

Woodbrooke
Quaker Study Centre

Good lives

don't have to cost the Earth

**A study pack for a day gathering
with bring-and-share lunch**

A note to organisers and facilitators

Please read through these instructions, and the details of each of the three sessions, before you start. If anything is unclear to you, please do get in touch with one of us:

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Notes for facilitators

This file contains materials and facilitator instructions for a whole study day, with bring-and-share lunch; also included are the means to give us feedback on how the sessions went.

The materials here are suitable to use in groups of up to 10 people, consisting of maximum 8 participants, plus 2 facilitators. Run as a whole day, 5¼ hours (including breaks) are required, plus tea at the beginning and/or end as the group wishes. If your group is smaller than 10, some activities may take less time.

The activities are all straightforward and do not require complex facilitation. You could ask *Hearts and Minds Prepared* trained facilitators, or the group could rotate the facilitation. The final session takes the form of a clerked meeting for worship for business.

This is the one-day version and can be printed and copied as required. Also enclosed in the mailing is a pack of Post-It notes for use in the first session. Not included are pens/pencils – enough for each person to be able to write will be needed in the morning; the clerk will need a pen in the afternoon! Evaluation forms, for use at the end of the day, are included. You might want to provide scissors for the newspaper activity.

At the end of both the morning and the afternoon, the facilitators are asked to collect certain items that have been written during the session, as part of the feedback. An envelope is enclosed for these, together with a large SAE to post feedback and evaluation forms back to us at Woodbrooke.

Towards the end of the day there is a clerked meeting for worship for business – it might be useful to ask someone to clerk this who hasn't been the facilitator for the earlier sessions.

In each session the sections are numbered, with headings in bold. It will help your group keep track of where they are if you read out the heading each time.

Time needed

- 80 minutes before lunch (if you have a group smaller than 10, it is best to start later, so that the lunch break still falls in the right place)
- An extended lunch break which includes a task to be done in preparation for the afternoon
- 2½ hours after lunch (includes a break)

... plus time for tea/coffee before and/or after, as the group wishes.

Eg:

10:30am	Gathering, meeting and greeting, tea/coffee
11:00am	Morning session
12:20pm	Break for lunch
	• lunch-time task in preparation for the afternoon
	• washing up
1.45pm	Afternoon session
4.15pm	Tea and depart

NB: if you decide to run this with a group larger than the recommended size, then all exercises will inevitably take longer. This means you will need longer day overall, both starting earlier and finishing later.

Resources you will need

- Facilitator's notes (provided)
- Handouts 1-5 (provided – make enough copies for each person to have one of each)
- Post-It notes block (provided)
- Pens or pencils – enough for everyone to have one, in case some people do not have their own (not provided)

- Agreed person(s) to clerk the the last part of the session with a table available for them to use
- Evaluation form (provided) – please make enough copies for everyone to have one
- Feedback Envelope and large SAE (provided)
- A range of recent local and national newspapers. You can ask everyone to bring some, but it would be wise for the organiser(s) to bring some as well – you will need enough for everyone to have at least one local and one national paper; ideally, the national papers should cover the whole range of political persuasion and of tabloid/broadsheet. If your area has more than one local paper, it is helpful to have copies of all relevant papers.
- Scissors are not essential for the lunch time activity, but some people may prefer to use them, if you are able to provide them.

Aims for this Study Pack – please read this paragraph to the group

This pack is designed to help Friends apply our Quaker values and practices to the pressing issues of today, in particular the threats to the environment. It will offer a further step in study and application to Friends who have done Hearts and Minds Prepared; it will provide Local Meetings with a means of beginning to discern if they might be called to action in their own locality; and it will act as a means to move us towards what William Penn had in mind when he wrote: “True godliness don’t turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavours to mend it” (1682).

A note to the facilitators

This study pack is based on the assumption that there is an environmental crisis, and that human activity is the principal cause of it. There are people who dispute this, and you may have someone in your group of this opinion. If you realise that this is the case, please make it clear to them that they are welcome to express their views in the many places within the structure of the sessions that invite that. However, if they want to disrupt the entire process of reflection that is built into the shape of the three sessions, then it is best that you ask them to withdraw. It is preferable to have this conversation in private with the person concerned, not to confront them in the group.

Morning session

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

TOTAL: 80 minutes

1a. Welcomes and opening worship

Facilitator to say 'welcome' to everyone, welcoming them to the place you are in and to the activity. Invite everyone to gather in a few minutes of worship. Close worship and move to 1b.

1b. Aims for this Study Pack

Read out the 'Aims for this study pack' (see page 6)
10 minutes

2. Introductory go-round 8 minutes

In a go-round, each person gives their name (if participants are not all known to each other) and one reason they were interested in taking part in the three sessions.

3. Check group ground rules 7 minutes

Eg: coming to all 3 sessions; listening and building on each other's contributions, sharing time in discussion, encouraging the less verbal members).

4. Some Quaker views of the Good Life (don't forget to read the heading) total 45 mins

Give out Handout 1 (extracts from *Quaker Faith and Practice* about Good Lives and the impediments to them) and allow time for each person to read the extracts, without rushing; or, take turns round the group in reading the extracts out loud.

If everyone has a sheet in front of them, and the extracts are also read out loud, this is the most inclusive way if the group contains people with limited hearing and/or eyesight; be aware

that the group might also contain people who are dyslexic, and being asked to read out loud could be distressing – ask for volunteers round the group rather than insisting that everyone reads. 7 minutes

- Each person choose which most appeals to them, and which one most challenges them, and mark it on their own handout, as a reminder. 3 minutes
- Share in pairs (what you chose and why). 10 minutes
- Each person share in the group in a go-round (what you chose, what you already do in that context; and what it excites, inspires, or challenges you to do, or to do more, or to do differently in your life). 20 minutes
- Each person write what they personally shared on the back of their handout to keep as a reminder to use later; and also write it briefly on a Post-It note – facilitator collect the Post-It notes and put in the Feedback Envelope (and keep until the end of the day). 5 minutes

Time allowance for ‘slippage’ of any of the above – 5 minutes

5. Preparation for the afternoon

Give out Handout 2 and check that everyone understands what they have to do. Put all the newspapers out (and scissors, if available). Take an extended break for lunch and the completion of this task.

Pause for a few moments quiet together before breaking for lunch.

Afternoon session

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

TOTAL: 150 minutes

6. Re-gather the group with a few minutes silence

5 minutes

7. Sharing our news stories 20 minutes

In a go-round say which *Quaker Faith and Practice* extract from last time you were thinking about, what you felt about it, and what your news story is – explain how your news story fits your chosen extract.

8. Give out Handout 3 and form pairs 10 minutes

In your pairs, discuss your stories in relation to their 'spin' – what's the newspaper's 'angle' on this story? What does the writer want you to feel about the story or the people in it? (See Handout 3 for examples).

9. Back in the whole group 15 minutes

Share (as led – not a formal go-round) what you discovered in your paired conversations.

10. Preparation for last part of the day 15 minutes

Give out Handout 4, and give everyone a stretch/comfort break and reading/reflection time.

11. Sharing our responses 10 minutes

In a go-round share any responses you had to:

- The reformulated version of John Woolman's words in relation to the environmental crisis, rather than to war.

12. Explain how the next part of this session will work

5 minutes

- *Remind the group* what you have all done together so far:
 - a. considered some passages (Handout 1) from *Quaker Faith and Practice* and chosen one that resonates for us
 - a. related our chosen text to aspects of our own life, and to some element of the external world (as found in our news-cuttings)
 - a. considered a reformulation of John Woolman's thoughts about the causes of war, and related it to current environmental issues.

- *Read the following paragraph out loud:*

We will conduct the last part of this session as a meeting for worship for business, and we hope to come to unity on a minute by the end of the session; if not, then we will make a minute of record. We are using our Quaker tried-and-tested method because the question we are faced with, in the world now, is: are we able to come to some unity about the path ahead of us? Can we, as Quakers, have a shared voice and message for our times? The task in our meeting for worship for business will be to consider this text:

- a. give out Handout 5
- b. ask one or two people to read out loud the extracts on 'Sense of the Meeting' as a preparation for your business session – tell the group that this is why you're reading them.
- c. ask someone to read the Micah text aloud.

and in the light of all that we have done together, we will now consider how we might rewrite this, ie:

“What does the Lord require from you: to X, to Y, and to Z?”

- In preparation for that, we will spend some time in pairs thinking through our individual responses.

13. Split into pairs 10 minutes

Pairs to think through with each other what their individual thoughts would be, to put in place of X, Y, Z above.

14. Meeting for Worship for Business 25 minutes

- Reconvene as one group
- Clerk to read the Micah text aloud
- Conduct a business session in the normal way
- The minute will be the rewritten text (ie: including what we decided to put in place of X, Y, Z) plus any comments the group wishes to make on their new text
- If unity cannot be reached, then a minute of record can be made

15. Taking it back to our Meetings 15 minutes

As a result of what the group has done during these three sessions, are there matters that you want to take to a regular business meeting, for your LM or AM to take action on? If so, please make a minute of record of what these issues are, and how they are to be taken forward.

The group now moves straight into:

16. Closing worship 10 minutes

17. Evaluation 5 minutes

Facilitators: please make a copies of both minutes and put them into the Feedback Envelope. Please put the Feedback Envelope into the large SAE provided, together with the completed evaluation forms and post back to Woodbrooke. Thank you very much.

Handout 1

Extracts from Quaker Faith and Practice (1995)

A

God comes to us in the midst of human need, and the most pressing needs of our time demand community in response. How can I participate in a fairer distribution of resources unless I live in a community which makes it possible to consume less? How can I learn accountability unless I live in a community where my acts and their consequences are visible to all? How can I learn to share power unless I live in a community where hierarchy is unnatural? How can I take the risks which right action demands unless I belong to a community which gives support? How can I learn the sanctity of each life unless I live in a community where we can be persons not roles to one another?

Parker J Palmer, 1977 (23.48)

B

[. . .] Decisions about where to live, what forms of transport to use, where to spend money, where to send children to school, where to work, whom to employ, where to obtain health services, what to condone, what to protest about, business decisions, personal decisions, political decisions – all these have an effect. Our first and greatest responsibility is to make those decisions in the knowledge of their effect on others [. . .]

Martin Wyatt, 1986 (23.49)

C

I think I have wasted a great deal of my life waiting to be called to some great mission which would change the world [. . .] I have wanted to make a big and important contribution to the causes I believe in. I think I have been too ready to reject the genuine leadings I have been given as being matters of little consequence. It has taken me a long time to learn that obedience means doing what we are called to do even if it seems pointless or unimportant or even silly [. . .]

Deborah Haines, 1978 (23.52)

D

[. . .] ten principles for the outward expression of simplicity: First, buy things for their usefulness rather than their status. Second, reject anything that is producing an addiction in you. Third, develop a habit of giving things away. De-accumulate. Fourth, refuse to be propagandised by the custodians of modern gadgetry. Fifth, learn to enjoy things without owning them. Sixth, develop a deeper appreciation for the creation. Seventh, look with a healthy scepticism at all 'buy now, pay later' schemes. Eighth, obey Jesus' injunction about plain, honest speech. Ninth, reject anything that will breed the oppression of others. Tenth, shun whatever would distract you from your main goal.

Richard J Foster, 1979 (25.09)

E

We are building towards the climax of crisis. [. . .] As Christians, it seems to me, we are now required to critically assess the capital driven market economy and identify it as a false religion [. . .] Challenging market economics with a Biblical sense of the goodness of God in creation is to join a spiritual struggle [. . .] We must be perfectly clear about the implications of undertaking this responsibility. It is more than just setting up

household recycling bins, growing organic vegetables or riding a bike to work. It is more than a talking job. It is a renovation which will change everything: the way we do business, the way we eat, the way we travel, the houses we build, the products and services we can expect and the prices we pay for them, the way we feel about trees and the way we worship God.

Keith Helmuth, 1990 (25.14)

Handout 2

During the lunch break please look for one or two news stories, in either the local or national press, which relate to your chosen extracts, and your responses to them, in one or more of these ways:

- It *illustrates* one of your extracts, or your feelings about it
- It *demonstrates* the need for the attitudes or behaviours expressed in one of your extracts
- It is *an example* of someone taking the kind of action in their life that you spoke about in relation to your own life, during the final go-round in the morning

Please cut or tear out these news stories and take them back to the group after lunch. Also take your sheet of *Quaker Faith and Practice* extracts as you will need to refer to it.

Handout 3

What is the newspaper's 'angle' on this story?

What does the writer want you to *think*?

What does the writer want you to *feel*?

Some examples of the 'spin' that the journalist might have put on your chosen story. In relation to the need for us to change the way we live:

- Is it a story inviting the reader to be cynical?
- Does it encourage or demonstrate apathy or avoidance?
- Does it embody denial that there is any problem?
- Does it invite disagreement or despair in relation to the need for change?
- Does it offer a 'get-out' that it's 'nothing to do with me'; or it's merely a lifestyle choice and we can take it or leave it?
- Is it a good-news story about someone taking action?
- Does it offer or explain possible future involvement for the reader?
- Is it helpful and informative?

Does the newspaper actually completely ignore environmental issues?

If you disagree with the line taken by the newspaper, or you think that an article is factually incorrect, what might you do about it? (eg: one of the authors of this Study Pack belongs to a 'rapid response' e-mail network, organised by the local Green Party, to respond to environmental stories in the local newspaper. Local papers are always keen to involve readers – we always get our letters published).

Handout 4

One of the essential ingredients for creating positive and deliberately chosen change is to build and demonstrate the alternative. Consider the example below.

From *Quaker Faith & Practice* 23.16:

The war of 1914-18 made Friends more vividly aware of the close connection between war and the social order. Nine months after the outbreak of war London Yearly Meeting was impressed by the words of John Woolman:

May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions.*

These extracts arose in the social conditions of the time, and in the experience of war. We will think about what happens if we take John Woolman's words replace the word 'war':

May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try whether the seeds of our environmental crisis have nourishment in these our possessions.*

During the break, please reflect on this second version and on your life in relation to the challenges it poses.

You might like to make a note of the things you think about, so you can remember them to share with the group later.

*'try' is archaic usage, meaning 'consider' or 'think about'

Handout 5

The Sense of the Meeting – two extracts to remind us about our business method

(to be read out loud as preparation for the business session)

Quaker Faith & Practice 3.02

In our meetings for worship we seek through the stillness to know God's will for ourselves and for the gathered group. Our meetings for church affairs, in which we conduct our business, are also meetings for worship based on silence, and they carry the same expectation that God's guidance can be discerned if we are truly listening together and to each other, and are not blinkered by preconceived opinions. It is this belief that God's will can be recognised through the discipline of silent waiting which distinguishes our decision-making process from the secular idea of consensus. We have a common purpose in seeking God's will through waiting and listening, believing that every activity of life should be subject to divine guidance.

Quaker Faith & Practice 3.06

The unity we seek depends on the willingness of us all to seek the truth in each other's utterances; on our being open to persuasion; and in the last resort on a willingness to recognise and accept the sense of the meeting as recorded in the minute, knowing that our dissenting views have been heard and considered.

[. . .]

In a meeting rightly held a new way may be discovered which none present had alone perceived and which transcends the differences of the opinions expressed. This is an experience of

creative insight, leading to a sense of the meeting which a clerk is often led in a remarkable way to record. Those who have shared this experience will not doubt its reality and the certainty it brings of the immediate rightness of the way for the meeting to take.

“The LORD has told you what is good. This is what the LORD requires from you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to live humbly with your God.”

(Micah 6:8) (*God's Word*® Translation)

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