

Using this material

As you prepare to use this material with your meeting consider the following ideas on ways to bring down barriers.

Planning

- Think carefully about the perspective of the different groups participating in this process. What impact might this have? How will you respond to this?
- Think about the physical location of these activities
 - Is it accessible? For example are the activities timed when public transport is safely available? If not how will you make it accessible.
- Be careful to select games and activities that all the different age groups will participate in. To enable you to do this consider drawing together a mixed age facilitation team to help you identify suitable activities from this resource for your specific group.
- This resource is written to engage a range of different individuals and learning styles – remember to include activities that will appeal to people who learn through hearing, seeing and doing.
- During the planning be aware of what your body language is saying: how you stand, sit, look and move can all be used to assert power as well as to facilitate other participants.
- How have you enabled team members to share their views without forcing it on the group? How equal is the dialogue – are all participating?

Facilitation

- How will you ensure that adults and young people contribute their views equally and that one group does not dominate the conversations?
- During the facilitation be aware of what your body language and that of the facilitation team is saying: how you stand, sit, look and move can all be used to assert power.
- Be aware of how the body language of participants affects the dynamics of the group.
 - For example are participants sitting together in their age groups? This might create a safe place at the start, but as the group moves on it is important that you encourage different social groups and age groups to mix.

This material is based on p 47 Building a Culture of Participation by Kirby P, Lanyon C, Cronin K & Sinclair R Published by NCB 2008



Gathering Points

Bingo match: Question sheet

- First complete your answer to the following questions
- Once completed the facilitator will invite the group to start mingling – try to find a new face and an answer that matches yours.
- Fill their name in the box and if they were new to you, you can tick the new face box.

Your answer	Name of person with matching answer	New face?
My favourite colour is ...		
As a child I wanted to be a ...		
I am a Quaker because...		
My favourite food is ...		
I have... siblings		
... is my favourite famous Quaker		
I am the youngest/ middle/ oldest/ only child		
Being a Quaker means...		
I use a... as an energy saving device		
I have owned a... (pet)		
The last movie I watched was...		
I have been to... (Quaker event)		
My first name starts with... (Letter)		
The testimony that I find hardest to live out is...		
The biggest issue facing our meeting is...		
My favourite sport is...		
The board game I most enjoy is...		
My favourite flower is...		
If I was an animal I would be...		



Starting Points

Respect

Equality

Sharing

Participate

Enjoy

Communicate

Timing

Respect

Equality

Sharing

Participate

Enjoy

Communicate

T Timing



Starting Points

Concentric Circles: Questions

- What is the best and worst thing about being your age?
- What makes you proud of being a Quaker?
- What are you most eager to learn about from people in other age-groups?
- What is the most important thing you have learnt from someone older than you?
- What is your favourite childhood memory?
- How do you feel about the neighbourhood in which you live?
- How does your Quakerism affect your family life?
- What has been your most significant experience?
- What energises you? What gives you life?
- Have you ever found yourself in a group when you found that what you were saying wasn't heard or understood? How was this?
- What can you offer the meeting? For example a skill, an insight, something about who or how you are?
- What opportunities and what challenges do you think this meeting faces?
- How does your Quakerism affect your friendships?
- What are you really interested in?
- What do you hope for from doing these shared activities together?
- What is one thing that you find difficult about Quakerism, and one thing that you like?
- Talk about a time in your life when you have done something significant in relation to the Quaker Testimonies, why was this significant for you?
- Outreach is important because...
- Do you think that being a Quaker affects your life and the choices you make? How?
- Which testimony do you find hardest to put into practice?
- If you could be given any gift, what would it be?
- If you could have a superpower, what would it be?
- What is the next planned event in your life? How are you feeling about this?
- Who do you admire and why?
- What is your favourite book and why?
- You can visit one time in history, which would it be and why?



Starting Points

The M&M game: question cards (two copies for your use)

Red

- Say something that you like about your neighborhood/ meeting.

Green

- Say something about what you like to do in your neighborhood/ meeting.

Brown

- Say something about your neighborhood/ meeting that you would like to change.

Orange

- Say something about your neighborhood/ meeting that you fear or hope for.

Yellow

- Say something about the world that you would like to change.

Blue

- Ask another member of the group a question about the neighbourhood/meeting.

Red

- Say something that you like about your neighborhood/ meeting.

Green

- Say something about what you like to do in your neighborhood/ meeting.

Brown

- Say something about your neighborhood/ meeting that you would like to change.

Orange

- Say something about your neighborhood/ meeting that you fear or hope for.

Yellow

- Say something about the world that you would like to change.

Blue

- Ask another member of the group a question about the neighbourhood/meeting.

 The logo consists of a stylized blue 'Q' with a smaller 'Q' inside it, followed by a blue question mark.

Reflection Points

Back to the future: Reflection questions

Older Participants (think back to when you were a teenager):

- What was your most memorable experience?
- Who was your best friend and why?
- What was your worst experience?
- What was the style of your clothes?
- What sort of music did you listen to?
- Which Quaker testimony do you find hardest to live out?
- What keeps you connected to Quakerism?
- What was the most significant issue your peer group faced?
- Who was the person you most admired/respected/envied?
- What was one issue or problem you faced?
- Think about the last two questions, how might this be different for someone of a different age group?

Younger Participants (think about your current experience):

- What has been your most memorable experience?
- Who is your best friend and why?
- What has been your worst experience?
- What is the style of your clothes?
- What sort of music do you listen to?
- Which Quaker testimony do you find hardest to live out?
- What keeps you connected to Quakerism?
- What is the most significant issue is your peer group facing?
- Who is the person you most admired/respected/envied?
- What is one issue or problem you face?
- Think about the last two questions, how might this be different for someone of a different age group?



Reflection Points

Community Quotes

Whispers of Faith *Clair Reddy*

Where all think alike, no one thinks very much. *Walter Lippmann*

As we grow as unique persons, we learn to respect the uniqueness of others. *Robert Schuller*

Insight, I believe, refers to the depth of understanding that comes by setting experiences, yours and mine, familiar and exotic, new and old, side by side, learning by letting them speak to one another. *Mary Catherine Bateson*

We Quakers say we have no creed. We almost do! For nearly all of us would say we believe in 'that of God in everyone. *Quaker Faith and Practice 29.08*

We are all one, in a subtle but most significant way, one in the sense of being interdependent. I would not be as I am without you; you would not be as you are without me. *Adam Curle, 1992 QFP 29.07*

To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others. *Nelson Mandela*

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. *Martin Luther King*

Freedom is not merely the opportunity to do as one pleases; neither is it merely the opportunity to choose between set alternatives. Freedom is, first of all, the chance to formulate the available choices, to argue over them - and then, the opportunity to choose. *C Wright Mills*

Many people fear nothing more terribly than to take a position, which stands out sharply and clearly from the prevailing opinion. The tendency of most is to adopt a view that is so ambiguous that it will include everything and so popular that it will include everybody. *Rev. Martin Luther, King, Jr*

"It is vain to talk of the interest of the community, without understanding what is the interest of the individual" *Jeremy Bentham*.

"There is no such thing as community" *Margaret Thatcher*

"Community cannot for long feed on itself; it can only flourish with the coming of others from beyond, their unknown and undiscovered brothers." *Howard Thurman*

"Commitment, by its nature, frees us from ourselves and, while it stands us in opposition to some, it joins us with others similarly committed. Commitment moves us from the mirror trap of the self absorbed with the self to the freedom of a community of shared values." *Michael Lewis*



© Sophie

Young Friends, when gathered together, often form the most incredible communities in short periods of time, an experience few know how to describe. Bound together by young energy and enthusiasm, young Friends find spiritual grounding among their peers in many contexts.

Communities of young Friends have the power to change lives for the better.

Clair Reddy Whispers of Faith

Where all think alike, no one thinks very much.

Walter Lippmann



As we grow as unique persons, we learn to respect the uniqueness of others.

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“There is no such thing as community”

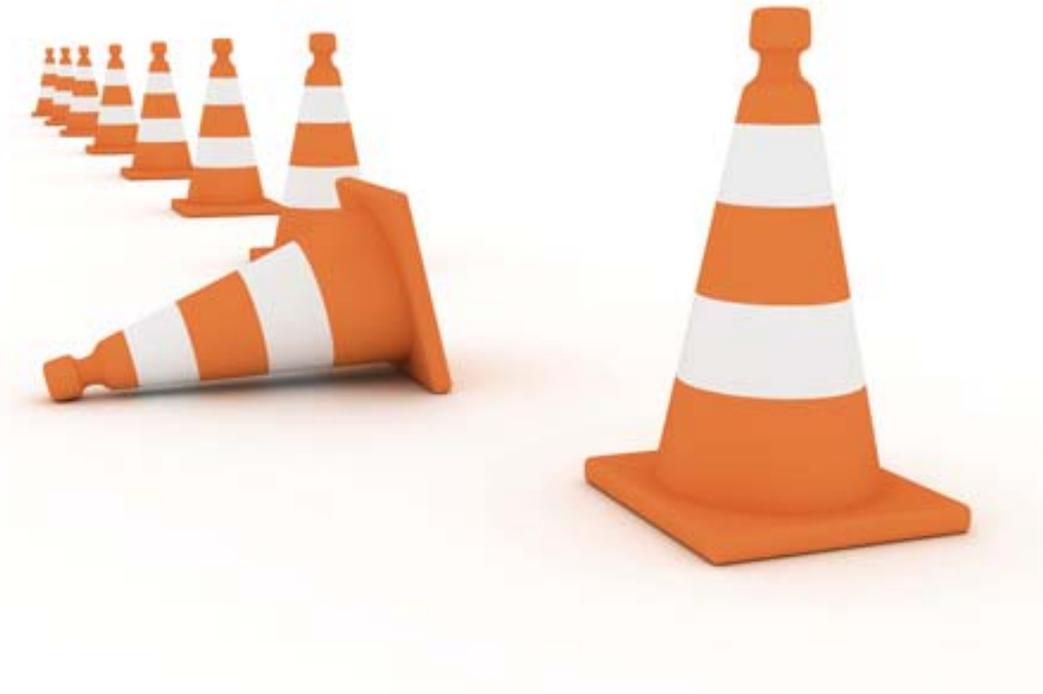
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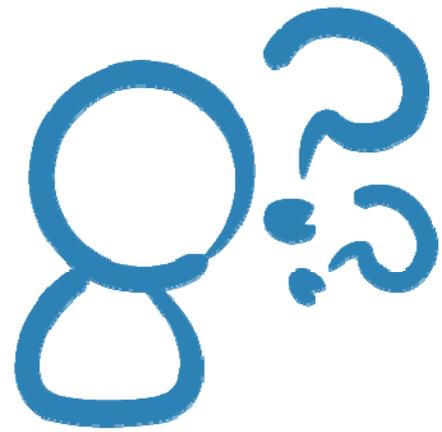
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Michael Lewis



Reflection Points

Believe



Belong



Behave





Listening points

Poem: Lost generation

I am part of a lost generation and I refuse to believe that I can change the world

I realise this may be a shock but

“Happiness comes from within”

is a lie, and

“Money will make me happy”

So in 30 years I will tell my children

they are not the most important thing in my life

My employer will know that

I have my priorities straight because

work

is more important than

family

I tell you this

Once upon a time

Families stayed together

but this will not be true in my era

this is a quick fix society

Experts tell me

30 years from now I will be celebrating the 10th Anniversary of my divorce

I do not concede that

I will live in a country of my own making

In the future environmental destruction will be the norm

No longer can it be said that

My peers and I care about this earth

It will be evident that

My generation is apathetic and lethargic

It is foolish to presume that

There is hope.

And all of this will come true unless we choose to reverse it.

There is hope.

It is foolish to presume that

My generation is apathetic and lethargic

It will be evident that

My peers and I care about this earth

No longer can it be said that

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Talking points

Chat rooms on general subjects

1. Community: Generations
2. Community: Religious Diversity
3. Community and Individuality
4. Environment and Sustainability
5. Sustainability
6. Doing Outreach...talking Quaker...
7. Quakers and the world
8. Quakers and Action
9. Quakers and the Future 1
10. Quakers and the Future 2
11. Quakers and Christianity 1
12. Quakers and Christianity 2
13. Quakers and Worship
14. Quakers and God
15. Quakers and other Faiths

With grateful thanks to members of the Junior Yearly Meeting event teams from 2007-2011 who have contributed to this resource.

Community: Generations

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." Nelson Mandela

"We are made for togetherness; we are made for family, for fellowship, to exist in a tender network of interdependence" Desmond Tutu

"There is nothing wrong with today's teenager that twenty years won't cure" Unknown

"People who don't cherish their elderly have forgotten whence they came and whither they go." Ramsey Clark

How do you interact with of a different generation, do you treat them differently because of their age?

Can you think of any situations where your age has prevented you from doing something that you wanted to do? Looking back do you think that this was fair?

Do you feel that other generations judge you on your age? Are they justified in doing this?

How might we respond as individuals and members of a Quaker and wider community to the issues that sometimes occur between different generations?



Community: Religious Diversity

“No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” Nelson Mandela

“Religion is a candle inside a multicoloured lantern. Everyone looks through a particular colour, but the candle is always there” Mohammed Neguib

“I never told my religion nor scrutinized that of another. I never attempted to make a convert nor wished to change another's creed. I have judged of others' religion by their lives, for it is from our lives and not from our words that our religion must be read. By the same test must the world judge me.” Thomas Jefferson

In a world full of diverse religious traditions is it inevitable that conflicts will arise? Do you think that peaceful co-existence can be achieved, is it even desired by the majority?

What are the benefits of living in a religiously diverse society? Do these outweigh the negatives?

How might we respond as individuals and members of a Quaker and wider community the problems that may arise out of religious diversity?



Community and Individuality

“In Africa, a person is identified by his or her interrelationships and not primarily by individualistic properties.”

“That personhood is identified by an individual’s interaction with others does not eliminate personal identity.”

“It is not easy to discover that there is no such thing as an individual

But it is worth the effort

To finally find yourself in others”

From the poem ‘Lose It’ by Martin Wroe

How do you rate your sense of the importance of community in relation to your perception of your individual ‘rights’ and ‘freedoms’?

Can a sense of individuality be maintained even where community structure and ties are very strong, for example in a small, isolated village, a football or work team or a faith community?

Are there particular problems associated with maintaining one’s individuality whilst being part of a worshipping community, with its emphasis upon shared ethical codes and, often, beliefs?

Is it possible to create a good balance between community values and freedom to be individual? What sorts of problem can you see in seeking to maintain your individual identity? How might your quest for individual recognition endanger the structure of the community?



Environment and Sustainability

“True identity will have to incorporate some elements that relate to higher levels of being (e.g. God, ancestors, transcendent reality) and lower levels of being (e.g. environmental and other living creatures.) This broadens the notion of individual identity from a single level of validation to a multi dimensional validation.”

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”
Martin Luther King

In what ways do you feel an individual decision to adopt an environmentally sustainable life-style might reinforce the philosophy of a network of mutuality? Are there situations which could undermine it, for example where does our recycling go to be processed?

Can respect for other individuals aid the growth of a respect for the whole of nature?

Do you think shared sustainable lifestyle choices are possible within a community? Will the pursuit of such shared choices strengthen the community?

Do you feel that a religious faith, as expressed above as a sense of the transcendent has any bearing on sustainable life-style choices at individual or community level? How?



Sustainability

'All species and the Earth itself have interdependent roles within Creation. Humankind is not the species, to whom all others are subservient, but one among many. All parts, all issues, are inextricably intertwined. Indeed the web of creation could be described as a three-ply thread: whenever we touch it we effect justice and peace and the health of all everyone. So all our testimonies, all our Quaker work, all our Quaker lives are part of one process, of striving towards a flourishing, just and peaceful Creation – the Kingdom of God.'

Audrey Urry, 1994, Quaker faith and practice, 25.04

Living sustainably is about living in a way that meets our needs today without damaging the planet or preventing other people elsewhere and in the future meeting their needs. There are many signs that we are not living sustainably however; such as climate change, species extinction and deforestation. These stem from and contribute to global inequality, poverty, injustice and conflict.

As Quakers we know that all life is sacred. So we are called to live in ways that enable the planet and all people to flourish. What could the world be like if we were all successfully living sustainably? Friends, with others, can act now to make a vision of a sustainable world real, and to be beacons of sustainable living in their communities.

What do you think of when you hear the word sustainability? Talk about what excites you and what worries you.

How does thinking about sustainability and the environment make you feel? Depressed? Angry (if so, at who)? Scared? Hopeful? Inspired to take action?

What can Quaker testimony offer in a world faced with climate change and other environmental crises?

What is your dream or vision for a sustainable world? In 2020 if we were all living sustainably what would the world look like/ what would we all be doing/ how would we be eating, travelling, working, holidaying differently to today?

Think of one change you can make in your own life to help this vision come true. Think of one change you could make in your meeting to help this vision come true.



As a meeting you might like to show your commitment to this by creating a pledge tree like the one illustrated (Image © Colin Edwards).

Doing Outreach...talking Quaker...

Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one. George Fox, 1656, Advices and Queries, 42.

If we don't tell others about our Quakerism, how will they ever know? If we don't share it, how will Quakerism survive?

If it is true that to really understand Quakerism, you just need to spend time with Quakers, what will they find out from meeting us? How do you know this?

If you had to describe yourself in 5 words, what would they be?

If you had to describe Quakerism in 5 words, what would they be?

*What helps you keep on being a Quaker?
What sometimes makes you think about leaving?*

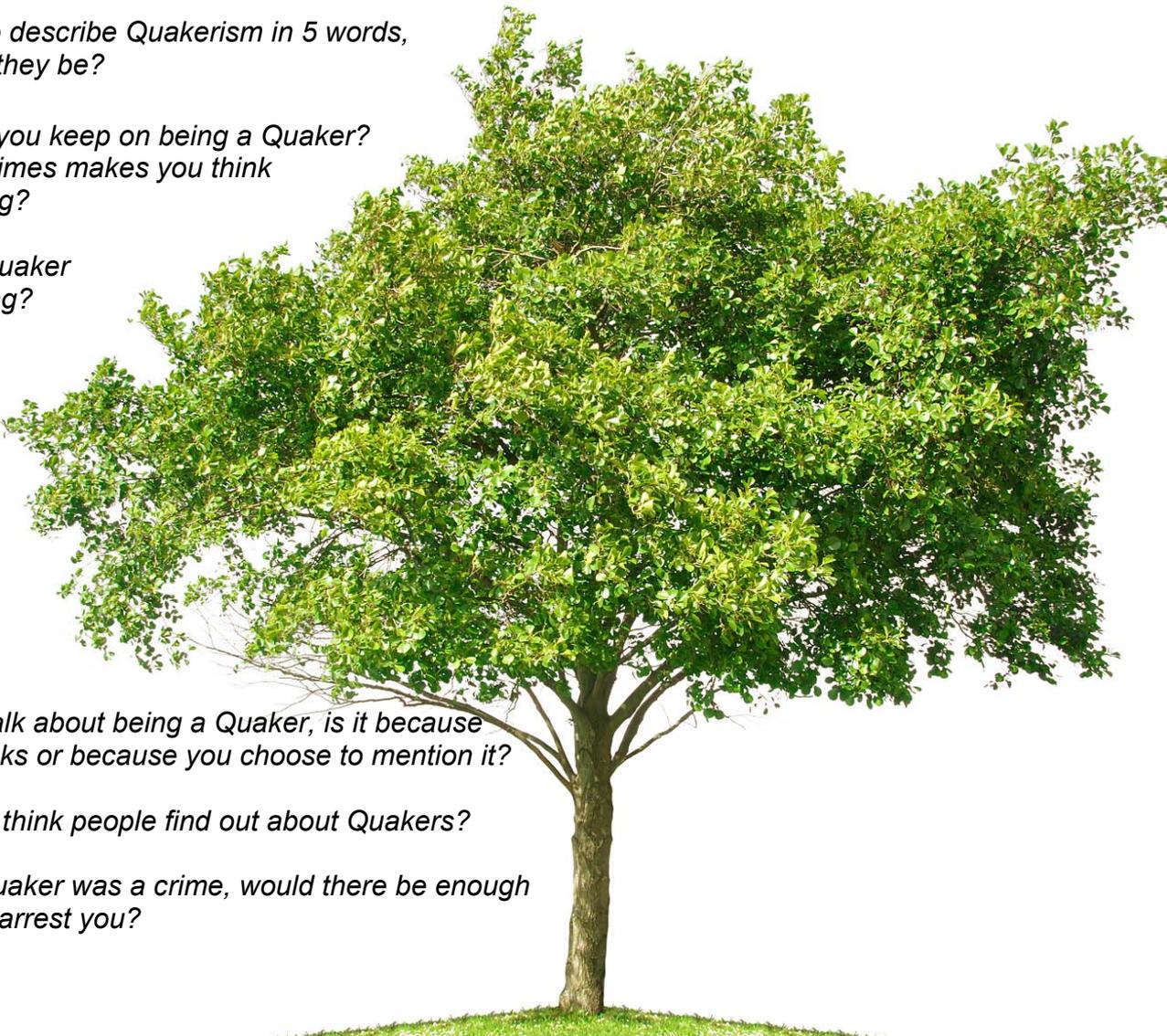
Is being a Quaker embarrassing?

How do you find talking about being a Quaker?

When you talk about being a Quaker, is it because someone asks or because you choose to mention it?

How do you think people find out about Quakers?

If being a Quaker was a crime, would there be enough evidence to arrest you?



Quakers and the world

Early Friends separated themselves from the world with a 'hedge' by dressing differently, saying 'thou' instead of you, not using titles like 'Lord', 'Sir' or 'Mr' and not taking off their hats to those in authority.

They thought of themselves as being different to other people and as being "in the world but not of it"

They were often criticised and attacked for this and even imprisoned – their distinctive ways made them easy targets for abuse.

Quakers nowadays don't face the same issues... or do they?

"People at school think religion and God are stupid"

"We become easy bullying targets for people who don't understand us"

Not many people will be challenged to a fight at the office, but many Quaker teenagers have to defend daily a peace testimony which they may not yet have worked through for themselves. Hugh Pyper, 1986 Quaker faith & practice 22.68

Can you be a Quaker in today's world?

'We leave having identified our values and beliefs... eager to apply them to our daily lives' (JYM Epistle 2003).

I don't regularly recite passages from Quaker faith and practice... I don't dutifully commit myself to all tasks with the same presence of mind and assurance that I do when sitting down in meeting for worship... But after much more careful consideration... I began to deeper examine my daily routines and tasks, and search for those little essences of 'Quakerism' which I've woven into the fabric of my life. I discovered that everywhere I searched; there were little gems of faith flashing back at me. Chris Beck 2007

Things to think about.....

How can we be Quakers in today's world?

Should we as Quakers separate ourselves off from the rest of society?

What aspects of Quakerism can we take into the world?

What are the 'little gems of faith' that reflect back to you?

What helps you to do this? What makes it difficult?



Quakers and Action



The actions of a person is the best judge of their beliefs

Do you agree? Why? When have you judged someone on their action?

The world is a dangerous place, not because of those that do evil but because of those who look on and do nothing.

Have you ever looked on, rather than doing? When and why?

If you want anything said, ask a man. If you want something done as a woman.

Does this sound like the women you know?

When it comes to getting things done we need fewer architects and more bricklayers.

Why? When is this true? When might it not be true?

Quakers and the future 1

Where do you see the Society of Friends in 5 / 25 /100 years?

Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the Community? Let your life speak. When decisions have to be made, are you ready to join with others in seeking clearness, asking for God's guidance and offering counsel to one another? *Advices and Queries: 25*

... in 1985, London Yearly Meeting responded to proposals for revision that had arisen... The previous thirty years had seen changes in language, in religious thoughts and social attitudes and in the nature of British society itself. Lives of ordinary people had been affected by advances in communication. Images of famine, war and disaster, wherever they occur in the world, are now brought into our own homes. The immediacy of our knowledge oppresses us with the feeling that the distress and violence of our times are greater than ever before. In Britain, however it has been the good fortune of this generation to be free from war and conscription and, though, poverty, homelessness and unemployment are widespread, many live with expectation of comfort, care, and length of life.

There is no yardstick by which the experiences of one generation can be judged against that of another, but we do know that whatever that circumstance, we are called to rediscover the Quaker way and to find appropriate words to express it. *Quaker faith and practice, introduction.*

How do we direct others to the Religious Society of Friends?

How do we respond to and celebrate, the diversity convincement brings?

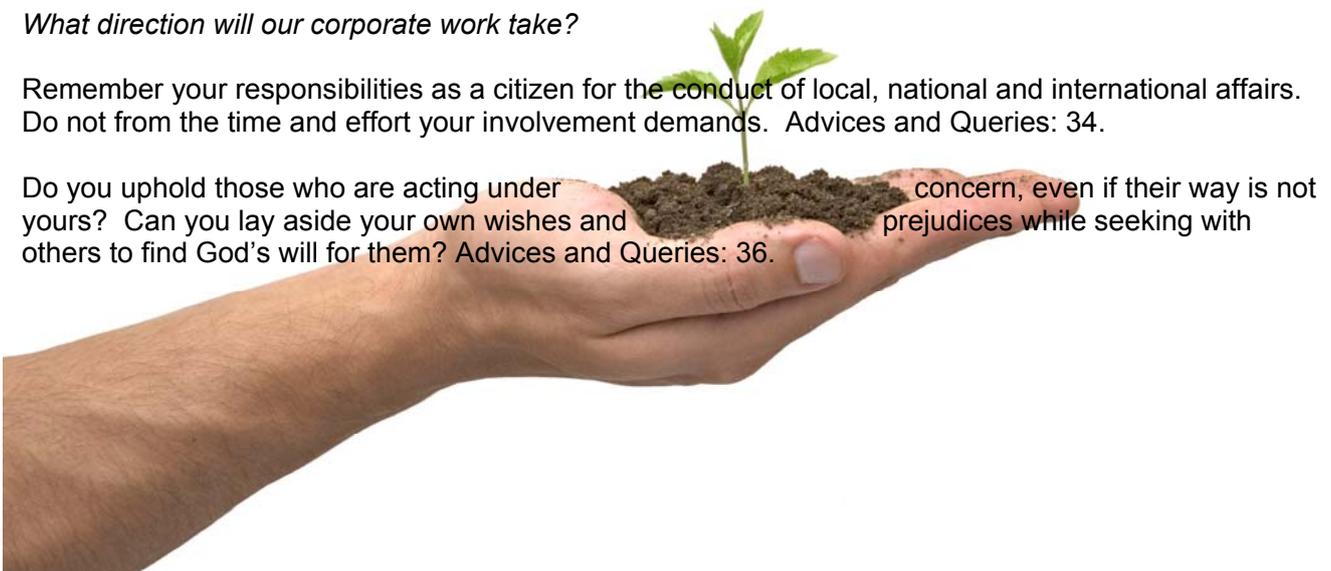
How can we make the meeting a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured, and strangers are welcome? Seek to know one another in the things which are eternal, bear the burden of each other's failings, and pray for one another. As we enter with tender sympathy into the joys and sorrows of each other's lives, ready to give help and to receive it, our meeting can be a channel for God's love and forgiveness. *Advices and queries: 18*

Outreach is for me an invitation to others to join us in our way of worship and response to life which are so important to us that we wish to share them... It is different from some forms of evangelism in that it does not use mass emotional appeal, idiosyncratic demands or autocratic compulsion but only the persuasion of insight, humanity and good sense. It does not depend on rewards or threats, but on the active acceptance of those who see it as truth. *Edrey Allot, 1990 Quaker faith and practice 28:09*

What direction will our corporate work take?

Remember your responsibilities as a citizen for the conduct of local, national and international affairs. Do not from the time and effort your involvement demands. *Advices and Queries: 34.*

Do you uphold those who are acting under your concern, even if their way is not yours? Can you lay aside your own wishes and prejudices while seeking with others to find God's will for them? *Advices and Queries: 36.*



Quakers and the future 2

Some Quakers feel that in order to live most fully and appreciatively, we must live in the present moment.

Do you agree? How much thought should we put into the future?

How much control do we have over our future?

Quakerism has changed a lot since it began in the 17 Century. Although it branched off from Christianity, many Quakers would now not class themselves as Christians. In fact, Quakers involved in other faiths, like Buddhism and Islam, are becoming increasingly common.

Is religion becoming less about community and more about our individual spiritual paths?

Should religion be experimental? Is it ok to combine religions?

How can we help those who are sympathetic to Quaker ideas not to be put off?

Is Quakerism shrinking as a religion, if so, does it matter?

Are Quaker morals spreading outside of the society?

If this is true, would it matter if the Society didn't exist?

If people stopped joining Quakerism, would it matter?



Quakers and Christianity 1

The Religious Society of Friends is rooted in Christianity and has always found inspiration in the life and teachings of Jesus. How do you interpret your faith in the light of this heritage? How does Jesus speak to you today? Are you following Jesus' example of love in action? Are you learning from his life the reality and cost of obedience to God? How does his relationship with God challenge and inspire you? *Advices & Queries 4*

It would appear that our Quakerism is changing, in that the links between Christianity and Quakerism are existent but not compulsory. *JYM Epistle 2008*

Bring the whole of your life under the ordering of the spirit of Christ. Are you open to the healing power of God's love? Cherish that of God within you, so that this love may grow in you and guide you. Let your worship and your daily life enrich each other. Treasure your experience of God, however it comes to you. Remember that Christianity is not a notion but a way. *Advices & Queries 2.*

From the beginning the Quaker Christian faith has had a universal dimension. George Fox saw the Light 'shine through all' and he identified it with the divine Light of Christ that 'enlightens every man that comes into the world' (John 1:9). *Quaker faith & practice 27.04*

How do you interpret your personal understanding of Quakerism in the light of its Christian roots?

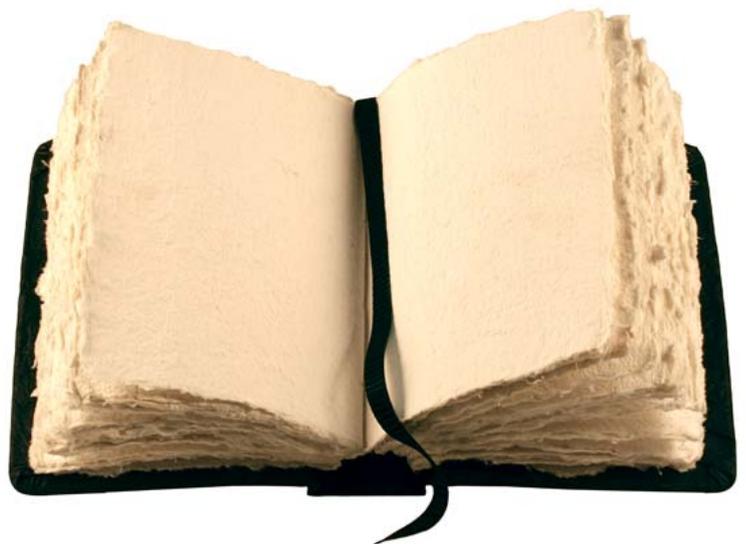
What might it mean to be a Quaker and a Christian now?

Do we see our Quaker lives as being different to what we think of as 'Christian', Why is this and what is the distinction? What are the strengths and weaknesses of both?

How would you react if you told someone you were a Quaker and they said... 'ah so you're a Christian then?'

How does Jesus speak to you today? How does Jesus' relationship with God challenge and inspire you?

Do you think it is bad that Quakerism is losing its Christian roots or are you glad to have left 'all that Christian stuff' behind?



Quakers & Christianity 2

Introduction: Historically, Quakerism is rooted in Christianity, and many Quakers in Britain today would identify as Christian. But many would not; and Friends openness, silent worship and lack of creeds mean that many 'seekers' who identify as atheist or agnostic, and some members of other religions, attend Quaker meetings. This can lead to debate and questions about what unites us as Friends now, and how to regard Christianity.

Remember that Christianity is not a notion but a way

To me it is important that the Religious Society of Friends is not labelled a Christian group. I find one of the most exciting things about the Society is that it changes, it reinterprets itself, it reflects the direct experience of its members. Christians have creeds, and to me that implies a caging of the spirit, a boxing in, an attempt to define something that is too big to be defined in words...
If we advertise ourselves as Christian, then I think a lot of potential enquirers who would have found their home in the Society would be put off.

Why am I a Quaker? I find it strange that people come to Quakerism who say they are atheists, who feel uncomfortable with Christian language. How can you be Quaker without recognising those promptings to love and truth? ... A lot of Young Friends say they don't believe in God. This is where language and labels hinder us. Our impulses are the same, and I believe they derive from the same force. I reject, however, any 'Quakerism' that does not focus to some extent on spirituality. A non-spiritual Quaker is an anomaly.

Some Quakers find traditional language full of meaning some do not

The central perceptions of Christianity remain as a source of perennial wisdom without which we sink into non-life. Incarnation, the cross, repentance, forgiveness, resurrection – these unfashionable words express the deep realities of the human condition.

I would call myself a Quaker, but not a Christian because of the Jesus thing

To me, being a Christian is a particular way of life, not the unquestioning acceptance of a particular system of theology, no belief in the literal truth of the Virgin birth, or the Resurrection and Ascension, but being the kind of person that Jesus wanted his followers to be and doing the things he told them to do...

... well there came a point when I realised that I wasn't a Christian. I recognised the value of the Bible and the messages it contains, but I didn't believe in its literal truth. The clincher was that I did not consider Jesus to be my personal saviour... Rather, I saw (and still see) him as teacher and healer.

I used to think that anyone who did not believe in God was out of place in the Religious Society of Friends. It is a *religious* society, after all. We can come with Christocentrics and universalists, but atheists? Then I started talking to a particularly insightful person I know from Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM). He turns out to be rather on the side of agnostic. Yet he finds YFGM a great place to come to develop his spirituality and to find people to work together for peace, equality, truth and simplicity. How could I not want my friend to be part of the Society?

How do you interpret your faith in the light of this [Christian] heritage? How does Jesus speak to you today?

How do you interpret your faith in the light of this [Christian] heritage?

What values / beliefs do you associate with Christianity, where is there overlap with Quaker values?

Why do you or Why don't you identify as a Christian...

How do you think people's views on Christianity affect their belonging to the Society of Friends?

What or where are the boundaries to Quakerism?

Do you see Quakerism as a part of Christianity?

Quakers and Worship

	adore	apotheosis	awe	bow down	celebrate	
prayer						honour
prostration						glorify
religion						faith
respect						exalt
ritual						devotion
spiritual						conformity
revere						service
idolize						
laud						
love						
magnify						
praise						

The first thing that I do is close my eyes then still my body... Then I still my mind and let it open to God in silent prayer

How can a person best prepare for worship?

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Matthew 18:20

Can a person worship alone or is worship a community activity only?

Worship is our response to an awareness of God. We can worship alone, but when we join with others in expectant waiting we may discover a deeper sense of God's presence. We seek a gathered stillness in our meetings for worship so that all may feel the power of God's love drawing us together and leading us. Advices and Queries 8

Friends have never regarded [worship] as an individual activity. John Punshon, 1987 Quaker faith and practice, 2.73

Is the use of the word 'worship' appropriate in a Quaker context if Quakers believe in equality and a direct relationship with God?

Worship. The act of paying divine honors to the Supreme Being, religious reverence and homage; adoration, or acts of reverence, paid to God, or a being viewed as God. [1913 Webster]

When I admire the wonders of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in the worship of the creator. Gandhi.

What is the purpose of worship?

If all of life is worship, then what is not worship?

Early Friends felt that the churches' worship was not true worship. George Fox wrote, "For teachings, churches, and worships that have been set up by man's earthly understanding, knowledge, and will must be thrown down with the power of the Lord God"

service conformity devotion date on exalt faith glorify honour

Quakers and God

So here's what I want you to do. God helping you; take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.

Romans 12:1 The Message

Do you respect that of God in everyone, though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or be difficult to discern? Each of us has a particular experience of God and each must find the way to be true to it. When words are strange or disturbing to you, try to sense where they come from and what has nourished the lives of others. Listen patiently and seek the truth which other people's opinions may contain for you. Avoid hurtful criticism and provocative language. Do not allow the strength of your convictions to betray you into making statements or allegations that are unfair or untrue. Think it possible that you may be mistaken.

Advices and Queries 17

Reflection on a pilgrimage along the East Coast... some Queries [Evan] created for his trip:

- How do I remain secure and non-threatened in my own faith to be open to others?
- What are the blindness's or biases from my Quaker roots?
- What is selflessness and is it ideal?
- How do I know what is my will and what is the will of God?¹

How might you answer these Queries?

How do you explain to others what you believe?

Would you use the word God? Why?

What words do you use to describe "God" – why?

Do you have to believe in God to be a Quaker?

What kind of God do Quakers believe in?

What is God doing for you?

Is God important for Quakerism?

² Edited by Angelina Conti et al. (2010). *Spirit Rising: Young Quaker Voices*. Philadelphia: Quakers Uniting In Publications, 2010, p.95

Quakers and other Faiths

There have been suggestions that Quakerism should include non-Christians from at least as far back as 1870, but this idea has become more visible during the latter half of the 20th century. This idea is still controversial among some Friends. Other Friends feel we should be accepting of those who actively identify themselves as a member of Quakers and another faith, such as Islam or Buddhism.

The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious, and devout souls are everywhere of one religion; and when death has taken off the mask they will know one another, though the divers liveries they wear here makes them strangers.
William Penn, 1693

Quakers have no set creed or dogma - that means we do not have any declared statements which you have to believe to be a Quaker.

...although we come from different faiths and backgrounds, human core beliefs are often very similar... JYM 2007 Epistle

In all Faiths the centrality of God's love is present.

The Quaker way has its roots in Christianity and finds inspiration in the Bible and the life and teachings of



Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God 1 John 4:1

If everyone listened to the promptings of their own minds and interpreted them in their own their way, there might be total



We are Christians or we are nothing.

We may have more in common with other main world religions than with traditional Christianity.

We are rooted in but not limited to Christianity as a source of religious inspiration.

Some traditional Friends find the whole idea of Buddhist Quakers inconceivable.



Differences of Faith are linked to conflict situations.



We need to focus on what we have in common.

Questions to consider:

- If Quakers are accepting of all faiths, why do we only have Quaker faith & practice and the Bible out during meeting?
- Are all Quakers Christian?
- Would it not be easier just to have one super-religion?
- How can anyone be of more than one Faith?
- What do Quakers actually believe?
- Why do people bother with a religion, doesn't it just waste time and bring false hope?
- Are we, as Quakers, judgmental of other faith groups?
- How do you know that Quakerism is the correct Faith for you? Can you be truly sure?



Talking points

Chat Rooms on the testimonies

1. Peace
2. Equality: the rich/poor gap
3. Equality: fair or unfair trade
4. Simplicity
5. Truth

With grateful thanks to members of the Junior Yearly Meeting event teams from 2007-2011 who have contributed to this resource.

Peace

“When you find peace within yourself, you become the kind of person who can live at peace with others.”

“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.” Martin Luther King jr

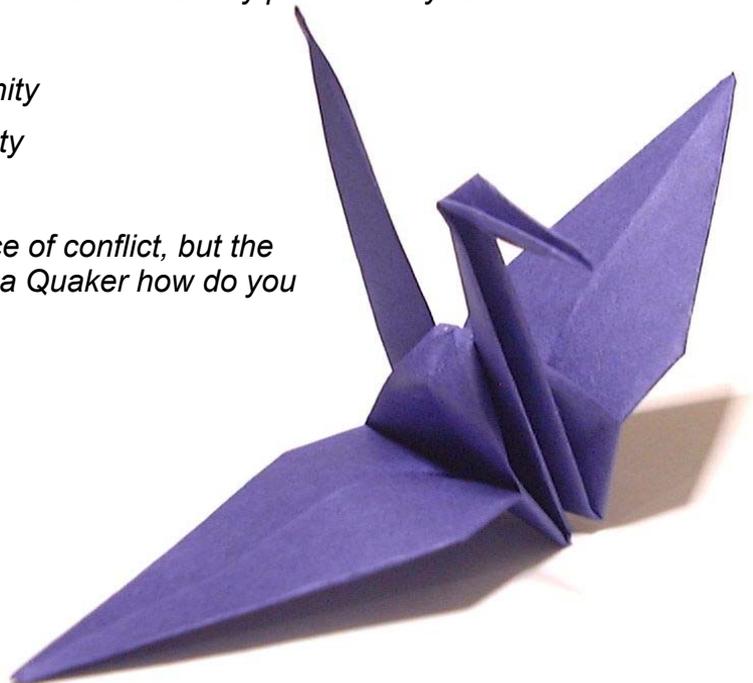
“Peace is not something you wish for; It's something you make, Something you do, Something you are, And something you give away.” Robert Fulghum

“Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to cope with it”

“When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.” Jimmi Hendrix

“Peace is not only better than war, but infinitely more arduous.” George Bernard Shaw

- *Think of a time when you put the Peace testimony into action*
What did you do? Why was it important to you?
Was it easy or was it difficult?
Why did you do it? (Were you told to? Did you feel it was the right thing to do? Did you want to do it?)
- *Did other people ask you about what you did? How did you explain it? How did you find doing this?*
- *What challenges does the Peace testimony present for you*
at home,
in your local community
as a global community
in today's society?
- *“Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to cope with it” as a Quaker how do you understand this quote.*



Equality: The Rich/Poor Gap

“When you have Ubuntu, you embrace others. You are generous, Compassionate. If the world had more Ubuntu, we would not have war. We would not have this huge gap between the rich and the poor. You are rich so that you can make up what is lacking for others. You are powerful so that you can help the weak, just as a mother or father helps their children.”
Desmond Tutu

“As long as there is poverty in this world, no man can be totally rich, even if he has a billion dollars” Martin Luther King

“Compassion is not just feeling with someone, but seeking to change the situation. Frequently people think compassion and love are merely sentimental. No! They are very demanding. If you are going to be compassionate, be prepared for action!” Desmond Tutu

How big a problem is the gap between rich and poor in our country today? What could we do as individuals and Quakers to make a difference in our local communities?

What role do you have as a westerner in contributing to global poverty?

Is there anything that can be done by individuals to make a difference to the issue of poverty on a global scale?





Equality: Fair-trade or unfair trade?

*“who receives the majority of the profit for the produce?
Is it the Northern Hemisphere or the country of origin?”*

“Fair-trade is still the middle man, there are still laws that limit the extent to which I can manage what happens to my product. Whilst giving a better price for the product, the overall benefit to my country is still minimal – slightly raising the standard of living, it does not give us the freedom to market and produce on a level playing field. It does not allow us to step out of poverty. As long as the west sees fair trade as Fair, nothing will change – poverty will continue” Kenyan Fair-trade Coffee Farmer

Fair trade can actually be a way of continuing poverty. There has to be another way. ^{Neil Kelsall}

“Fair-trade and equitrade represent two very different - and, on the surface, competing - economic models of helping the poor. Equitrade... “tries to improve the quality of life of the majority of people in a poor country by increasing the money in the economy. Fairtrade, on the other hand, concentrates on helping a small group of marginalised people - the growers. One intervenes in the market with a premium price; the other is essentially benign free trade.” (ibid)

Background Information

With fair-trade products:

- Probably only about 5p of the £1.70p... bar of [fair-trade] chocolate goes to Africa or a poor country...
- the other £1.65p, all goes to benefit [Britain]...

"Everyone, including the Treasury, seems to do very nicely out of that [fairtrade] bar of chocolate, except the country that provides the raw material".¹

Equi-trade:

- 40% of the income generated by every bar of [equi-trade] chocolate stays in Madagascar
- the country further benefits because 11% tax is paid to the government. [totalling 51%] (ibid)

A spokesperson for the Fair-trade Foundation says that “the real problem is that almost all of the world’s chocolate is in the hands of just three companies - Nestlé, Mars and Cadbury.” – What do you think?

A spokesperson for Equitrade says “we want to help the people trade their way out of poverty rather than accept charity” Do you think Fair-trade is Charity?

*Do you think Fair-trade continues poverty? Do you think Equitrade will eradicate poverty?
How can we build on the work of Fair-trade?*

¹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2005/may/25/environment.environment>

Simplicity

Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength.
Advice and Queries 41

Quakers should live simply and not follow fashions in dress

Unless we simplify our lives we cannot get close to the 'truth'

We should keep our possessions to a minimum
– everything we own should have a use

All Quakers should be vegan or vegetarian

Unnecessary possessions just clog up our lives

We should be aware of our personal clutter

We should be actively working against consumerism

Do you agree or disagree?

If you don't strive for simplicity you will become greedy, the implication of greed is war

The Quaker testimony to simplicity is irrelevant in today's complex technological society

Dare to be different:

1. Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status.
2. Reject anything that is producing an addiction in you.
3. Develop a habit of giving things away – de-accumulate!
4. Refuse to be propagandised by custodians of modern gadgetry.
5. Learn to enjoy things without owning them.
6. Develop a deeper appreciation of creation.
7. Look with healthy scepticism at all 'buy now pay later' schemes.
8. Always speak the plain honest truth.
9. Reject anything that will breed the oppression of others.
10. Shun whatever would distract you from your main goal.

How do you rate yourself?

Truth

Everything we hear is an opinion,
not a fact. Everything we see is a
perspective, not the truth.
Aurelius
Marcus

There is no truth. There is only perception. Gustave Flaubert

It is difficult
to be right
even when
those in
power are
wrong.

God, is even though the whole world deny him.
Truth stands, even if there be no public support. It is
self sustained. Mohandas Gahndi

Not being known
doesn't stop the
truth from being
true. Richard Bach

I don't believe that there's one truth. There are so
many different people, and there are so many
different ways you can look at things. I don't see
how there could just be one truth. Martin Latter

you will experience for
yourselves the truth, and the
truth will free you. John 8:32

The truth knocks
on the door and
you say, go
away, I'm
looking for the
truth, and it goes
away. Puzzling.
Robert M Pirsig.

For what we apprehend of truth is limited and partial,
and experience may set it all in a new light; if we too
easily satisfy our urge for security by claiming that we
have found certainty, we shall no longer be sensitive
to new experiences of truth. For who seeks that
which he believes that he has found? Who explores
a territory which he claims already to know. Charles F
Carter, 1971 Advices and Queries, 26.39

What is truth?

*The truth that makes man free is for the most part the truth which men prefer
not to hear* Herbert Agar *What do you think?*

As a Quaker, how do you understand truth?

How does truth prosper?

*Consider the possibility that you might be wrong, is this something that comes naturally
to you?*

When is it hard to speak the truth?

If truth is relative, what challenges does this present today's diverse society?

We all have a question deep inside us that we don't want to answer.



Talking points

Friends General Conference: Queries for meetings (<http://www.fgcquaker.org/youth/queries-for-meetings>):

- Are Friends careful to recognize and name the gifts of young Friends?
- Do Friends worshipfully consider how Young Friends and Young Adult Friends' gifts may be best used by their Monthly Meetings or Yearly Meeting?
- Do Friends consider the difficulties that a young Friend may have in securing transportation to Meeting, Business Meeting, Committees or Quaker Gatherings?
- Do Friends consider how money may limit a high school-aged Friend or a Young Adult Friends' participation?
- We have found that a Monthly Meeting's readiness to accept Young Friends often determines how many Young Friends the meeting has. If a Monthly Meeting is supportive of the needs and concerns of Young Friends, they will be encouraged to attend. Therefore, does your Monthly Meeting consider how they might best support the gifts of young Friends, even if your Monthly Meetings does not have any young Friends at present?
- Are Friends careful to consider how young Friends may have similar spiritual needs as older Friends?

Queries for community

- How do we show respect for all members of our community, no matter their age?
- How do we care for our environment as a community, including the place we worship in?
- How do we demonstrate gratefulness to members of this community who give their time in service to the life of the community?
- Our Worship and Business is central to the life of our community, how do we nurture and create a safe space in this for each and every individual that is part of the life of this place.
- Have I considered what my action or inaction communicates to this community? Have I considered the impact?
- Have I thought about the impact of my behaviour on those worshipping around me?
- When I am frustrated by the behaviour or attitude of another, do I pause and consider the need or cause that motivates this?
- Do I dictate my needs or do I respond with grace and kindness?
- Have I taken the time to know and value those I worship alongside? How do I share their joys and frustrations as a member of this community?
- Am I so consumed by doing and my own need to belong that I miss the person on the edges?
- Am I willing to be like a child to find the wholeness of shalom?



Action points

Sustainability

[QPSW](#) and [Living Witness](#) have been working on a toolkit packed full of resources to help you and your meeting act, get inspired and reflect on greening your meeting.

Greening our meetings is about what we do as worshipping communities to support each other to live more sustainably and how we work with others and speak out on sustainability. Meetings can do many things including reducing the carbon footprint of their building, taking political action, working in their community, supporting individual Friends to green their own lives and reflecting in worship.

The toolkit contains practical advice, group exercises, reflection pieces and case studies of Quakers and meetings who are already taking action.

The toolkit will be available in the early autumn and information about how to get a copy advertised widely. If you'd like to be notified when it's available then email sunnivat@quaker.org.uk.

Why not get you and your meeting started by working out your climate impact using the new Climate Impact calculators produced by QPSW and Living Witness?

Read about what action Friends have already been taking on sustainability [here](#).

In the meantime here are some ideas to get you going...



Create a community vegetable patch

Create a meeting pledge tree

Could you go a day without oil – could your meeting succeed at an oil fast?

Hold a make do and mend session, where members can share their creative skills to create and mend

Organise a trip to the annual [Campaign Against Climate Change march](#)



Worship points

We are all the poorer for the crushing of one man, since the diminishing of the Light anywhere darkens us all.

Michael Sorenson 1986, Quaker Faith and Practice 23.09



It's better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

Chinese Proverb

What cannot be achieved in one lifetime will happen when one lifetime is joined to another.

Harold Kushner



The life I touch for good or ill will touch another life, and that in turn another, until who knows where the trembling stops or in what far place my touch will be felt.

Frederick Buechener

'Ubuntu is nothing more or less than compassion put into colourful practice'.



We don't accomplish anything in this world alone ... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something.

Sandra Day O'Connor



No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

John Donne

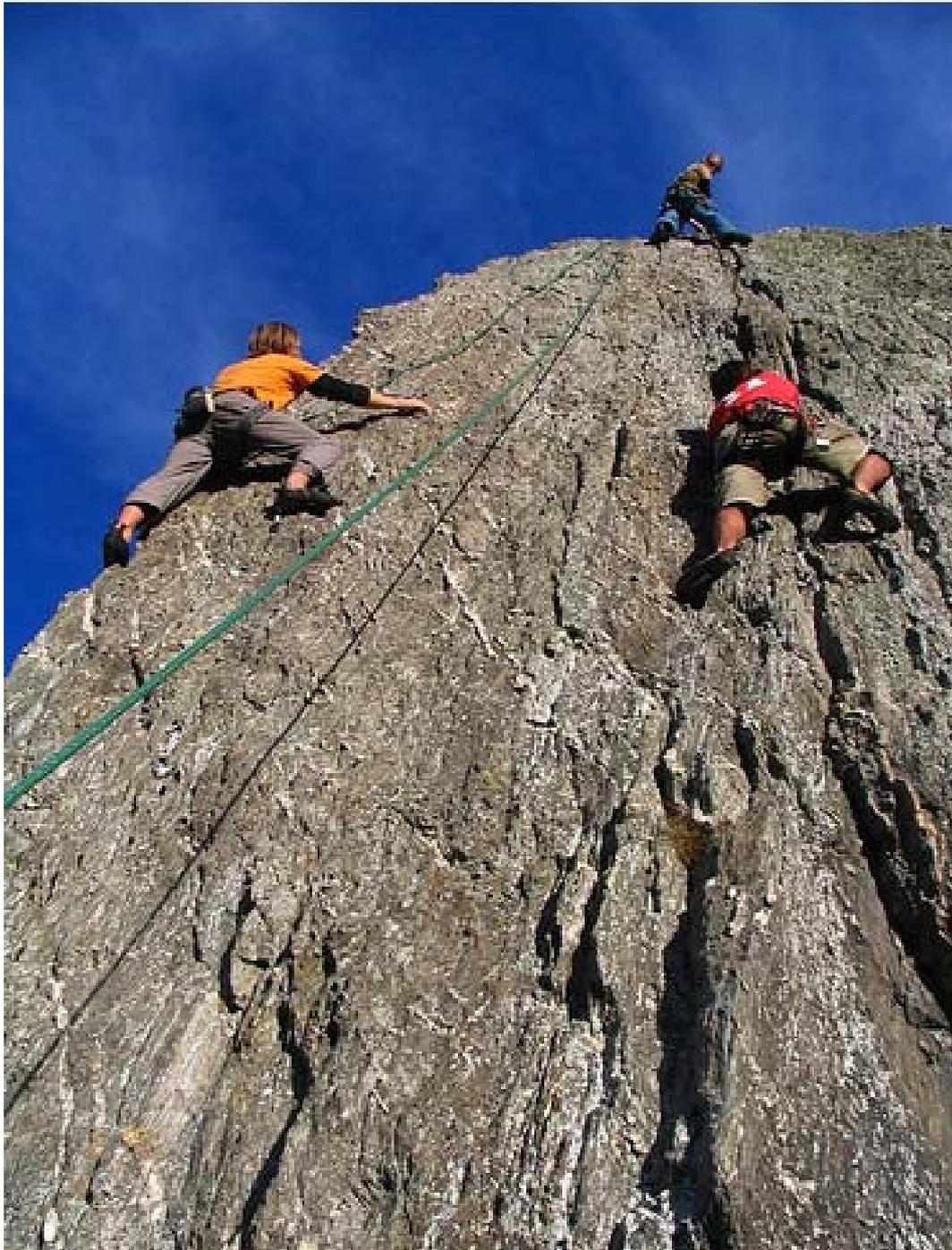


One generation plants the tree and the next sits in the shade.

Chinese Proverb

Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

1 Timothy 4:12



© Ruth Burgess

We need to teach the next generation of children from day one that they are responsible for their lives. Mankind's greatest gift, also its greatest curse, is that we have free choice. We can make our choices built from love or from fear.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross



The future is something which everyone reaches at the rate of sixty minutes an hour, whatever he does, whoever he is.

CS Lewis

Nothing endures but change.

Unknown

Methods: to get people into groups or pairs

Batman	Robin	Rudolph	Santa
Fish	Chips	Yolk	White
Snow White	Apple	Cinderella	Ugly Sisters
Posh	Becks	Cadburys	Chocolate
Clarks	Shoes	Rain	Clouds
Snow	Flake	Coffee	Biscuits
Tea	Scones	Facebook	Friends
Laurel	Hardy	Aladin	Lamp
Frogs	Spawn	Nest	Egg
Apple	Pie	Salad	Cream