

Session 3

Groups and Belonging

This session is an addition to the Living as a Quaker pack since the original Only Quaker publication. It aims to create the opportunity to explore the experience of belonging to groups and to identify the skills needed to respond to experiences of being left out.

Resources required for the session

- Flip chart paper and pens
- Large sheets of paper
- Glue
- Art materials
- Resource sheets: Mapping Groups and Groups Part 1 (available at the back of this pack)
- Pens
- Post-it notes
- Participant folders/envelopes to store the Mapping Groups sheet

Preparation for the session

- Stick up copy of the working agreement
- Invite participants to bring photos / illustrations / or an avatar of themselves to this session
- Divide a sheet of flip chart paper into two. Give one half the title “One thing you would change” and the second “One thing you will do differently”
- Ensure there are enough copies of the Resource Sheets: Mapping Groups and Groups Part 1 (available at the back of this pack and on the website for download)

Session Overview

60 minutes

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| Similarities | 10 minutes |
| Introduction to the session | 5 minutes |
| Mapping groups | 5 minutes |
| Groups part 1 | 12 minutes |
| Groups part 2 | 12 minutes |
| Feedback on Groups | 12 minutes |
| Worship | 4 minutes |

Similarities

10 minutes

Divide into two groups.

Each group should find something they *all* have in common – it could be obvious, for example they all have red hair, or it could be less obvious, for example they have all been to America.

Each group will have the opportunity to ask the other group a series of closed questions, for example – is it to do with appearance? The aim of this activity is to discover what the other group has in common.

After 10 minutes invite both groups back together to form a circle.

In every group there will be something that draws us together, something in common. In the previous sessions, we looked at some of the things that Quakers have in common – for example the Testimonies.

As the last activity shows, groups have obvious things in common, for example hair colour, but also some commonalities that are less clear, for example that everyone has been to America.

- **What might be obvious about Quakerism to someone new? (For example the style of worship is silence in a circle.)**
- **What might be less obvious about Quakerism to someone new? (For example how Quakers make decisions using the Business Method.)**

We don't always know why some people feel they belong and some people don't. Sometimes groups don't realise that there are people who don't feel included – particularly in groups that believe they are inclusive. This session is the opportunity to look at the times when we are included and when we are not and what we can do about it.



Note that the map of groups created in this session will be used in the final session, so remember to ask the group to keep hold of their sheets – or to hand them in to you.

Hand out the resource sheet: Mapping Groups (found at the back of this pack).

Invite the group to reflect on the groups that they belong to and working as individuals:

1. Put a representation of yourself on the sheet.
2. Place all the different groups you have belonged to in your life on the sheet.
3. Include groups you don't enjoy or in which you do not feel totally accepted.
4. Include different types of groups – e.g. informal (family, friends) and formal (Local Meeting, School)
5. Try to include both Quaker and non-Quaker groups – remember Quaker groups can include your Local Meeting, Link Group etc.
6. Don't forget to include online communities, for example FriendLink.
7. Think about the sub-groups that are parts of groups for example Summer School includes a number of sub groups; friendship groups, base groups, arrangements committee etc.
8. Whilst you are doing this choose two groups that you have been involved in – one which you felt included in, and one you felt a “bit out of”.

Remind the participants to keep their sheet in the folder or envelope you provided at the start of the programme for them to store their work.

Now we are going to focus on the two groups you chose, one you felt included in, and the one you felt a “bit out of” – as we look at each of these groups we will think about our experiences.

Arrange the group into pairs. Guide the pairs through the following questions one at a time leaving a couple of minutes discussion time between each one. Alternatively you may wish to give the pairs a copy of the sheet Groups Part 1 (included in the resources pages at the back of this pack).

Thinking about the group that you felt a “bit out of” discuss the following:

- 1. What was the attraction of being in the group that you felt a “bit out of”?**

What was positive about this attraction? What was negative?

- 2. Think of some advantages of being a member of the group that you felt “a bit out of?”**

What was positive about this? What was negative?

- 3. Are there other groups or relationships or activities that offer the attractions or the rewards of this group?**

- 4. What feelings did you experience when you were left out?**

Who else might have felt like you – what could you do about this?

- 5. How do you see the group in the light of this discussion?**

True friendship consists not in the multitude of friends, but in their worth and value (Ben Jonson)

No person is your friend who demands your silence, or denies your right to grow (Alice Walker Copyright © 1995–2006 Jone Johnson Lewis. All Rights Reserved)

We're going to do some thinking about the group that you felt included in. On your own take a minute's silence to think about the feelings you experienced when you were included.

After a minute's silence, work through the following questions as a whole group – you'll have around 3 minutes for each question. Encourage individuals to think about how they behaved, how they communicated to those in the group and how they responded to the group and individuals in the group.

- **What skills did you use to help you become a part of this group?**
- **How was your involvement in this group different to the one you felt a "bit out of?"**
- **What have you learnt from this about how you participate in groups?**

Conclude the session by asking the participants to take another minute to think about the same group.

Are there people that you think perhaps did not feel a part of the group? Why was this? What could you do about this?



If you have more time, you could ask the group to prioritise the skills people used to become a part of the group. What are the most important skills? Would they put listening or contributing first? Why?

Becoming part of a group takes... "Confidence, patience, persistence, listening skills, contributions, participation, a relaxed approach, not too pushy yet not a pushover, respect for yourself – don't let others speak over you, smiles! Eye contact! Not being the wall paper, sharing, not imposing" Karomba (2008)²

² Karomba, Floyd Waitthaka (2008)

Draw the group back together to look at the following questions as a whole group.

- **How do you see the groups you were looking at in light of this discussion?**
- **What can we do when we are left out of a group?**
- **What can we do to avoid leaving others out of the group?**
- **What have we learnt about groups? What have we learnt about this group?**

End the session with five minutes Worship – bring this to a close by shaking hands.

As the group leaves invite them to write on a post it note, one thing that they will do differently as a result of the session, and one thing that they would change about the session. As they leave ask the participants to stick their post-its to the flip chart sheet that you have prepared for this.

