

Session 1

Quaker Values and Beliefs

The starting point for this session is looking at what it means for each participant to be a Quaker. This session concentrates on identifying their values and strong beliefs:

- Which Quaker values or beliefs do they find helpful?
- Which Quaker values or beliefs do they find difficult?

You'll look at how these values and beliefs affect their lives e.g. at home, at school, at meeting and in the wider community.

Resources required for the session

- Resource sheets: Quote Cards, Values and Beliefs Cards and Octagons (available at the back of this pack)
- White Tac
- Labelled folders or big envelopes to store individuals' work
- Seeds, seedling pots, soil and lolly stick
- Art materials, including scissors, glue & paper
- Flip chart paper and pens

Preparation for the session

- Stick the Resource Sheet Quote Cards up around the room – these are found at the back of the pack
- Copy and cut out octagons – these are found at the back of the pack
- Put soil into the seedling pots
- Write up the bullet points on Quaker in the World (see page 14) on a flip chart
- Invite participants to bring along their favourite spiritual music
- If using Desiderata by Max Ehrmann, find a copy on the internet using a search engine like www.google.co.uk

Session Overview

60 minutes

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|---------------------------|------------|
| Introduction | 5 minutes |
| Working agreement | 5 minutes |
| Expressions | 10 minutes |
| Values and Beliefs | 5 minutes |
| Quaker Values and Beliefs | 25 minutes |
| Quaker in the World | 5 minutes |
| Worship | 5 minutes |

Group introductions

Ask participants to organise themselves according to how long they have been a Quaker. Do this in a circle – with the longest serving Quaker at 1 o'clock and the most recent at 12 o'clock (if you are working with a new group ask the participants to introduce themselves). Ask each participant to share why they are a Quaker.

Silence

Continue with a moment of silence

Introduction to the course

These sessions are about being a Quaker – your Quaker identity, beliefs, values and your relationship with other people. In this session we are going to think about what it means for each of us to be a Quaker. What Quaker values and beliefs do you find helpful, which do you find difficult? We'll also think about how being a Quaker affects how you live your life.

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 time keeping.

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 annoying?

Working agreement introduction

We'll be working together as a group for a number of sessions – we are going to start out by sharing:

- **What motivates each of us to be here**
- **What each of us hopes to gain – for example you might want to learn more about what being a Quaker means to you**
- **What each of us needs from others in the group to help them to be involved effectively during our sessions together**

Working agreement activity

Distribute paper and art materials to the participants – they should each draw round their hand. Your role as facilitator is to work through the digits, using the following:

- **On the first digit write what motivates you to be here.**
- **On the second digit write what you hope to gain from these sessions.**
- **On the remaining digits you should write what you need from others to be involved in the group and activities.**
- **Once you've completed this cut out the hand and stick it on the large sheet of paper to form a circle of hands.**

Once participants have finished invite them to share with the group any comments which they found significant.

Encourage participants to think about how their suggestions are going to happen in practice by asking questions – for example “What does it mean to be inclusive?” “Can you give an example of how that might happen?”

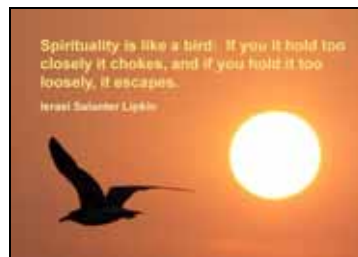
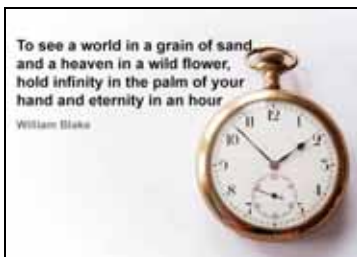
Remind the group that it is OK to take away ideas but not to repeat people's thoughts and stories outside of the group.



This activity will form the basis of the group's working agreement – so keep hold of this so you can make use of it in the coming sessions.



During this part of the session you could play the music which participants may have brought with them. You may like to start this session with a reading of *Desiderata*, by Max Ehrmann. This is available on the internet – use a search engine like www.google.co.uk to find a copy.



Draw the participants attention to the quote cards which you stuck up around the room before the session. These are available at the back of this pack.

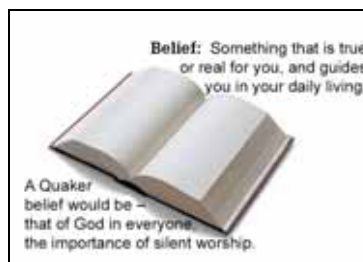
Around the room are a variety of quotes, they are all quotes that say something about our spiritual life. Some will be immediately meaningful to you and will put into words what is important to you about your Quakerism; others may not be as helpful in expressing this. Concentrate on the ones that help you express what it means to be a Quaker.

After five minutes of reading the quotes ask participants to choose one or maybe two quotes that they like best and give them the chance to jot down this quote if they would like to.

Ask people to pair up with someone and spend a five minutes talking about the why they chose this quote and/or why they brought a particular music track.



You can use the three Resource sheets below to illustrate values, beliefs and faith. These are available at the back of this pack.



We use the words values and beliefs without really thinking or even knowing exactly what they mean.

Values can be described as a standard or moral principle by which you strive to live. Quaker values might be living simply, pacifism or equality.

Beliefs can be described as something that is true or real for you and guides you in your daily living. A Quaker belief would be that of God in everyone, or the importance of silent worship.

All faiths are based on particular beliefs that help develop values that become our guidelines for daily living.

How do your Quaker beliefs affect your values?

Introduction

10 minutes

It is important to take stock from time to time and think about why we are Quakers.

As the first activity showed, some of us here will have been Quakers for many years, some will be new to Quakers, some will be attenders and others members and perhaps some may be a little undecided.

We are all at different stages in our spiritual journeys. Some of our values and beliefs will be specifically Quaker, others more general.

We are going to think about our personal values and beliefs, the things which are important to us in our day-to-day lives.

Ask the participants their thoughts on the following:

How does your Quakerism affect

- **Your family life?**
- **How you are at work or school?**
- **Your friendships?**
- **Your view on the environment?**
- **Your view on social issues?**

Quaker Values and Beliefs Activity

15 minutes

Have the shapes that you cut out at the start of the session to hand. These are available in the resources section at the end of this pack. Ask the participants to pair up.

Here we have some shapes that fit together like a patchwork. Some shapes are blank and some shapes have images relating to the testimonies Peace, Equality, Simplicity and Truth and the developing testimony of Environment and Sustainability. Think about what is important to you in your life. Take a shape or two – if it's blank write, draw or doodle something from your life that is important to you. Share in your pairs what is on your shape and why it is important to you.

Once you have finished place it on the floor along with other people's shapes to create a patchwork quilt – and have a look at the shapes other participants have created.

Draw the group back together, and invite participants to share with the group what they have put on their shape and why.



You may want to adjust your timings depending on the size of the group: allocate participants 30 seconds each for feedback.

The patchwork is like life – we are all different but can live together side by side accepting our diversity and encompassing the richness that this brings. Sometimes we fit together; sometimes there are spaces between us. In session 2 we are going to consider the Values and Beliefs that form our Quaker Faith.

Talk briefly with the group about their experiences of being a Quaker in school, college, work etc.

- **Have you noticed a difference between yourself and your peers?**
- **Have your peers noticed anything different?**
- **What happens as a result of this? How do you feel about this?**

We're going to do some exercises that will help you to think about what is important to you about being a Quaker and what your values and beliefs are.

The Childrens Act, which legislates for the protection of young people, applies to Britain Yearly Meeting. It requires that if you are aware that an individual is at risk of serious harm, you are to inform those responsible for child protection issues within your meeting. They may need to take action in response to these concerns. If you are concerned about a participant's safety – you should explain this to them, and who you will be recording this concern with, who you will inform and what will happen next. It is good practice to make participants aware of this in advance.

Your area meeting should have a Child Protection Co-ordinator. You should know who this person is and be aware of their responsibilities. For more information see www.quaker.org.uk/cyp and click on the link on the left hand side to Meeting Safety.

You may want to consider a pastoral support structure from which members of your team may seek support over general participant concerns/needs/issues. Do think carefully about how you may deal with concerns about a participant and any bullying they may be subject to.

Take a seed and think about something that you have learnt about yourself during this session.

Plant this seed in the pot provided, and write what you have learnt on the lolly stick provided.

Take some time in silence and finish by joining hands.



If you are able – keep the flower pots in a safe space so that the group can watch them grow as the sessions progress. Take note of what participants have learnt in this session.



Suggest people put their decorated patchwork shape in their folder or envelope – people may find it useful to refer to them in future sessions. If you are running these sessions as a series over a period of time, you may want to think about whether the folders go home with people or whether you should keep them to distribute each session.

