worship. The material can be used as several consecutive sessions over a number of weeks, over a residential weekend, or in a one-off session.

The activities provide young people and adults with a chance to explore these topics and share this with other Friends of all ages in their meeting or other Quaker group.

It is important to read through the exercises beforehand to check that you have thought through the purpose of the activity, are clear what to do and have the materials you need.

## About the authors

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# Facilitator's notes

Each of the sessions requires some preparation. In each section there are a range of activities that you can choose as appropriate to your group. As you prepare for the sessions think about the following.

## How you will work with a co-facilitator

- Who will be responsible for what? (e.g. preparation, facilitation, co-ordination)
- How will you support each other?
- How will you work together?

## The environment you want to create

Have you thought about the space you will work in – is it a safe one where participants feel happy to explore the topics, share their experiences and work together?

- Is it the right size for the number of people in the group and the exercises that you have planned?
- Where will participants sit? Are there enough chairs? Is the floor carpeted?
- Do you have tables for people to work on if necessary?
- Who is the room set up for?

## The group you are working with

- How many people are in your group? The activities are designed for a maximum 'whole group' size of 20 to 30 people; the small group activities are for between 4 and 6 people. If you are doing activities at an event with more than 30 people you may need to split the group up for some activities.
- What ages are they? Are there a greater number of adults than young people, or vice versa?
- Are they all from the same meeting? Do they know each other well?
- For what reasons might people be coming to the sessions? How will you facilitate in light of this?
- How will you balance the needs different participants? For example, vocal participants and quiet participants? Participants who learn through discussions and participants who learn through activities? Think about how the composition of the group affects pair work and group work.

## Planning your sessions

Each section begins with ideas for activities to begin a session with. This is followed by a range of creative activities and questions for discussion in small groups. Each section concludes with ideas to enable individual reflection.

- Plan what you will do alongside those you will be facilitating with, encouraging the young people to be part of the planning process and the facilitation.
- Choose which of the four sections you are going to be focusing on.
- When beginning your time with the group, use some of the ideas from 'Starting off' to enable the group to come together.
- Then use some of the suggestions within 'Going deeper' to explore the theme of the section.
- Finish with something from 'Reflections' to round off what you have done.

## Reviewing the session

- After the session, as facilitators, reflect on how you worked together. How have you worked with the group?
- Review the sessions with the participants, what have people taken or learnt from the session? How should you develop your practice; are there any changes which you need to make?
- Think about the following questions:
  - Did everyone have the opportunity to speak and be listened to?
  - Did everyone have the opportunity to listen to others?
  - Did everyone have the opportunity to reflect?
  - How did the activities encourage people to:
    - Think about their relationships with other people?
    - Think about themselves, their spirituality and what's important to them?
    - Think about the world/the environment (natural, political, etc.)?
    - What questions were people encouraged to ask about 'God'?

## Working agreement

It is important that people are clear and happy about how the group will work. Having a working agreement may help this. A working agreement covers how a group will work together. For example, listening to each other, respecting what others say, ensuring everyone is included, being able to ask for help and being aware of timekeeping. Often it is easy to say the things usually included in a working agreement without thinking through how it is going to happen in practice. What does being

inclusive actually mean? For example, do people think about their body language – are they aware of physically excluding people? How do they respond to people they find difficult?

### Working agreement activity

This activity helps the group think about and share their needs in working together as a group, possibly over a number of sessions, and to create a working agreement together:

Ask people to think about and share in pairs:

- what motivates them to be here
- what they hope to gain
- what they need from others in the group to help them to be involved and feel confident about participating in the group.

Ask the pairs to feed back to the whole group and work together to make a working agreement for your time together.

If it is not mentioned, remind the group that it is okay to take away ideas but not to repeat people's thoughts and stories outside of the group.

### Other resources

- *Journeys in the Spirit: youth work edition* – this comes out three times a year offering activities on a theme for one-off sessions or weekends with 12- to 18-year-olds. Obtainable by free subscription, go to [www.quaker.org.uk/cyp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/cyp) and follow the link via 'Resources' to *Journeys in the Spirit: youth edition*.
- *Living as a Quaker* – a six-session programme providing facilitators with all they need to support young people in exploring their Quaker identity, beliefs, values and interactions with others. Available free online through [www.quaker.org.uk/cyp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/cyp), following the link via 'Resources' to *Working with young people*, or for a hard copy phone 020 7663 1013.
- Ideas Store – a collection of tried and trusted ideas, categorised by age and activity. Access for free through [www.quaker.org.uk/cyp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/cyp), following the link via 'Resources' to 'Ideas Store'.
- *Spiritual development* booklet – written as a first step for youth workers thinking about how their engagement with young people might facilitate spiritual development, offering both theoretical and practical insights. For a free copy phone 020 7663 1013.
- *Glimpses* – a dynamic and exciting resource for youth workers packed full of creative ideas and reflections to do with young people, including a DVD of images, music and video clips. Available for £12 from [www.fyt.org.uk](http://www.fyt.org.uk), follow the link to resources.
- *Glimpses for Young People* – a DVD containing hundreds of resources and ideas to help young people explore, develop and reflect upon their spirituality. Available for £8 from [www.fyt.org.uk](http://www.fyt.org.uk), follow the link to resources.

# Exploring spirituality

## Starting off

### Quick think: Spirituality (whole group)

Ask the group what words/thoughts/ideas they associate with the word 'spirituality' or express their understanding of the word 'spirituality'. Explain that there are no wrong answers and people should just say whatever words or phrases come into their head.

Write these up on a flipchart as people call them out and then put it up so that people can see it for the rest of the session.

### Sharing something spiritual (pairs)

Ask the group to think of something which is spiritual for them. It could be an activity, a thought, a feeling, a place they've been, something that inspires them (e.g. food, hill-walking, candles, worship, sunsets, architecture, paintings, music).

Ask them to share this in a pair, what it is and why they find it spiritual – make sure both people get a chance to speak.

## Going deeper

### Spirituality quotes (individual/pairs)

Give each person a copy of the sheet of spirituality quotes (see pages 25 and 26) or download large colour versions from [www.quaker.org.uk/sharing-our-journeys](http://www.quaker.org.uk/sharing-our-journeys), print them off and place them around the room.

- Say that there are a variety of quotes. Some are from *Quaker faith & practice* and *Advices & queries*; others are quotes by people who are not Quakers. They are all quotes that say something about our spiritual life.
- People might find some of the quotes helpful, and feel they put into words some of what they think is important about being a Quaker. Others won't be helpful to them; they might not like them, and that's fine. Ask the group to concentrate on the ones that they like and find helpful.
- Give people time to look at the quotes and read them. Ask them to choose one or possibly two quotes that they like best.
- Ask everyone to pair-up with someone else and spend a few minutes talking about the quote that they choose, why they chose it and what they like about it.

## **Personal web (individual/pairs)**

This is a chance for people to think about the people in their lives who they are connected to.

Everyone has connections with lots of different people; everyone is part of different groups: families, friends, school, work, your meeting, and other organisations. These relationships form a web, and this activity explores that web.

- Ask people to take a bit of time to think about their connections with other people and the relationships they have with others and the groups they belong to.
- Give everyone a piece of paper (A3 is best).
- Ask them to draw or write something that represents themselves in the middle of the piece of paper.
- Then think about all the people they are connected to and all the groups that they are part of. They should draw or write these on the piece of paper around the representation of themselves and connect the other people and groups to this representation with lines to create a web.
- If the groups or people are linked to each other then they can draw in those links too.
- Ask people to share their personal webs in a pair – telling each other about their web and the other people and groups on it – but don't share any more than they feel comfortable doing.

## **Beliefs (small groups)**

This activity enables people to start thinking about their beliefs and sharing them with others in a safe way.

- Give each person a small pile of sticky notes and ask them to think about the things that they believe in. These beliefs might be fairly straight forward or simple or they might be deeper – for example 'I believe that war is wrong' and 'I believe that everyone has something divine within them'.
- Give people a little time to think on their own and write on the sticky notes (one thing they believe in on each sticky note).
- Then ask them to think about things they don't believe. Again it can be fairly straight forward or simple or something deeper – for example 'I don't believe in life after death' or 'I don't believe in a judgmental and vengeful God'.
- Give them a little time to think on their own and write on the sticky notes (one thing they don't believe in on each sticky note).
- Ask people to get into small groups. Give each group a sheet of flipchart paper that is divided in half, with one half headed 'I believe...' and the other headed 'I don't believe...'.  
• Ask them in their groups to share some of the things that they believe and don't believe. Ask them to take it in turns to share what they have written on the sticky notes and as they do so place the sticky notes on the appropriate side of the paper.

# Exploring spirituality

## Sacred spaces (individual / pairs)

- Put out a selection of photographs, postcards of scenery, landscapes, etc. (it is easy to build up a stock of old postcards to use for this – or ask around at meeting).
- Ask people to choose one that they like and then share in pairs why they chose it and what they like about it.
- Ask participants to think of a special place for them. A sacred space for them, somewhere where they feel 'spiritual'.
- It could be up a mountain, in a park, at meeting, in their bedroom, on their own somewhere. It might be somewhere they've been once but was particularly memorable or it might be somewhere they've been lots of times.
- Give each person a piece of A4 card and ask them to create a representation of their spiritual place / sacred space / special place, using the collage materials to create a picture that represents this sacred space.
- When they have finished, ask them to pair up with someone and share their picture, where it is of, and why this place is important to them.

## Discussion (small groups)

This activity could be done as creative listening using a token that people have to be holding to talk, this helps to ensure that only one person speaks at a time.

Groups might want to work through the questions in order or they could pick one question to concentrate on.

Remind people that if they don't want to answer a particular question then they can pass. Try to make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.

- What is something that you think is beautiful?
- What is something that makes you feel happy?
- What is something valuable to you that money can't buy?
- When do you feel spiritual?
- Where do you feel spiritual?
- What is something that is spiritual for you?



## Reflection

### **Spiritual lifelines (individual)**

This is a chance for people to think about things that are significant for them, in their lives and as Quakers. Our spiritual journey isn't about a journey to being spiritual, we are all spiritual and it's about the journey that we take as spiritual beings.

Ask people to sit quietly. You can use these words to introduce and explain the activity:

- Think about significant events in your life, either in your life as a Quaker or otherwise. Think about significant events, changes, experiences or encounters and how you feel about them. Think about particular people, places, key events, important times in your life, or particular feelings. Think about significant Quaker events, possibly particular meetings for worship or epilogues that have been important for you.
- Think about times or moments when you may have felt 'spiritual' or had a 'spiritual experience', it might be in meeting for worship or epilogue or on the top of a mountain or at a peace vigil or anti-war march.
  - Give everyone a piece of A3 paper.
  - Invite people to represent their spiritual path. They might want to do this as a line and take that line in whatever way they want – up and down, back and forth, in circles. They might want to do it as a map of their journey with signposts marking particular events or moments, they might want to draw, write, or doodle.
  - Reassure people that they can represent their thoughts, feelings and experiences however they wish. They should choose the method that they feel comfortable with.
  - Ask them to share this in a pair but recognise that they may bring up difficult things as well as good memories – that's okay as these are all part of our experience and they don't have to share anything they don't feel comfortable with.

### **Spiritual journey in a box (individual)**

This activity enables people to explore and identify the spiritual in everyday life.

Give each person a box template (see page 27). You will need a variety of coloured pens and pencils for people to use. You can also use other art materials, glitter, sticky shapes, etc.

## Exploring spirituality

You can use these words to introduce and explain the activity:

- Our spiritual journeys aren't like journeys with a destination. When we think of a journey in a car or a plane we think of travelling from one place to another with a specific destination, but our spiritual journeys are journeys we are always on, and the various places we travel to on our journeys can excite, nourish and inspire us. Our spiritual journeys are an important part of our human experience: a process of discovering ourselves and the world around us. This process is gradual and ongoing throughout our whole lives; it is intrinsically linked to our values and beliefs.
- We are going to explore our spiritual lives; hopefully you will be able to see the spiritual in your lives.
- We are going to map out our spiritual journeys and create a box.
- Do use coloured pens and pencils in the middle.
- We can do this on our own and in quiet.
- We can think of our spiritual journeys as taking us in several directions:
  - Start by writing, drawing or doodling something that represents you on the central square.
  - The first direction we travel in is inwards to ourselves. Think about yourself and what's important to you, things you like doing or you are good at. Choose a triangle and inside it write, draw or doodle something you enjoy doing or are good at.
  - The second direction we travel in is outwards to others. Think about your relationships with other people. In another triangle write, draw or doodle a person or a group of people that is important to you.
  - The third direction is downward to the world. Think about the world and the environment, this could be the natural world or the world around us. Write, draw or doodle something about the world that you are worried about or like a lot.
  - The final direction we travel in is upwards to God, the divine, the deeper mystery. Think about how you experience God or whatever word you're comfortable with. Think about times when you've felt particularly spiritual, a deep experience. In the last triangle write, draw or doodle a time when you have felt awe or wonder, a spiritual experience. This could be when you were in meeting for worship, or when you have been quietly looking at or listening to something beautiful.
- Now you can decorate the outside of your box with the materials provided.
- To assemble the box fold along the dotted lines to form a pyramid with the square at the base. Punch holes through the circles at the top of the triangles and close it up with wool.
- Pair-up with another person and share things from your journey. Don't share anything that you don't feel comfortable with; you can keep things on the inside of the box if you want.
- Your boxes are yours to take away with you, to keep as records of the journey you've been on.

# Exploring God

## Starting off

### Descriptions of God (whole group)

This activity will encourage people to think about, reflect on and share their beliefs about God.

Give each person a pile of sticky notes:

- Ask them firstly to write on several sticky notes 'What God is not for me...' (e.g. 'God is not an old man in the clouds'). They can write as many as they want.
- Then ask them to write on sticky notes 'What God is for me...' (e.g. 'God is a life force'). Again they can write as many as they want.
- Ask people to stick them on two flipchart sheets, one for 'What God is not for me...' and one for 'What God is for me...', and share them with the group. If someone says something they have written then they can just add it next to the first sticky note.

If people aren't comfortable with using the word 'God' they can use spirit, force, power, light, etc.

## Going deeper

### God bag (small groups or whole group)

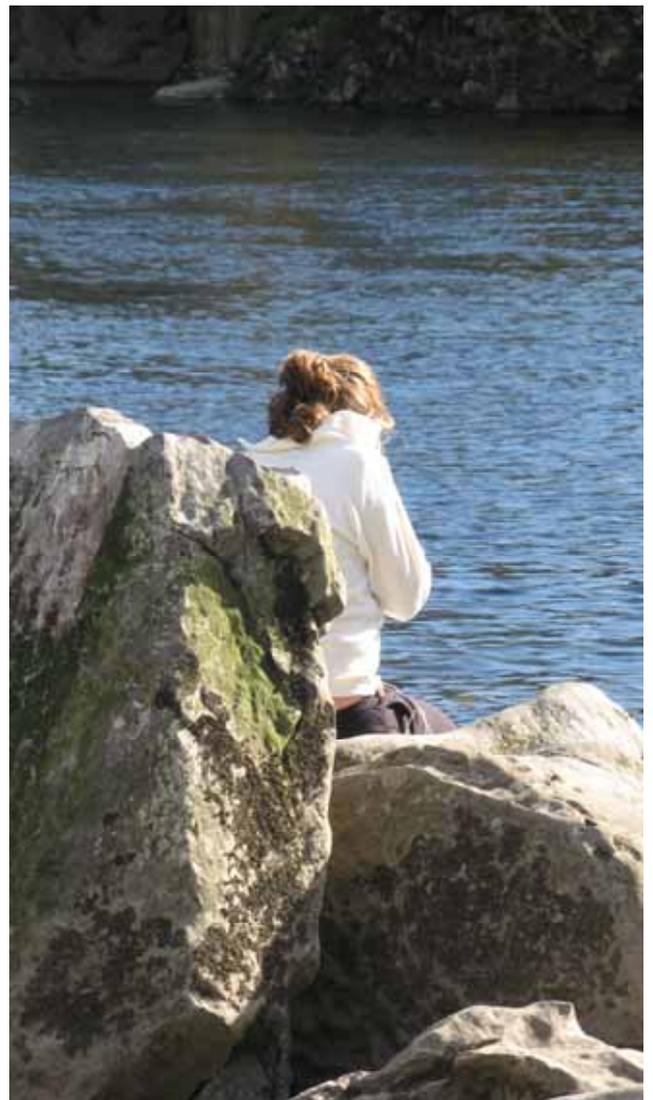
- For this activity you will need a 'God bag' – these are easy to create: find a nice cloth bag and put in it a variety of objects (e.g. a hair brush, a rubber duck, a cloth flower, a small stone, a coloured shell).
- Pass the bag around the group and ask people to draw out an object and answer the question 'How is this like God?' or 'How does this make me think of God?' or 'How is this different from God?'.

## Reflection

### God cards (individual/small groups)

For Quakers the idea of 'That of God in everyone' is very important.

- Ask people to think of three things that they really like: they might be things in the natural world, objects, people, places, an activity, or things that aren't tangible like feelings or emotions.
- Ask people to think about 'That of God' in these things.
- Give each person a piece of card and ask them to write or draw or doodle illustrating that of God in that thing. They can decorate the card using colour and other art and craft materials.
- Ask people to think of three things that they don't like: they might be things in the natural world, objects, people, places, an activity, or things that aren't tangible like feelings or emotions.
- Ask people to think about 'That of God' in these things.
- Give each person a piece of card and ask them to write or draw or doodle, illustrating that of God in that thing. They can decorate the card using colour and other art and craft materials.
- Ask people to share their cards in small groups.



# Exploring Quakerism

## Starting off

### Quick think: Quakerism (whole group)

Ask the group what words/thoughts/ideas they associate with the word 'Quakerism' or express their understanding of the word 'Quakerism'. Explain that there are no wrong answers and people should just say whatever words or phrases come into their head.

Write these up on a flip chart as people call them out and then put it up so that people can see it for the rest of the session.

### Being a Quaker (whole group)

This is an alternative – slightly more involved – way of doing a 'Quick think', do not do both in the same session as this would be repetitive for the group.

- Draw a large 'Q' on a piece of flipchart paper and place it in the centre of the group. Explain that this 'Q' stands for Quakerism, and being a Quaker.
- Hand out sticky notes and pens, ask people to write on the sticky notes what they associate with Quakerism and being a Quaker – serious and not so serious – and put them around the 'Q', the closest ones being the things that they more closely associate with being a Quaker, getting further away as they become less closely linked.
- Give everyone time to read all the responses.
- Prompt a discussion by asking:
  - why they wrote a particular thing?
  - where did they place it and why?
  - if other people agree – do they think it should be closer or further away?
  - if they had to leave just one sticky note which would it be? What, for them, is the one thing they most closely associate with being a Quaker?



## Going deeper

### Our Quaker priorities (individual)

Ask people to think about their ‘Quaker priorities’ – the five most important things about Quakerism for them now.

- They might be things that are particularly about Quakerism – like meeting for worship – or they might be about Quaker beliefs such as the belief in ‘that of God in everyone’, or Quaker values such as peace or equality.
- They might be Quaker activities that they enjoy being involved in, whether this is going to meeting or campaigning. Ask them to think about what is important about those activities – perhaps try to sum it up in one word or a short phrase.
- Ask them to think about these on their own and give them each a sheet of paper to jot them down on. They don’t have to put them in order – just list the five key things.

### Quaker priorities: what we share (small groups)

This activity leads directly on from ‘Our Quaker priorities’ and enables people to share their priorities and work together to agree a common set of Quaker priorities.

- Ask people to go round the group and share their five Quaker priorities. Remind people that it is important when they are sharing their priorities not to challenge or disagree with people’s personal priorities. They can ask people to clarify things if they are unsure.
- Ask them, as a group, to negotiate the five Quaker priorities that they share as a group. Again these could be about worship, beliefs, values, Quaker activities.
- Ask people to think carefully as they might be able to use the same word to reflect an idea that several people have put as a priority.
- They don’t have to put them in order, just list the five key things.
- Ask each small group to feedback to the whole group.

## Challenging Quakerism (small groups)

- Ask people to think individually about the things they find difficult about Quakerism:
  - It might be silent worship.
  - It might be that there are too many committees and making decisions takes a long time.
  - It might be that there aren't many Quakers – or that there aren't many Quakers their age.
  - It might be that they find it difficult explaining Quakerism to other people.
  - It might be things that people in the meeting do or the expectations on them in the meeting.
- Ask them to write each of the things that they find difficult about Quakerism on a sticky note.
- Give them the opportunity to screw up any that they want to write down but don't want to share. This gives them the opportunity to acknowledge things to themselves without having to talk about them with other people.
- Give each group a sheet of flipchart paper, and ask them to share what they find challenging about Quakerism and stick their sticky notes on the flipchart sheet.
- Ask the groups to think about and discuss:
  - Why do they find these things challenging?
  - What causes these things?
  - Are they avoidable? How?
  - What can they as individuals/other people/Quakers as a whole do to help with the difficulties?
- Pass the flipchart sheets round the room and give the other groups the chance to see what the groups have put on their sheets and reflect on them.



# Exploring Quakerism

## **Stereotypical Quakers (small groups)**

This activity will encourage participants to think about the image they have of various Quakers, the messages that they send and how it affects those they see in Quaker groups.

- Give each group a large sheet of paper (A3 or flipchart) and several flipchart pens / big felt tips.
- Ask them to draw and describe a stereotypical Quaker – they can either choose an adult or a young person.
- Before they start drawing, ask them to think about the following things to include in their stereotype:
  - their appearance (hair, piercings, etc.)
  - what sort of clothes they wear (do they have badges, logos, designs?)
  - their interests and hobbies (what do they enjoy doing in their spare time?)
  - what stage they are at in life (school, college, work, volunteering)
  - what music they like
  - what their family is like (their family structure, who they live with, what other people in their family do)
  - their values (what's important to them)
  - their involvement in Quakerism (do they go to their local meeting; are they involved in committees or a particular area of Quaker work; do they attend Quaker events?).
- Ask the groups to think and then draw and create their stereotypical Quaker. Tell them that once they have drawn their stereotypical Quaker, each small group will be introducing them to the rest of the group.
- When the groups have finished ask them to introduce their stereotypical Quaker to the whole group.
- Ask the small groups to think about how close they feel to the stereotype, using the following questions as prompts:
  - How is your stereotypical Quaker like you and why?
  - How are they different from you and why?
  - How are they like other Quakers you know?
  - How are they different from other people their age (who are not Quakers)?
- Get people to line up/stand next to the stereotypical Quaker which they think they are closest to.
- Ask the groups to share their thoughts on the following questions:
  - How accurate is the stereotype?
  - What does the stereotype represent?
  - Is it an aspiration?

- Is it a badge? Something that identifies you?
- Is it how you (as a Quaker) would like to be thought of by others?
- Is it how you (as a Quaker) think you are thought of by others?

## **Quaker mission statements (Small groups)**

- Ask the small groups to jot down on a sheet of paper words and phrases that summarise their experience of Quakerism.
- Ask them to create a mission statement using these words and phrases that describes the Religious Society of Friends for their group. They have to be between 15 and 30 words long. Examples could be:
  - “Quakerism for us is a place where we are only listened to once we are 21 and no one uses email, Quaker events should be entirely made up of periods of silence and early bed times.”
- Or
- “Quakerism for us is place to make friends who share the same beliefs as us, a place to worship and a place to have fun.”
- Say that once they are written each small group will be sharing them.
- Ask each small group to share their mission statement with the whole group.

## **Discussion (small groups)**

This activity could be done as creative listening using a token that people have to be holding to talk, this helps to ensure that only one person speaks at a time.

Groups might want to work through the questions in order or they could pick one question to concentrate on.

Remind people that if they don't want to answer a particular question then they can pass. Try to make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.

- Why are you a Quaker?
- What does being a Quaker mean to you?
- I like being a Quaker when... (what, for you, are the positive things about being a Quaker?)
- I find it difficult being a Quaker when... (what for you are the challenges of being a Quaker?)
- I feel most Quaker when....

# Exploring Quakerism



## **Discussion: membership and belonging (small groups)**

This enables people to think about belonging to Quaker groups and consider issues of membership. It could follow on from doing a personal web.

This activity could be done as creative listening using a token that people have to be holding to talk; this helps to ensure that only one person speaks at a time.

Groups might want to work through the questions in order or they could pick one question to concentrate on.

Remind people that if they don't want to answer a particular question then they can pass. Try to make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.

You may want to use these words as an introduction:

- Quakers understand membership in many ways. Some Quakers see membership as expressing a sense of belonging to a larger body. Others think of it as a way of saying to other Quakers and to the world, that they agree with Quaker beliefs and testimonies; for others it is a way of making a commitment to the community.
- Ask the group to think of reasons why people might become members of the Religious Society of Friends – write these up on a flipchart then lead on to a discussion, using these questions as prompts:
  - Which Quaker group do you feel most part of? Why?
  - Are any of the group in membership?
  - If yes, why did they join?
  - If not will they ever become a member?
  - What might make them more likely to join?
  - Do they think membership is important? Why? Why not?

## Reflection

### My Quakerism is.... (individual)

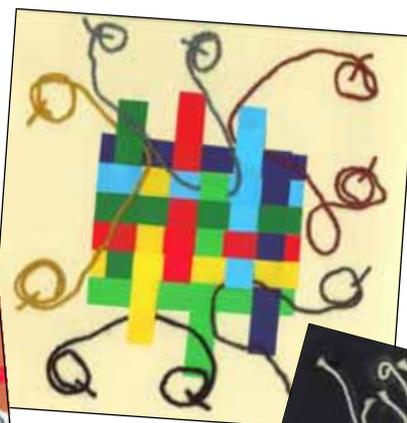
This activity gives people the opportunity to look at Quakerism as we see it and experience it and identify what in it they find beautiful, and special, and unique. It is a chance to look at ways of describing this beauty.

Ask people to find a space on their own and make themselves comfortable. Give everyone a piece of coloured paper.

Use these words to introduce and explain the activity:

- Firstly I'd just like you to sit quietly and think about your Quakerism and as I say the different things you can jot words or phrases or draw pictures or even just doodle on your sheets – use them how you like to express your thoughts and reflections to the prompts.
- Then say, “thinking about your Quakerism...”
  - What does it sound like? Is it soft or loud, harmonic or discordant?
  - What does it taste like? Is it sweet or sour, cold or hot, does it taste like something in particular?
  - What does it feel like? Is it soft or hard, is it rough or smooth?
  - What does it smell like?
  - What does it look like? Is it brightly coloured or dull, is it patterned or plain?
  - What are its precious moments?

Remember to leave a good pause between each question to allow people time and space to write or draw or doodle.



# Exploring Quakerism

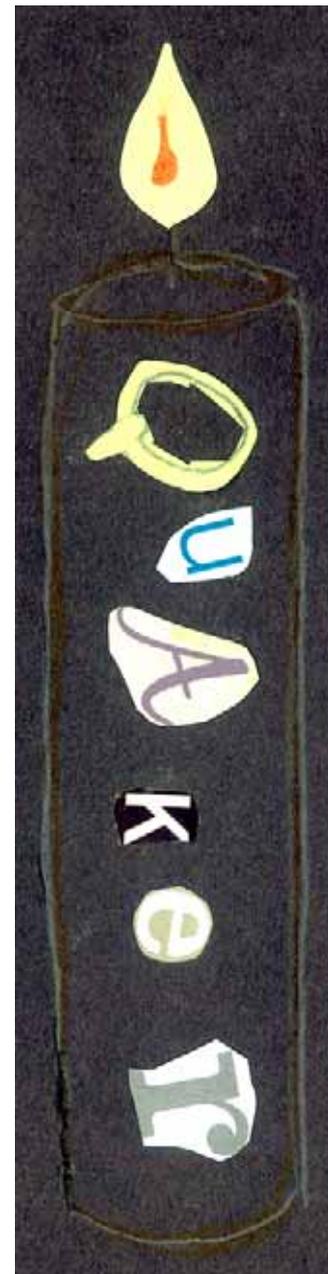
## Quaker treasure box (individual)

This is a reflective activity that gives people the chance to think about different aspects of their Quaker experience and find ways to express this.

Give each person a box template (see page 27). You will need a variety of coloured pens and pencils for people to use. You can also use other art materials, glitter, sticky shapes, etc.

You can use these words to introduce and explain the activity:

- For each of us Quakerism contains treasures. We're going to create a treasure box that will contain our Quaker treasures. Do use the coloured pens and pencils in the middle. Please can we do this on our own and in the quiet?
- Start by writing your name or drawing or doodling something that represents you on the central square.
- The first treasure is what is important to us. Think about what is the most important thing about Quakerism for you. Choose a triangle and inside it write, draw or doodle something that represents the most important thing about Quakerism for you.
- The next Quaker treasure is others in the community. Think about other Quakers or groups of Quakers that are important to you. In another triangle write draw or doodle a Quaker or a group of Quakers that are important to you.
- The third treasure is how being a Quaker affects our lives. I'd like you to think of a particular Quaker value that you try to live by or a way in which you have put your faith into action. Pick another triangle and write, draw or doodle this.
- The final treasure is the precious moments of Quakerism. I'd like you to think of a particularly special Quaker memory... it might be a particular meeting for worship, a Quaker event, a weekend away with your meeting. It might be a particularly 'spiritual' moment, a deep experience, or a time you felt particularly close to God.
- Give people the opportunity to decorate the outsides of their boxes with the materials provided.
- To assemble the box fold along the dotted lines to form a pyramid with the square at the base. Punch holes through the circles at the top of the triangles and close it up with wool.
- If you have time you can give people the chance to share something from their Quaker treasure boxes.



# Exploring worship

## Starting off

### Quick think: worship (whole group)

Ask the group what words/thoughts/ideas they associate with the words 'Quaker worship'. Explain that there are no wrong answers and people should just say whatever words or phrases come into their head.

Write these up on a flipchart as people call them out and then put it up so that people can see it for the rest of the session.

### Thinking about worship (small groups)

Quaker worship means different things to different people. For some it feels like something that immediately connects with them and is central to Quakerism for them. For others it might be something that doesn't feel so much a part of their experience.

- Hand out sticky notes and pens. Ask people to think about the different aspects of Quaker worship and jot them on the sticky notes.
- Give each group a piece of flipchart paper. Draw a line down a piece of flipchart paper and label one side of the paper 'Enjoy' and the other 'Difficult'. Ask them to think about whether the aspect of worship they have written about on their sticky note is something they enjoy or something they find difficult. Ask them to stick the sticky notes they have written on either under 'Enjoy' or 'Difficult' depending on where they feel they should go – some may need to go on the line down the middle.
- Give the groups a chance to discuss what they enjoy and what they find easy and difficult and why they have put their sticky notes where they have. People may want to change where they have put things after the discussion.

## Going deeper

### What we need for worship (small group)

- Ask people to look in small groups at all the things you need for worship, this includes both meeting for worship and worship at other times, such as epilogue (which is a common feature of residential events). Ask them to think about where Quaker worship happens, and what Quakers use during worship. Ask people to write on a sheet of flipchart paper all the things that they think you need for worship. You could give them some examples from the following list to get them thinking:

# Exploring worship

- *Quaker faith & practice*
- Bible
- chairs
- a meeting house
- flowers
- a table
- silence
- someone to decide when worship begins and ends
- other people.
- Ask the groups to think about the things that they have come up with on their lists:
  - Which of these do you need for worship?
  - Which of these you don't need?
  - Which of these are helpful?

## Discussion (small groups)

This activity could be done as creative listening using a token that people have to be holding to talk, this helps to ensure that only one person speaks at a time.

Groups might want to work through the questions in order or they could pick one question to concentrate on. Remind people that if they don't want to answer a particular question then they can pass. Try to make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.

- What do you do in meeting for worship? Do you sit and think? Do you meditate? Do you pray? Do you sleep? Do you listen? Do you watch what other people are doing?
- Do you enjoy meeting for worship?
- How do you use the silence?
- What helps you to use the silence? What gets in the way?

## Reflection

### Special worship moments (individual/whole group)

- Ask people to think about a special moment during Quaker worship. For example it might be a special epilogue at a Quaker event, or the first time they went to meeting for worship, or a particularly memorable piece of ministry. It could be something general about Quaker worship: what makes worship special for them, why it is important for them... it can be anything they like.
- Ask people to share this in worship in the whole group. Remind people that if they don't want to answer then they can pass.

# Spirituality quotes

The spiritual quest begins, for most people, as a search for meaning.

*Marilyn Ferguson*

Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal.

*Mary Baker Eddy*

Religion is a set of social and political institutions and spirituality is a private pursuit which may or may not take place in a church setting.

*D. Patrick Miller*

The spiritual life does not remove us from the world but leads us deeper into it.

*Henri J. M. Nouwen*

The deepest expression of spirituality is love.

*Robert L. Simpson*

We are not human beings on a spiritual journey. We are spiritual beings on a human journey.

*Stephen Covey*

Spiritual development is about getting in touch with the deep parts of life – valuing the experiences of awe and wonder, of hurt and sorrow, relationships with other people and the natural world, and coming to an understanding of what is meant by the term ‘God’.

*Francis Cattermole*

Spiritual development is about each person as a unique human being with life-long potential for growth and development.

*John Lee*

Spirituality is one’s deepest belief about what in the end is ultimately important.

*Brian Sweasey*

Spirituality is an awareness of that which is deepest within us, that which responds to other people and the world around us, that which gives us a direction in life.

*Miranda Salamon*

God helps them that help themselves.

*Benjamin Franklin*

Spirituality is like a bird: if you hold it too closely, it chokes, and if you hold it too loosely, it escapes.

*Israel Salanter Lipkin*

## Spirituality quotes

There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.

*The Dalai Lama*

The religious life is not a dull, grim drive towards moral virtues, but a response to a vision of greatness.

*Thomas F. Green*

It is because the learning process is continued throughout life that Friends are seekers as well as finders – not one or the other, but both. One only has to think of the need for a continual search for fresh language to know that we must, if we care about truth, continue to be seekers.

*Ruth Fawell*

There is a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and ages hath different names; it is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of religion nor excluded from any where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes root and grows, of what nation so ever, they become brethren.

*John Woolman*

I should like to change the name 'seekers' to 'explorers'. We do not seek the Atlantic, we explore it. The whole field of religious experience has to be explored, and has to be described in a language understandable to modern men and women.

*Ole Olden*

I do not know the course I am to run, all is hid in mystery, but I try to do right in everything... I must not despair or grow sceptical if I do not always feel religious. I felt God as it were, and I must seek to find Him again.

*Elizabeth Fry*

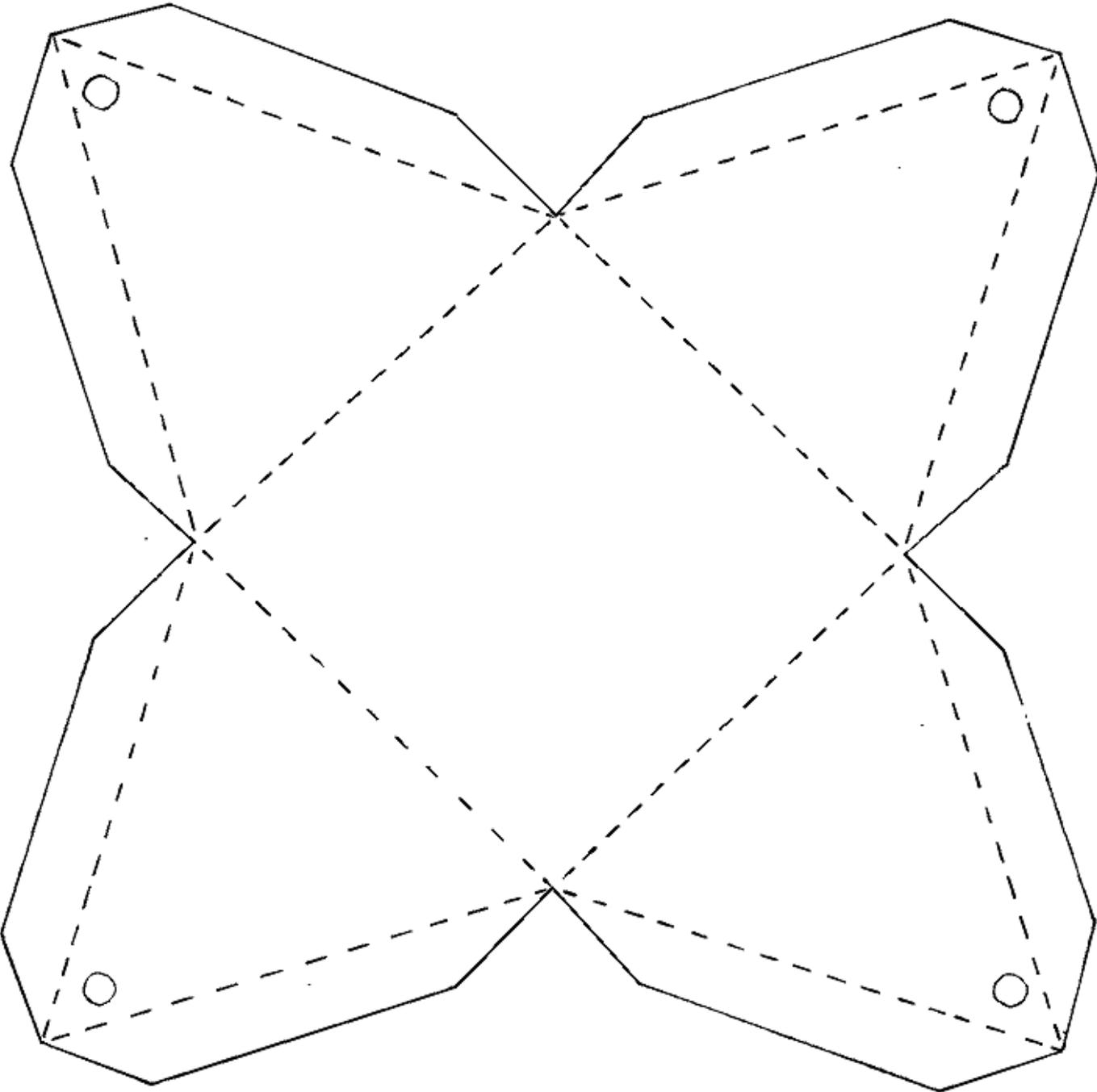
This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine!  
This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine!

*African American Spiritual*

These things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided; and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

*The Elders of Balby, 1656*

**Template for 'Spiritual journey in a box' and 'Quaker treasure box' activities**



## Sharing our journeys

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