

Welcoming families



Quaker Week Ideas Pack 2022
August 2022



First steps

Think first of what your Quaker community has to offer. What interests do Friends have that they might like to share with others? What do you enjoy doing together?

Then think about who you might connect with locally. Who do you already know: groups, organisations and individuals? Is there anyone you could contact who hasn't attended for a while? Can you think of any ways to connect with people in your locality?

If you'd like a chance to consider these questions with Friends from other meetings, do remember there is **Woodbrooke training** available over the next few weeks where we are exploring this together. You could drop in for a single session to get some inspiration!

Key resources for Quaker Week 2022



These three videos are informal conversations on some of the key topics from the Woodbrooke training. You could watch them with a group from your meeting, as a starting point for talking about your next steps:

Engaging with families (Alistair Fuller and Kathy Chandler)

The role of joy (Sophie Smith and Helen Chambers)

Linking with our localities (Jude Acton and Mel Cook)







Another important resource is **All Are Welcome**, which can support us to reach out to families, connect with each other and enrich our all-age worshipping community. Please contact outreach@quaker.org.uk if you don't have a physical copy.

Planning activities



If you don't have families in your local or area meeting



- Bear in mind that Quaker Week doesn't have to involve running an event. You could decide to attend something that is already going on locally as a group.
- For example, **Great Big Green Week**, is happening at the same time as Quaker Week. See below for suggestions of how you could get involved.
- Consider linking with another meeting in the area that does have families and working together to organise something.
- You can ask Friends if they have any children, grandchildren or extended family that they would like to invite to a one-off event.
- Remember that there are families in your local area, even if they don't come to meeting. Think about ways to engage with them where they are, rather than thinking of them coming to you. For example, volunteering to hear children read at a local school, or visiting or helping at a coffee morning for asylum seekers and refugees and their children, if something like this is already being run in your area.

Link up with Great Big Green Week





Great Big Green Week is the UK's biggest ever celebration of climate action. You can check if an event is happening in your area via their [website](#).

- Consider if a group of Friends could attend together and bring banners/outreach materials to the event, if it is appropriate.
 - Think about whether you can reach out and offer to help with the event in any way. If you have a building you can offer as a base or to help with preparations, this can be a fantastic way to connect with the wider community.
 - Consider connecting with other local meetings to see if Friends would like to join as a group to go along and enjoy an event together.
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- If no events are happening in your area, do you have the resources to organise one together as a meeting? Could you work together to plan an event with other churches or faith groups in your area, or link up with a local climate justice organisation?

If you already have some families within your local or area meeting



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- Make sure you contact families associated with the meeting in plenty of time, to find out what kind of activities would work for them, and what days or times would work best.
 - These activities do not have to be at the meeting house (or place your meeting is held). All-age outreach is about bringing people together, and doesn't have to mean more people attending meeting on a Sunday morning. Families may connect with the meeting in all sorts of ways.
 - If families find it hard to attend on a Sunday morning, they might feel uncomfortable only coming for something fun. Make sure they know they are always welcome, whenever they are able to come along.
 - Try and pick a place that can be reached by public transport. If this isn't the case, can you arrange lifts for those who may need them? Remember that young children need car seats.
 - Try to reconnect with those who have drifted away by – sending a card/email/message, asking if they'd like to be involved in a non-Sunday morning activity, or simply finding out how they are.
 - It's always worth sending out reminders to families just before the event.



Activity ideas

Something outdoors

Spending time outside can bring Friends of all ages together. You might like to organise:

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- A walk – think about ease of access for those who have reduced mobility, or use aids like wheelchairs and pushchairs. Perhaps you could include a picnic for those who cannot manage the walk?
 - A picnic – sharing meals together can be a joyful experience. Challenge – to help Friends mix across age ranges, could you organise an all-age scavenger hunt, or games as well?

- Games – you could organise fun games that encourage everyone to join in. *The Journeys in the Spirit* **Games Supplement** offers lots of gathering, active and reflective games suitable for children and young people aged 5–18. If you have older children in the meeting, could you ask them to help you plan and run the games?
- A task – do you have a garden that needs some attention, or something to build or fix? Can you do that as an all-age activity? The edition of *Journeys in the Spirit* on **gardens** offers some great ideas on this theme.

Something involving food



Shared food is a wonderful way to join people together. Some things to think about:

- Some families might welcome a shared breakfast before meeting for worship – pancakes can be a big hit, with Friends bringing different toppings. You may already share lunch from time to time – can you think of ways to extend an invitation to the community? Shared dinners can be combined with all sorts of fun evening activities.
- If there are families who are associated with the meeting who don't attend regularly, invite them to join the meeting for a meal, and ask them what would work best for them.
- Think about allergies and intolerances, and ask Friends to clearly label food. For those who are understandably worried about illness, can you meet and eat outside?

Something creative


Being creative allows Friends of all ages to connect, appreciating each other's skills and imagination, helping one another, and offering relaxed opportunities for conversation. Think about:

- Keep creative activities simple – or have simple alternatives if there are small children taking part. The September edition of *Journeys in the Spirit* will have a lantern-making activity that you may like to try, which leads into worshipping together.
- Craftivism is the act of trying to change the world through crafts and making things, can you connect your craft and activism?
- Ask Friends to volunteer to support the children taking part in their activity. Then their parent can do their own project (or just sit and have a coffee).

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- Remember small children may lose interest in the craft activity, and need to let off steam. Consider having a “play” corner in the space to keep them occupied while everyone else is working – or organise the event outside, where they can run around.

Something with music (or even dance!)

Many Friends enjoy singing together – and dancing. The resource **Sing me on a Journey** is full of songs and ideas to get your meeting singing, which could be a great way to involve all ages.




You may have talented musicians in your meeting. Could you organise an afternoon or evening of music for members of the meeting or of the wider community to attend?

You could organise a ‘desert island discs’ session where Friends bring their favourite piece of music to share.

You can find more ideas in **Journeys in the Spirit**. You might like to try this **Treasure box / basket activity** or this **Garden of hope activity** or this **Nature mandalas activity**. And there are many more!

Worship

Where can you include some worship in your activity? This could be a few minutes of silence before the shared meal, or on the summit of the hill you have just climbed, or sitting with candles and silence at the close of an evening celebration.





If you do include worship, let people know to expect it and a rough idea of how long it is going to be. If Friends are new (or have not been to meeting in a while) it would be great to introduce the worship with a bit of an explanation.

Organising all-age worship

All-age worship allows the meeting to experience worship together in a different and more accessible way. You might try to organise this for Quaker Week, or to make it a regular event throughout the year: some meetings have one all-age worship session in each season.

It doesn't have to be on a Sunday morning in place of your usual meeting. You might like to gather on a Saturday or a Sunday afternoon instead. Of course, it's always worth asking any families who may attend what would work best for them. There are some fabulous resources for all-age worship online. In particular, consider **Spring into All Age Worship**.





Keeping children safe

If you need more information about safeguarding, please see the guidance here: www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/safeguarding.

Advertising/promoting your event:

- **Download our poster from the outreach page** to reach families in your local area. It has a blank space for you to add details of your event by hand, and then print as many as you need.
- If your meeting has a website, you can advertise your event there.
- If you are organising an event, do put it on Facebook as soon as possible if your meeting has a Facebook page. You can update with more information later. That gives people a chance to get it in their diaries.
- If you are on Twitter, use **#Quakerweek** to link up with other Quakers. Once you have put up the event, do keep posting reminders.
- Social media platforms make it easy to have paid advertisements, so you could consider experimenting with that, if you have a small budget. This can make a big difference in reaching people. Posting after the event can be useful too. If you have developed a new online audience, consider how you will keep them – what next steps can you advertise?
- Newcomers can **find your meeting online through our website**. Consider checking what it says about your meeting, to ensure that it's as welcoming as possible for families. If it indicates that meetings can only welcome children if the parents "call in advance", this may be off-putting to families. Of course, this comes from wanting children to have a good experience of meeting.

Instead, you could say something like "families are always welcome to attend. If you call in advance, we can organise specific activities for children. They are always welcome to join the adults in meeting for worship."

- You could have a small bag of books and simple activities to allow for quiet play in the meeting room, in case children come when no one is available to join them in a separate children's meeting. Contact **Friends House bookshop** to find out what is available to order.

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- **Our resources page** links to sample leaflets for meetings. The text can be edited to create a leaflet that you can share with families when they attend for the first time.

After Quaker Week

Please get in touch and let us know what you have done. We'd love to hear how it went, and any ideas you have for outreach or for engaging with families going forwards.

You can find ongoing support for outreach, and for engaging with children and young people in the following sessions which run every month on Zoom.

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- Children's Meeting Support Sessions: for anyone interested in or involved in supporting children in their meeting. You can sign up [here](#).
 - Youth Work Support Sessions: for anyone interested in or involved in supporting young people aged 11–18 in their meeting. You can sign up [here](#).
 - Outreach Network Sessions: these run every month on Zoom, with both evening and lunchtime sessions. Contact outreach@quaker.org.uk for more details.
 - This upcoming **Woodbrooke reading group** might also be of interest.
 - For more information about how to work with children, young people and families, [sign up for the monthly resource – Journeys in the Spirit](#).

Information to share with families:

Please do let families know about these opportunities to connect online:

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- Giant Online Children's Meeting – these meetings happen on the first Sunday of every month. Please register [here](#).
 - Young People's Epilogue, for 11–18-year-olds, on the first Sunday of every month. Please register [here](#).
 - **Quaker Parenting Network Facebook group**: this is for parents of under 18s who live in Britain and have an interest in Quakerism.
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To find out more about other things that are on offer for children and young people, please contact cypadmin@quaker.org.uk.



How did we do?

You can let us know how helpful you found the support on offer from BYM via an online survey or by attending an online session to share your feedback. We'll send out details of both of these in September.

Did you find this resource useful? To let us know your thoughts, to share a story of witness or to request support from Quakers in Britain, please email outreach@quaker.org.uk.

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