

Make a mark for peace: Quaker peaceworkers appeal 2008–09

All-age activities

Dealing with conflict

Purpose

Many of the organisations that Quaker peaceworkers are supporting in 2009 work to find constructive ways of dealing with conflict. Understanding conflict is the first step in transforming it. This exercise gives you the opportunity to look at conflict in a creative way and to share insights about it with other people.

Resources

You will need some paper and pens or pencils for drawing. If appropriate, participants could use more creative materials to produce collages or other decorated drawings.

Exercise

There is always conflict in our lives. Sometimes we argue with people who challenge us or our values – for instance, if we believe that somebody is treating us unfairly. Sometimes we argue with people we love – we might have an argument with a parent, brother or sister.

Imagine or explore a situation in which there is an argument. How do people react? Have a discussion with your group:

- Some people don't like conflict at all. They might pretend that nothing is wrong.
- Some people love to argue. They talk and shout and won't admit that there might be a better way.
- Some people are very fair. They listen carefully and then make a judgement based on what they think is best for everybody.
- Other people might be very defensive. They don't like to be challenged and feel upset that somebody disagrees with them.

Think about how you react to conflict, and then think about an animal which represents that. Are you like an ostrich, which buries its head in the sand? Or an elephant, who trumpets loudly and tramples over everybody else? Maybe you are like a stubborn donkey, a quiet mouse, or a brave lion. Draw a picture of the animal that you have chosen.

When you have finished, perhaps you would like to show your drawing to the group and talk about it. How many different animals have people chosen? What does this tell us about conflict? What can we learn from each other about the different ways that we respond to conflict?

You might like to read *Quaker Faith & Practice* 20.71 in conjunction with this exercise.

Message

Achieving peace requires us to understand more about conflict. Quaker peaceworkers at St Ethelburga's Centre in London, with the AFSC in Bujumbura, and at QUNO in Geneva are all involved in work which seeks to find ways to transform conflict into something creative, not something destructive.

Find out more about Quaker peaceworkers – visit
www.quaker.org.uk/appeal

