

Woodbrooke
Quaker Study Centre

GOOD LIVES STUDY PACKS



GOOD LIVES

The four study packs in this book derive from work undertaken by the Good Lives Project at Woodbrooke between 2009 and 2012.

From the spectrum of work undertaken by the Good Lives Project, four themes are presented here:

- Beliefs and Values
- Spirituality
- Human Behaviour
- Community

The materials and exercises have all been used with groups of participants at Woodbrooke during Good Lives weekend courses. They are reproduced here in the hope that Friends in meetings and elsewhere may find them useful, particularly in support of activities arising from Minute 36 [see Appendix 7] of Britain Yearly Meeting 2011 in Canterbury.

The materials in these study packs are designed for use with a group, although individuals may also be able to use some of them if the suggestions for sharing or discussion – in pairs, threes, or the whole group – are replaced by reflective personal writing, or other styles of reflection.



STUDY PACKS

Each pack includes

- copying originals of any handouts you will need, or information on where to find them online
- lists of any other materials required (such as felt pens and flip chart paper, scrap paper and pencils)
- lists of any other equipment you might need (occasionally an exercise might need something additional)
- information about any pre-session planning or preparation that may be needed
- explanation of how to set up the session, with timings
- facilitator's 'crib-sheet' notes for each session

Each pack is derived from the main sessions of a full residential weekend, but each individual session could be done in an evening; or perhaps you could do three or four sessions in a one-day workshop. A few of the sessions require a little practical preparation beforehand. Some of the sessions can stand alone, but others very obviously depend specifically on what has gone before. So in some cases, you could pick and choose which ones to do, and in some cases you need to follow the order of them as given; if you do them all in the order given they do build up into something greater than the sum of the parts.

The sessions require relatively simple facilitation, comparable to that needed (for instance) with Woodbrooke's *Hearts and Minds Prepared* study pack.

Note for facilitators

For each of the four packs, it will be helpful for you to read through all of it before starting, in order to identify which sessions you want to do (maybe all of them) and what pre-session preparation is needed.

For each pack and each session, facilitators might find it helpful to bear in mind:

Are you working with a group of people who all know each other well?

- If so, you might want to start with a short period of gathering silence followed by a simple go-round for people to say why they've come to the session and what they're hoping for – keep this moving and don't let it extend too much.

Are you working with a group in which only some people know each other, or in which people know each other only slightly?

- If so, you might want to start with a short period of gathering silence followed by a simple go-round for people to say their names, whereabouts they've come from, why they've come to the session and what they're hoping for – keep this moving and don't let it extend too much. Also, each time you use pairs or threes during an exercise, remind people to introduce themselves in the small group.

In the second case this will take longer, and you will need to add this time to the stated time for the session.

All the materials in these study packs are also available for download on Woodbrooke's website (go to the Publications page). You will find them in PDF format, and also in Word format in large print for visually impaired users.

Study Pack no.1

*Good Lives... because everyone's worth it –
exploring beliefs and values*

Below are opening remarks relating to the whole study pack – the facilitator might read this out, or say something similar in their own words, or copy this page as a handout, or invite the group to share their own ideas. If you invite the group to share ideas, it's a good idea to have a flip-chart and felt pens to write up suggestions as they're made, and not to let this run on for beyond about 5 minutes with a small group (say, 6–10) or 10 minutes with a larger group (say, 12 or more).

Our Beliefs and Values – and why it matters to explore them

One of the features of Quaker groups is that we don't often stop to articulate and explore our beliefs and values. We tend to put more emphasis on how we live and what we do, rather than on words about what we believe.

However, as the various global pressures on humanity increase, we will need the bedrock of our beliefs and values, both to help us make the difficult choices with which we will all be confronted, and to nurture the inner strength on which we will certainly have to draw.

Our beliefs and values, and the ways we enact them in everyday life have an influence on others – this particular aspect is something explored in more detail in Study Pack 3.

Additionally, it is all too easy to believe that we believe something, or value something, only to find that in a situation where we are tested in new ways, we actually behave as if we believed something quite different.

So this first study pack begins the process of this exploration, to give us some tools, and to raise our own awareness so that this attention to our beliefs and values becomes an on-going component of how we live our lives.

EXERCISE 1

A simple statement of beliefs

- This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity

Time needed

60–90 minutes, depending on group size and length of final whole-group sharing.

Pre-session preparation

You will need to download a page from the Web and print or copy it so that everyone can have a copy. The text you need is, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*: www.peace.ca/kindergarten.htm (we are unable to reproduce it here for copyright reasons).

Materials needed

- for each person in the group, a piece of A5 sized paper [you can use scrap, as only one side of the sheet will be needed, but please ensure you've cut the paper to A5 size]
- pens/pencils for the group
- for each person in the group, a copy of the handout (as above)
- Blu-tack or pins for displaying papers, and somewhere to stick them up
- flipchart and felt pens [or substitute, if you don't have a flipchart]

NB: if you don't have printing or copying facilities for the handout, you could just read it out loud, but it's better if people have their own copies.

Facilitator comment

This exercise a simple way of making a first-draft statement of what we believe and value.

Facilitator

Pass handouts round and give people time to read them [about 5 minutes].

Facilitator comment

Robert Fulghum's piece is about 'behaving our beliefs' – behind these behaviours lie a set of implicit beliefs and values. We are going to take a step back to those underlying beliefs. Also, Fulghum's words are basically secular, and for this activity you will probably want to include religious or spiritual components in what you say you believe. But we'll stick with the simple, child-like, language. This is the important facet of Fulghum's writing here – it's simple and straightforward and allows no fudging by saying, "it depends what you mean by..." We're going to limit ourselves to vocabulary and sentences that a seven-year-old child could understand. So the task is to express our adult beliefs and values in this very plain and simple way.

Activity

Facilitator

- pass round sheets of A5 paper
- make sure everyone has a pen or pencil

Instruction to group

Using only one side of an A5-sized sheet of paper (and not 'cheating' by using tiny writing!) write the essence of what you believe about people and the world – and only use words and sentences that a seven-year-old could understand.

▲ Allow 10 minutes for this

Instruction to group

Form into pairs *[or threes, depending on group numbers]* and share:

- each person in turn read out what you have written
- then share how you feel about what you've said, and about what it's like to read it aloud

▲ Allow 10 minutes in pairs or 15 minutes in 3s

Facilitator

Stick all the sheets *[without names on them]* up somewhere, spread out so that everyone can read them – allow reading and milling-about time *[amount of time depends on the size of the group – use your judgment on this]*.

Then bring everyone back to one circle. Invite people to share any thoughts, feelings, responses, both to the experience of writing and to the outcomes.

Facilitator tell the group

There will be other exercises, later on in the study pack, to revisit these statements of what we believe.

Facilitator make sure

That each person retrieves their own statement – they will be needed for Exercise 2 in this study pack.

Closing

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

EXERCISE 2

Values and change

- This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity but works best if it follows on directly from Exercise 1

Time needed

60–80 minutes, depending on length of final group sharing

Materials needed

- scrap paper and pens/pencils
- flipchart and felt pens [or substitute, if you don't have a flipchart]
- each person will need the sheet they wrote at the start of Exercise 1.

NB: See Appendix 1 for optional reading about cycles of change.

Facilitator comment

This exercise is to explore change in our lives, how we experience change, how we make decisions about change, and how our beliefs and values influence that.

Activity

Facilitator

Ask people to work alone first, with paper and pen. Read each line out, and allow time for people to respond to it before moving on to the next. After you've read each part out, write it up on the flipchart. Judge an average time when most people seem to be ready to move on (writing it up will allow those taking more time to keep track of what the next steps are). Ask people to write their answers briefly, purely as an aide-memoire for later sharing:

- identify a change in your life that is recent or current (**and that you are willing to talk about**); it might be a change that you have initiated, or one that has happened to you, and you're having to deal with it
- how do you *feel* about it right now?
- and what are your *thoughts* about it at the moment?
- what were or are the external influences involved?
- how do you think or feel about them?
- who were or are the other people involved
- how do you feel about them now?
- what has helped or hindered you in this change?
- is it completed or still ongoing?
- were there stages to this change – can you identify them?

- how did your values come into play as you decided or dealt with this change?
- how are you now with it?

▲ Allow 10–15 minutes for all of this

Facilitator

Divide the group into pairs (with one 3, if needed to make numbers work).

Instructions to group

- in your pairs, take turns, with one person speaking and the other listening and helping clarification
- don't get into general discussion
- take 15 minutes each [*10 minutes each in the threesome, if there is one*], with your partner helping you to clarify your experience
- try to spell out how your values were involved; how did that relate to your core beliefs as you wrote them in Exercise 1?

Facilitator

- call time at the half way point, for the pairs to swap roles
- if you have a threesome, watch the time and quietly move them on to the next person after 10 minutes, and again 10 minutes after that
- after half an hour bring everyone back to the whole group
- invite open sharing [*or a go-round, or worship sharing – see Appendix 2 – whichever feels best for that group*]; share what you have discovered
- can we draw any conclusions about what happens to our stated values when we find ourselves in the midst of change?

Closing

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

A possible second stage exercise

If your group is, say, a group of people all from the same Local Meeting, you might like to try a second stage.

First, identify a current or recent change in the life of your meeting. Then follow the pattern above in relation to the group as well as to yourselves as individuals. Timings will be a little longer – allow 2 hours.

EXERCISE 3

'Behaving our beliefs'

- This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity

Time needed

60–80 minutes, depending on length of final group sharing *[excluding pre-session preparation time]*

Pre-session preparation

For this exercise you need a number of cards, at least two cards per person. It works best to have more cards than you actually need. Cut thin card into small pieces – eg: cutting A4 sheets into four equal pieces. On each card, write one word that describes some aspect of life (you could use the list below, or invent or add your own). If you have a large group, there can be several cards bearing each word to make up the required total number.

Card words could include:

clothes	money	transport	leisure
work	friendships	holidays	society
local community	shopping	hobbies	politics
neighbourhood	food	housing	entertainment

Materials needed

- set of cards, prepared as above
- flipchart and felt pens *[or substitute, if you don't have a flipchart]*

Activity

Facilitator preparation

Lay all the cards word-side-down, either on a table or on the floor.

Facilitator comment

This exercise is to help us discover the ways in which we 'behave our beliefs' and what helps or hinders that.

Facilitator instruction

Ask people to pick up two cards at random – if they find they've picked up two the same, replace one and choose again, everyone to pick up two different ones.

Facilitator

- divide the group into 3s (with one or two 4s if needed to make numbers work – don't use pairs for this exercise)
- people take turns round their group of three to choose one of their cards and speak about it for 5 minutes:
 - how do you 'behave your beliefs' in relation to this aspect of life?
 - how hard or easy do you find this?
 - what helps you to do this?
 - what are the obstacles?
- when one person is speaking, the others listen, without commenting and without interjecting their own experience
- when each person has spoken about one card, go round again and do the same with each person's second card
- when everyone has had two turns, talk together in your threesome about any overlaps and differences, about what helps and hinders (for about 15 minutes)

Facilitator

Call time at 5 minute intervals to move people round their threesome, call time to move into general discussion, and call time at the end. If you have one or two 4s, they will need to move round after about 4 minutes.

Bring the whole group back together and share what helps and what hinders the process of 'behaving our beliefs'. You might want to write key points up on a flipchart.

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

EXERCISE 4

Shared believing – belonging and believing

- This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity

Time needed

60–80 minutes, depending on length of final group sharing

Materials needed

- scrap paper and pens/pencils
- flipchart and felt pens [*or substitute, if you don't have a flipchart*]

Facilitator opening comment

In the sociology of religion there is an area of interest and investigation around 'belonging and believing'. Traditionally, these went together. But it is a characteristic of the late twentieth century onwards that many people believe without belonging – they have their own firm religious or spiritual beliefs but they do not identify with any church or religious grouping; among Quakers (at least, liberal unprogrammed Quakers) there is quite strong evidence that we are people who primarily *belong*, rather than believe in a particular set of beliefs.

[see: Pink Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers: the silent revolution*. Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996]

So, in this exercise we will look at: some of the groupings to which we belong, to varying degrees; what the belief patterns and habits are of those groupings; and where we place ourselves in relation to those beliefs.

Activity

Ask people to work alone to start with (a large sheet of flip-chart paper and felt pen may be best, otherwise ordinary pen and paper):

- identify the significant (to you) groupings, networks or organisations you belong to; include your family (or maybe several different versions of 'family', such as your family of origin, the family you have made for yourself, etc); include your workplace (if any); include the people in your household (if any), any social or campaigning groups you belong to, as well as whatever groupings you identify as your spiritual community
- identify some of the overt beliefs, and also belief-habits of each of these. By 'belief habits' we mean what an intelligent Martian, who observes the group, might conclude these people believed
- identify where you feel congruence or dissonance (or maybe neutrality) in relation to the beliefs of these groups
- are there groups where you are able to feel congruent with each, but they would not feel congruent with each other?

- are there any group beliefs that, on reflection, you feel quite uncomfortable to be associated with? Does this make you uncomfortable with the group itself?
- are there any groups where you do feel discomfort, but where solidarity over-rides personal feelings (would you put limits on this)?

▲ Take about 20 minutes over this whole task

Then, divide the group into 3s or 4s, for about 15–20 minutes, share what your areas of comfort and discomfort are, and also any areas where you feel solidarity has to prevail over everything else.

Then, bring the group back together and in a whole group go-round, share what you discovered about yourself in relation to Quakers (or whatever you identify as your spiritual community). *[length of time for this depends on size of group]*

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

Study Pack no. 2

Good Lives... because we need to walk humbly as well as cheerfully – exploring sustainability and spirituality

Our spirituality and our engagement with sustainability

As Quakers our engagement with the world, our lived testimonies, spring from our spirituality. Attention to the spiritual roots of our lives will lead us to engage with the world's needs; and our engagement with the world will draw on our spiritual roots. It is therefore important, in a series of study sessions about aspects of sustainability, that we take time to consider our spiritual experience and the spiritual nurture that we need.

'Sustainability is an urgent matter for our Quaker witness. It is rooted in Quaker testimony and must be integral to all we do corporately and individually.'

From *A framework for action 2009–2014*

This is potentially a moment in history when Quakers are needed – needed to be faithful to Quaker testimonies; needed to be visible, to be speaking out, to be offering leadership; needed to 'do the right thing' in the face of external pressing circumstances. To accomplish this, we will have to deepen our spiritual grounding, alone and together, not solely for inward exploration but for the future of human society. A further challenge will be to find the corporate will, the rediscovery of a depth of corporate discipline, to undertake this together, wholly and fully – and not just as a matter of some individuals' personal choices.

We are the people alive now, we are the people who know about the problem – who else do we imagine is going to do what needs to be done? We need a consciousness and a spirituality that creates in us joy, gratitude, determination, courage and humility. And we cannot do this without spiritual practices and ways of living that will sustain and nourish us over the very long haul.

From *Costing Not Less Than Everything: sustainability and spirituality in challenging times* (The 2011 Swarthmore Lecture)

EXERCISE 1

What does our spirituality encompass and what is it good for?

- This is an introductory exercise and may be used as a stand-alone activity

Time needed

About 60 minutes, depending on group size and length of final whole-group sharing

Materials needed

It's helpful to have a small bell, or something to use as a gong, to signal time intervals.

Activity

Explain that this is an introductory listening and sharing exercise.

Break the group into 3s (ideally 3s – if that doesn't work numerically, include a 4, or even two 4s. This doesn't work so well in pairs and shouldn't be in groups larger than four).

You need a bit over five minutes per person, plus a bit; so if all your groups are 3s, allow 20–25 minutes; if you have some 4s allow half an hour.

Ask people to move physically into their small groups before you give them the detail of the task. Tell them that they won't be asked to share in the whole group anything they say in these 3s.

Tell the group that you aren't going to ask them to share in the whole group anything they say in these 3s. Once they're in 3s, tell them:

- do a go-round in your three, each person to have just over 5 minutes to speak while the other two listen
- tell them you'll signal time to change to the next person, so they can focus on listening
- each person to:
 - introduce themselves
 - and then tell the others in your group **one thing** about what your spirituality means to you – this could be your personal understanding of the word 'spirituality', or it could be about the ways in which your spirituality matters to you.
- after each person has spoken, allow another 5–10 minutes of open sharing within the small groups

Use the bell or gong to signal time to change round. Bring the group back together for a period of open sharing. Helpful prompting questions might be: how did you feel about doing that exercise? When you were speaking? When you were listening?

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

EXERCISE 2

Postcards

- This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity but the group will gain more from this if they have already done Exercise 1 in this study pack. It also builds on the basic go-round Introductions (see p.3).

Time needed

70–90 minutes, depending on length of final group sharing *[excluding pre-session preparation]*

Materials needed

- series of images, collected beforehand, sufficient to allow choice *[see explanation below]*
- flipchart paper and felt markers, or scrap paper and pens/pencils for the last part of the exercise

Pre-session preparation

- in advance of the session ask participants to collect a variety of images *[see explanation below]*
- before the session begins, spread the images face-up round the room (on tables if you have them, or on chairs or even on the floor, as long as people don't have difficulty bending).

General information and instructions for facilitator

How the 'postcards exercise' works:

You will need a variety of images for this exercise. You can use postcards, or you might (if you prepare far enough ahead) be able to find images from colour magazines, newspapers, greetings cards, photographs, etc. Many people who work regularly as facilitators have such a resource that they've collected over time. It's a very useful collection to assemble as it can be used in many settings.

In this situation, you might like to ask the group to help you. Starting two or three weeks before this session is to be run, ask everyone to find images and bring them.

You need varied images – representational, abstract, cartoon, photographic, 'pleasing', 'challenging'; people, plants, animals, reproductions of well-known paintings, landscapes, seascapes, buildings, still life, countryside, cityscapes... etc. You might want to include also a few that aren't an image but a very short quotation. (Not more than a couple of lines at most). You might have a few with single words on such as peace, joy, light and so forth, but this exercise is primarily about images rather than words.

You will need a large number of images for this activity – at least twice the number of cards as people in the group.

Activity

Once the cards are laid out ask people to walk round, slowly, looking at them all, and then choose one that speaks to them of their spiritual life at present. (You might suggest that they 'let one of the cards choose you'.)

Give people time to walk around, think about it, and consider which one calls to them. If two people want the same card they can go and sit together.

Once everyone has picked a card arrange the group into either 2s or 3s (or, in a very small group, you can do this as a whole group).

Now give each person in the group some time to explain to the other people/person what it was about the card that prompted them to choose it. About 5 minutes per person is about right.

As a secondary part of the exercise you could ask people to share in the whole group some of the key words that emerged for them. A good way of doing this, which doesn't put people too much 'on the spot', is to give each pair or small group a piece of flip-chart paper and a felt pen; ask them to put the words on the sheet (allow about 5 minutes for this). The small groups can then share their flip-chart sheets in the whole group, which takes the spotlight off the individual.

At the end, you can ask in the whole group if there is anything they noticed about the process of doing the exercise that they would like to share with everyone – play the timing of this by ear.

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

EXERCISE 3

Practising our practice

- This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity with a group in which people know each other very well. However, it works best in a sequence following Exercises 1 and 2 in this pack.

Time needed

About 60–90 minutes, depending on length of final group sharing

Materials needed

It's helpful to have a small bell, or something to use as a gong, to signal time intervals.

Activity

Split the group into 3s (ideally 3s – if that doesn't work numerically, include a 4, or even two 4s. This activity doesn't work so well in pairs and shouldn't be in groups larger than four).

First, ask people to move physically into their groups.

Then explain that:

- you'll take a few moments in silence, and then you will ask the first question to reflect on.
- each person should take about 5 minutes, in turn, to speak in response to the question
- they don't have to speak for the whole time – they can pause, be silent, for some of it
- you will ring the bell to signal each 5 minutes (so don't forget that you're keeping time!)
- you will repeat this process with two further questions
- there will be an opportunity to share in the whole group at the end, but it won't be a go-round, and there's no pressure to share

Then leave some silence...

Question 1: In terms of a spiritual discipline, what do you actually do? Is it helping?

*[5 mins/bell/5 mins/bell/5 mins]**

Bell...

Question 2: What do you intend to do, but don't actually accomplish? Why is that? (Time? Motivation? Resources?)

*[5 mins/bell/5 mins/bell/5 mins]**

Bell...

Question 3: Does your Quakerism help you? Do you need (or choose) to look elsewhere?

*[5 mins/bell/5 mins/bell/5 mins]**

Bell...

When this whole process is complete, ask people just to turn their chairs to face inwards (without physically moving back into a circle) and ask if there's anything anyone would like to share with the whole group – play the timing of this by ear.

** If your group numbers mean that you have some 4s, then you have a more complex time-keeping task! Ring the bell for the threes every 7 minutes, and quietly indicate to the fours to change every 5 minutes (or ask them to time themselves – one person to watch the time while another is speaking) – in this case the whole exercise will take a little longer.*

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

EXERCISE 4

Our spiritual life in the everyday

- This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity

Time needed

About 60–90 minutes, depending on length of final group sharing

Materials needed

- scrap paper and pens/pencils, enough for each person
- or you might prefer flip-chart paper and crayons or felt markers, if you are working with a group that might enjoy using these
- optional: postcards, or envelopes, for people to address to themselves, to be posted some time later.

Activity

Explain that this activity comes in two parts, first focussed on ourselves and second focussed on others.

1: Ourselves

Each person will need a piece of A4 paper and a pen – you'll start with what is known as a 'spider diagram' – in the centre of the piece of paper write down the aim:

"to make my spiritual life and concerns manifest in the world"

Now draw lines coming out from this central phrase like the legs of a spider. Along or at the end of each of these lines write down the different ways in which you could imagine making your spiritual life and concerns manifest in the world.

For example – along one line you could write, 'pray more'; on another, 'go on one demonstration a month'; on another, 'set up a spiritual activists support group in my meeting', and so forth.

Once you have written down a number of possibilities, sit with these for a while.

Think about which of these actions might work for you – think about time and resources needed, about what is realistic given your circumstances and so forth. Be very practical.

On another sheet of paper write down the one or two that you think you might really do, and identify what or who can help you in this. List what you would need to change in order to make this real (eg: making time, allocating money, managing your overall energy and activity levels, including other people, and so on).

▲ Allow about 20 minutes for all of this

If there are 6 or more of you, split into groups of 3 or 4 and share with each other about what you intend to do. Listen well to one another. If you are a small group of 5 or fewer, this sharing can be done in the whole group.

▲ Allow about 15–20 minutes for this

An optional addition is to write the intention(s) down on a self-addressed postcard (or in an envelope if that feels more comfortably private) and arrange for someone to send it to you in about 3 months time. It acts as both a support and accountability mechanism.

2: Others

Allow a time of open worship-sharing (see Appendix 2) on how we will take all that we have done together back into our regular lives – our homes, our local meetings, our communities, our campaigning activities... any other locations that are significant to us.

Let the worship-sharing gradually settle into meeting for worship.

Close

Close with a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

Study Pack no.3

Good Lives... because we're all in this together –
exploring aspects of individual and group behaviour

Introduction – for the first session of the group

Opening remarks relating to the whole study pack – the facilitator might:

- read out Appendix 3: 'Human behaviour – and why it matters to explore it'
- or say something similar in their own words
- or copy Appendix 3 as a handout, perhaps to be distributed before the group meets for the first time
- or invite the group to share their own ideas. If you invite the group to share ideas, it's a good idea to have a flip-chart and felt pens to write up suggestions as they're made, and not to let this run on for beyond about 5 minutes with a small group (say, 6–10) or 10 minutes with a larger group (say, 12 or more).

EXERCISE 1

What do we think we know about human beings?

- **This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity**

This is a simple introductory exercise that works for a group of 10 or more. In a smaller group there's unlikely to be sufficient variety for this to work well. The exercise helps the group get a sense of the range of views they hold among them. It's not intended to be 'in depth' but more a quick overview that also includes some interaction to help the group get to know each other.

Note to facilitator

Appendix 4 is a 'facilitator's crib-sheet' for this exercise, to help you with the background to the questions, and also to give you assistance with questions that might arise from participants.

Time needed

Between 1 hour and 1½ hours depending on group size

Preparation needed

You might want to look at the facilitator's crib-sheet if you're not already confident to explain any of the terms used in the exercise.

Activity

Ask everyone to stand up and push the chairs away to the sides of the room – you need a clear space. Explain that you're going to look together at a series of polarised views about the nature of human beings, some factually based, some more metaphorical. You're going to ask people to arrange themselves in a line – a spectrum – to indicate where their own view falls, at or between the extremes. They may need to talk with the people either side of them to get a sense if they're in the right place in the line in relation to others.

Facilitator now says: *[leave spaces between the instructions so that people have completed one before you move onto the next]*

Line-up 1: 'people' (nature/nurture)

- Consider whether you think people are shaped primarily by nature or nurture (explain this if anyone doesn't understand) *[there's a facilitator's crib-sheet on this topic at Appendix 4]*
- If you tend to think 'nature', move to that end of the room (indicate which)
- If you tend to think 'nurture', move to the other end of the room (indicate which)
- Form a line which shows the spectrum of views in the group
- Talk to people either side of you – are you in the right relative place to indicate your views? *[allow a few minutes for this, while people adjust themselves]*
- Then ask: 'would anyone like to say why you are standing where you are, and what your view is on this that puts you there?'

- Take a few minutes to hear what people have to say, and then ask if anyone thinks they should move, having heard what was said
- If anyone moves, ask them if they would like to say why

Line-up 2: 'most people' (selfish/generous &/or violent/wimpish)

Now explain that you'll try another one – choose one from the list below and repeat the sequence above. These themes that are more about behaviour – make it clear that you want them to respond about 'most people' – a generalised view of humanity. If you have a lot of people bunched in the middle, ask them to talk to each other in order to discover how to spread themselves out a bit.

- people are generally selfish/generous
- people are basically violent/wimpish

Decide if you want to do the other one as well.

Line-up 3: 'most people' (competitive/cooperative or nice/nasty or aggressive/passive)

Now say that you're going to do one more, but slightly differently. Choose **one** from this list:

- people are generally competitive/cooperative
- people are generally nice/nasty
- people are generally aggressive/passive

Start off by explaining that we'll first do it as before – what do you think about 'most people' on this spectrum? Use the method as above.

Line-up 4: 'Quakers' (same topic as chosen for 3)

Then say: now we'll do this again, but put 'Quakers' on this spectrum (same topic) – how do you think most Quakers are? And use the method as above.

Line-up 5: 'yourself' (same topic as chosen for 3)

And then lastly: same spectrum but put yourself on it – method as above.

Reflection

Then get the group to sit down and reflect on what came out of that; in particular, to reflect on any differences that showed up in the final line-up between 'people'/Quakers/self.

- First split into 3s or 4s and reflect together
- Then come back to the whole group to share

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

NB: If the group will be meeting next to do Exercise 2 [overleaf], it's a good idea to give everyone a copy of the handout on **Groupthink and Discernment** (See Appendix 5) and ask everyone to read it before the next session.

EXERCISE 2

Groupthink and Discernment

- This section is about reflecting on Groupthink, Discernment, the differences between the two, and the dangers of group discernment sliding into groupthink. The exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity providing that the group members have been given the handout *Groupthink and Discernment* (see Appendix 5).

Time needed

About 1½ hours

Materials needed

Handout on *Groupthink and Discernment* (see Appendix 5); flipchart and felt markers; questions for the small groups (as below) on slips of paper (one for each small group)

Preparation needed

Participants to have read the handout before the session

Facilitator to be ready to summarise handout as reminder, especially the concepts of 'risky shift' and 'cautious shift'

Breakout groups should be 3, 4 or 5 people (larger or smaller works less well). If you're working with a very small group, perhaps too small to divide, then have the whole group consider each scenario. It is helpful to have the questions written out to hand to the groups.

Activity

- remind people of the main points in the handout
- explain that we're going to be sharing aspects of our Quaker experience, so it's important to establish ground-rules of confidentiality – what's said in a group stays in the group in which it's said, no gossiping, no talking about it over tea afterwards
- divide people into small groups [4s if possible, some 3s or 5s if necessary]
- using the questions on the next page, divide the questions between the groups as works best for the number of people you have [*eg: one question per group, or two different groups considering each question, etc, depending on overall groups size – make sure all questions are covered*]
- in the groups, take a few minutes silence for each person to think about the question; then take 5 minutes each in a go-round (no discussion) for each person to share their own response; then take 10 minutes to draw out any parallels and other issues to share with the whole group (30 minutes in all). Tell the participants that they will not be asked to share their specific scenarios in the whole group.

Question 1: when have you been in a Quaker group when 'groupthink' was exhibited? What were the issues? What happened? Was either 'risky shift' or 'cautious shift' in evidence?

Question 2: when have you been in a social change group, campaigning group, or similar, when 'groupthink' was exhibited? What were the issues? What happened? Was either 'risky shift' or 'cautious shift' in evidence?

Question 3: when have you been in a group at work, or in some other formal situation when 'groupthink' was exhibited? What were the issues? What happened? Was either 'risky shift' or 'cautious shift' in evidence?

▲ Allow 30 minutes for this

- After the half hour has elapsed, bring the small groups back together, share the conclusions, issues, parallels, questions that arose from your small group discussions.
- Ask the group: how do these issues impact on discussion, action or campaigning around climate change issues? Write up responses on a flipchart

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

NB: If the group will be meeting next to do Exercise 3 [overleaf], it's a good idea to give everyone a copy of the handout on **Bystander Behaviour** (see *Appendix 6*) and ask everyone to read it before the next session.

EXERCISE 3

To identify and reflect on our own 'bystander' experiences

- This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity providing that the group members have been given the handout *Bystander Behaviour* (see Appendix 6)

Time needed

About 1½ hours

Materials needed

Handout on *Bystander Behaviour* (see Appendix 6); flipchart and felt markers; questions for the small groups (as below) on slips of paper (one for each small group)

Preparation needed

Facilitator ready to summarise handout as reminder; participants to have read the handout before the session

Breakout groups should be 3 or 4 people (larger or smaller works less well). If you're working with a very small group, perhaps too small to divide, then have the whole group consider each scenario. It is helpful to have the list of questions below copied as a handout for the groups.

Activity

Facilitator

- remind people of the main points in the handout
- split the group into 3s/4s (depending on overall number) – no bigger than 4s
- everyone take a few moments quietly to identify a time when you were an 'apathetic bystander' and a time when you were a bystander who intervened.

Questions

Facilitator: read these questions out and write them up on a flipchart where everyone can see them

- What were the situations?
- Who were the other people?
- What did/didn't you do?
- How did you feel?
- What happened?
- What were the outcomes – for you? For the others?
- How do you feel about it now?

- then take it in turns to share with the others in your small group – about 10 minutes each – explain the story of each of the events and as you tell it, try to identify for yourself what made the difference for you between intervening or not.
- bring everyone back together into one group
- share in the whole group what made the difference between 'apathy' and 'intervention' [remind people that they're not being asked to share the detail of the stories]
- what made the difference at Step 3 in the intervention model – the moment of assuming responsibility for the situation? Reflect and discuss.
- reflect on this in relation to the practices of personal discernment.
- how do we nurture spiritual practices in ourselves and others that enable us act when the moment requires it?

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

EXERCISE 4

The parable of the Good Samaritan in the light of 'Bystander' ideas

- This exercise works best if it follows on from Exercise 3 on our own 'bystander' experiences; it needs 12 or more people in the group for it to work well.

Time needed

About 1½ hours.

Materials needed

The Good Samaritan story (as below, or in some other version) with a copy for everyone

Preparation needed

You need the chairs arranged in a horseshoe, with one chair extra in the open space of the horseshoe. It's very helpful if this chair can be distinguished in some way (eg: you might have available a chair that looks different from the others; or you could put a cushion, or a throw, on it, to distinguish it).

Note to facilitator

This exercise uses a method called 'empty chair bible study'. This format for bible study works for those very familiar with the text and also those who are new to it. It works if there are people with scholarly understanding as well as for those with a devotional approach to scripture. It can also make a text that seems very familiar suddenly open up in new ways.

The parable of the Good Samaritan

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'

Luke 10, 30–35 (RSV)

Activity

Facilitator

- have the group seated around the horseshoe (make sure that there are no extra chairs except the designated 'empty chair') with the single chair left empty, as described above
- pass round the copies of the parable, and explain that we're going to read it out loud, twice, going round the circle, each person reading one sentence, and then on to the next person for the next sentence, and so on. Ask someone to start and then indicate which way you'll go round. Pause at the end of the first time through the passage, and then continue in the same way for the second reading
- explain that anyone can now ask a question to the text – what this means is that anyone in the group can ask a question of any of the characters or even inanimate objects in the text – for example in the good Samaritan text someone might ask what it was like to be the priest passing by – what did they feel, what did they think about where were they going etc. Such questions are just addressed to the whole group
- after someone has asked a question anyone can go and answer the question by going and sitting in the chair, and speaking as the character or object about whom the question has been asked, eg: "I'm the Levite, and the reason I walked past was..."
- more than one person can answer the same question
- asking and answering questions can go on for a while – 30–40 minutes is good
- when you feel it's right to draw this part to a close, have a short period of worship sharing – see Appendix 2 – (about 15–20 minutes) about the experience as a whole.

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

Study Pack no.4

*Good Lives... because it takes a village to raise a child –
exploring aspects of community*

Good Lives – *because it takes a village to raise a child*

A greener future must include, among many other factors, a re-created and re-enlivened localism. For sustainability, we need communities where most of what we need can be found within walking and cycling distance. This represents a huge shift from what most of us are accustomed to, and will require cultural transformation and revitalised, re-imagined communities. It will challenge many of our ideas of individual freedom and choice, and runs counter to all the trends in this country since the Second World War. This pack represents a small foray into this vast territory.

EXERCISE 1

Experiences of community

- This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity.

Time needed

Between 1 hour and 1½ hours depending on group size; if the group members are not already all known to each other, allow extra time for introductions

Preparation needed

Set the room up with tables and chairs, arranged for people to work in 3s or 4s at each table; or, if people are able to work on the floor, set up floor spaces similarly.

Materials needed

Tables to work at, if members of your group are unable to sit on the floor – enough tables for people to work in groups of 3 or 4; Flip chart paper and felt pens for each small group

Activity

Divide the group randomly into small groups of 3 or 4 (ideally 4); sit one group at each table (or space on the floor) with flip chart paper and pens. If numbers don't work exactly, make groups of 3s and 4s (5 is too big for this activity).

▲ Allow 5 minutes for this

Ask everyone to think about the word 'community': what does the word conjure up? Write down words or concepts, or draw images, that you associate with it.

▲ Allow 10–15 minutes for this, depending on how the 'buzz' in the room is feeling

With people remaining in their groups, but turn to face centre, share – group by group – what's on flip-chart sheets; stick the sheets up round the room.

▲ Allow 5–15 minutes for this, depending on the size of the group

Now form new groups, so as to mix everyone up, as follows (allow 5 minutes):

- One person in each group to remain seated
- The other three stand up and move on clockwise round the room: person 1 goes to the next group round, person 2 to the group after, and person 3 to the group after that. If you have only three groups, two people remain seated and two move in each case.

In the new groups, ask: what experiences have you had in the past of different kinds of communities? (both positive and negative experiences). What have you learned? Share in your group (*no need to write this*).

▲ Allow 10 minutes for this

Bring the whole group back to one circle for open sharing time (creative listening/worship sharing style – see Appendix 2); allow 15–20 minutes for this, depending on the size of the group and how the sharing is going.

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

EXERCISE 2

Mapping our own communities

- This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity.

Time needed

Between 1 hour and 1½ hours depending on group size.

Preparation needed

It's best to use flip-chart paper for this exercise, but if you don't have access to any, you can prepare a substitute. Tape four sheets of A4 paper together to form a larger (A2 size) drawing and writing area. Turn the paper over so the tape is underneath.

Materials needed

Tables to work at, if members of your group are unable to sit on the floor. Large sheet of paper (flip chart, or see above) and felt pens for each individual. Crayons are also ok. Flipchart and easel useful.

Activity

Get people seated comfortably with their paper and pens – explain that they'll be working alone and then sharing in pairs, so sit near someone they can easily turn to when it comes to conversation time. (If numbers aren't even, allow for one 3 for sharing). Then (after people are settled) explain how the session will work: you'll be asking a series of prompting questions – people can write, draw, whatever, to create a representation of their own communities. The questions will come in batches, and what is on their paper will build up over the whole session.

▲ Allow 10 minutes for all of this setup

Start asking the prompting questions below, leaving time between each for people to respond – keep an eye on the level of activity to judge when to move on. People will work at different rates, so you need a kind of average time. Allow enough time for people to have created a response, but not so much that they've finished and are getting bored – keep the pace moving.

- Where do you live? Talking here about your geographical local neighbourhood – 'local' meaning walking and cycling radius.
- What is it like? Eg: is it beautiful? Is there green space?
- Do you feel safe there?
- What facilities does it have?
- What is it like socially?
- What do you value about it?
- What does it lack (for you)?

▲ Allow 10–15 minutes for this

Share with your partner.

▲ Allow about 5 minutes for this

In the whole group (don't ask people to move – just from where they're sitting): is there anything that anyone would like to share with the whole group? (not a go-round – just sharing as it comes). Write up key points on a flipchart if possible.

▲ Allow 5–10 minutes, depending on how much sharing is offered

Return to working individually on their own sheets of paper:

- What needs can be met locally?
- What do people have to go outside the area for?
- What do you choose to go outside for? (think about work, buying food, clothing, larger purchases; leisure and entertainment).
- What local resources are there? (think about shops, industry, farming).
- How much of your social/spiritual/cultural needs can be met locally?

▲ This is probably about 10–15 minutes

Share with your partner

▲ Allow about 10 minutes for this

Pairs join to 4s to share issues arising.

▲ Allow about 10 minutes for this

(if you don't have an even number of pairs, there will have to be one 6; if it happened that you had a threesome, make sure that they end up in a 5 with a pair, not in a 7 with two pairs!)

Bring the group back together (this time physically move people into one circle) – is there anything that anyone would like to share with the whole group? (not a go-round – just sharing as it comes). Write up key points on a flipchart if possible.

▲ Allow 10–15 minutes, depending on how much sharing is offered

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

EXERCISE 3

Concerns about our communities

- This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity.

Time needed

Between 1 hour and 1½ hours depending on group size; if the group members are not already all known to each other, allow extra time for introductions

Preparation needed

Set the room up with tables and chairs, arranged for people to work in 3s or 4s at each table; or, if people are able to work on the floor, set up floor spaces similarly.

Materials needed

Tables to work at, if members of your group are unable to sit on the floor – enough tables for people to work in groups of 3 or 4; Flip chart paper and felt pens for each small group

Activity

Explain that this session is to look at concerns about our communities – concerns about aspects present or absent – and also to relate that to the wider national community/culture.

Split into small groups, 3s and 4s, according to the kind of place we live – eg: similar kinds of suburbs, or similar city centre areas, or similar rural areas. If your group members are all very local to each other, then split into geographic neighbourhood groups. You're trying to create small groups where the experience of the people in the group will be similar.

Write up some key ideas, prompt points, on a flip chart where everyone can see it, eg: safety, green space, beauty of environment, inter-generation interaction, friendliness, crime, litter, vandalism, anti-social behaviour, late night noise... ask the group for some other suggestions for aspects of local community that are important, positively or negatively.

▲ Allow about 10 minutes for all this up to this point

Discuss these issues in the small groups – how does your locality fare on these points? – and record findings on flip charts

▲ Allow about 15 minutes

Everyone return to circle – each group share and stick up the flip chart sheets around the room.

▲ Allow about 5–10 minutes, depending on the size of the group

Working now in the whole group: what about the bigger picture – national issues – list concerns and write up on a flip chart as they're spoken.

▲ Allow about 10 minutes, depending on the size of the group

Draw the circle round to close it but make sure everyone can see the flip chart.

Using creative listening/worship sharing (see Appendix 2):

- How much of this list are particularly Quakerly concerns?
- To what extent are our concerns from first-hand experience or from the media?
- How do people respond to the media – how do we apportion our energies? (eg: do we 'keep up with the news'? or is that too dispiriting?)

▲ Allow 20–25 minutes, depending on the size of the group

Then, for general discussion: if these are our *concerns*, what do we *need* from our communities? What do we ourselves need, what do people in general need – in terms of practical issues, spiritual/inner fulfilment, other areas?

▲ Allow about 10 minutes, depending on the size of the group

What about the good news? What is already happening that's positive and creative? Is your local meeting involved in any of the 'good news' activities?

▲ Allow about 10 minutes, depending on the size of the group

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

EXERCISE 4

Our community and culture – imagining how it could be

- This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity.

Time needed

This can take anything from 1 to 2 hours depending on the size of the group, and on how long you want to let it run.

Preparation needed

You will need a range of collage materials (see below) – a week or so before you plan to run this session, ask people to collect materials to bring along to the session.

Before the session starts, set the room up with tables pushed together to make one large working area; or, if **everyone** is able to work on the floor, set up a large floor space.

Materials needed

- Using half a dozen or so (depending on the size of the group) sheets of flip chart paper, join them edge to edge with tape to make one large sheet of paper that will cover the whole of the table (or cover a suitable area of floor); after you've taped the sheets, turn the whole thing over so the taped side is underneath. If you don't have access to flip chart paper, you might be able to persuade your local butchers shop to let you have some sheets of their meat-wrapping paper; or you could buy a roll of cheap wallpaper lining – two lengths of this, taped side by side, will work.
- You will need a supply of collage material eg: coloured magazines, bits of yarn and cloth, scraps of coloured wrapping or tissue paper, bits of shells, buttons, fir cones, seed pods... anything you can lay your hands on! Ask members of the group all to bring materials
- You will then need glue sticks (at least half as many glue sticks as there are people in the group) plus lots of crayons, felt pens of different thicknesses and colours, coloured pencils; if you're in a space where it's ok to use paint and water, then that's also good, but most places aren't suitable.

Set the room up ahead of the group starting time.

Activity

Explain that this session is to imagine the kind of community and culture we would ideally like to live in – let our imaginations be free. We can use words, images, abstract shapes, colours, patterns, pictures... whatever feels right for us. We're all going to work together on the same big sheet of paper – we have to accommodate to each other in terms of how we're going to do that, how we share and overlap space, and so on. We'll have to discover as we go along how that's going to work.

Then let people work for 30–45 minutes, depending on the size of the group and how it's going – judge the right end point by the level of engaged activity in the room: stop while there's still some buzz around, and most people are still focussed on what they're doing, but maybe one or two people are starting to look as though they've stopped.

▲ Give 5 minutes warning before stopping, so people can finish off what they're doing

Stop the activity, bring people away from the sheet of paper, to sit down and reflect:

- what was it like doing this activity?
- what role did you take, what kinds of interactions did you find yourself in?
- how did you accommodate to other people, and vice versa?
- are these your usual patterns?
- if not, how was it different?

▲ Allow 15–20 minutes for this, depending on the size of the group

Then, invite people to stand or walk around and look at what's been created together. Invite informal free-flowing sharing:

- What is it saying to you?
- What did you try to put into it?
- What has been created?

▲ Allow 20–25 minutes for this, depending on the size of the group

Bring the group back to a seated circle and invite general discussion:

- What are the issues arising for you?
- What would it feel like to live like this?
- What would be the benefits now?

▲ Allow 15–20 minutes for this, depending on the size of the group

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

Optional additional session

You might like, as a group, to watch some inspirational and informative DVD(s). There are many possible ones available.

You might use the 'Transition Movie', now called '*In Transition 1.0*'. It lasts about 50 minutes and raises so many issues that you might prefer to look at it in several separate sections to allow time for discussion. You can download it from www.vimeo.com/8029815

'*In Transition 2.0*' is now also available, and the DVD may be purchased from www.intransitionmovie.com/shop/in-transition-2-0-dvd/

Another useful one is *The Turning Point: a return to community*, available to purchase from www.theturningpointfilm.co.uk

Show the DVD(s)

General discussion

- what are the issues arising, for you?
- is this model of community appealing to you, or not? Why is that?
- how does community affect us – in terms chores, behaviour, etc?
- what holds communities together (eg: religious/spiritual)?
- what are the implications for our Quaker community?

Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.

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APPENDIX 1

Pack 1: Beliefs and values

Optional background reading – Cycles of Change

There are many models of the ways in which individuals, groups or organisations go through cycles of change.

The simplest of all is shown in **Figure 1**

In other words: What is new; or: what have we noticed; or: what is disturbing the status quo? What is the meaning and significance of this? As a consequence of our understanding, what should we now do differently?

Another way of considering this cycle is to use a process called *action enquiry* or *action learning*. These ideas are based on David Kolb's theory about how we learn and change and are used in everything from town planning and design, to co-counselling support. *[David A. Kolb (born 1939) is an American educational theorist whose interests and publications focus on experiential learning, the individual and social change.]*

In Kolb's cycle the four stages are described as shown in **Figure 2**

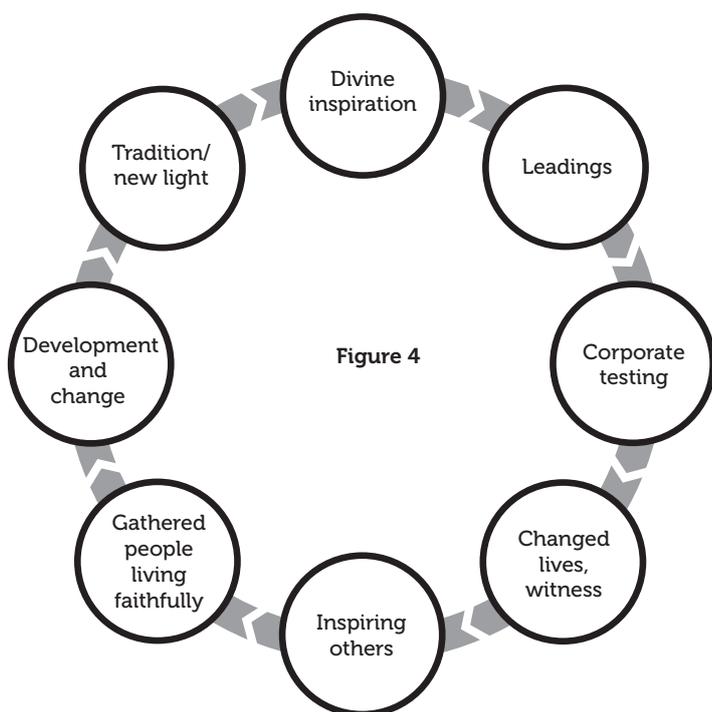
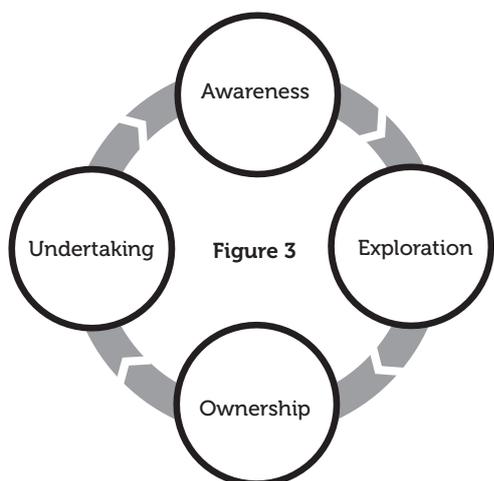
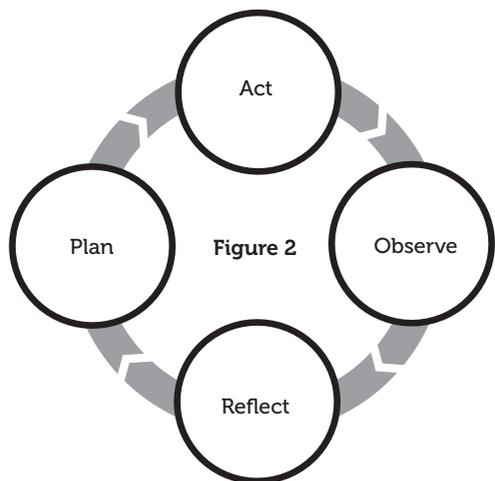
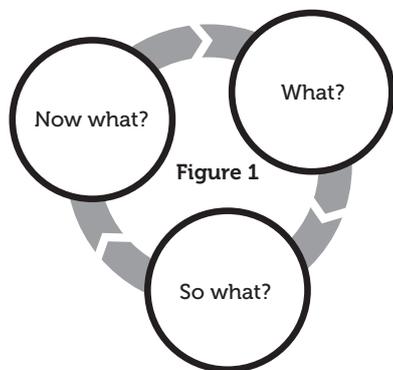
Usually the first stage is to observe what's going on, then comes reflection, followed by planning and finally acting on what we have decided. This is followed by a period of observing what we've done – working out if further changes are needed and once more planning and acting – a cycle rather than a linear process.

There are other versions of this – **Figure 3** shows discernment. This similar cycle can be used to help us understand the process of discernment – where in the context of a spirited enquiry we are endeavouring to find what it is that 'chooses us'. Here the cycle might be described as one where we are endeavouring to come to awareness, to explore, to own what it is that calls to us, and to then move to undertake it. All of this is done in the context of dependence on the Spirit.

In *Engaging with the Quaker Testimonies: a Toolkit* (Quaker Books, 2007, p.9) there is a much more complex model of how Quakers as a body have responded to outer and inward promptings, to changes in the world and to movements of the Spirit.

In words, we might say that our corporate discipline is that our **inspirations** and **leadings** should be **tested** in the community of Friends (in whatever way is appropriate). The way we live will then **witness** to these leadings, and the example of our lives will **inspire** and inform others. In doing this in the context of the community of Friends, we are strengthened as a **gathered people** and are enabled to embrace further **change and development**. The constant challenge is to be faithful to the wisdom of our **tradition** whilst at the same time being open and responsive to **new light** – a movement that brings us back to the Spirit as the source of our **inspirations**... thus completing the circle, **Figure 4**.

(Adapted from *Engaging with the Quaker Testimonies*, pp. 8–9)



APPENDIX 2

Worship sharing

Worship sharing is a kind of guided meditation. By focusing on a particular question, it helps us to explore our own experience and share with each other more deeply than we would in normal conversation. It seeks to draw us into sacred space, where we can take down our usual defences, and encounter each other in 'that which is eternal'.

The guidelines for worship sharing have been evolving among Friends for the past half century, drawing on a number of different sources. They can be summarised as follows:

1. The convener or leader should define a question as the focus for sharing which is simple, open ended, and oriented toward individual experience. It might be a question about the spiritual journey; or it might be related to an issue that is exercising or dividing the meeting; it might relate to a book you have been reading together. The question should be chosen prayerfully, to meet the particular needs of the group at that time. There are no stock questions.
2. The convener then explains the basic rules for sharing:
 - Reach as deeply as you can into the sacred centre of your life.
 - Speak out of the silence, and leave a period of silence between speakers.
 - Speak from your own experience, about your own experience. Concentrate on feelings and changes rather than on thoughts or theories.
 - Do not respond to what anyone else has said, either to praise or to refute.
 - Listen carefully and deeply to what is spoken. Expect to speak only once, until everyone has had a chance to speak.
 - Respect the confidentiality of what is shared.
3. Some leaders feel that going around the circle makes it easier for everyone to speak. Others prefer to ask people to speak as they are ready. Explain which practice you would like to follow. In either case, participants should know that they have the option of 'passing' or not speaking.
4. Allow at least half an hour for a group of five or six to share their responses to a single question, and at least an hour for a larger group. If you have more than a dozen people, it would be better to divide into smaller groups to make sure that everyone has a chance to participate.
5. Enter into worshipful silence, and begin.

Other Resources

Patricia Loring, *Listening Spirituality*, vol. 1, pp. 168–76

Baltimore yearly Meeting's guidelines are very useful:

<http://about.bym-rsf.net/worship/worship-sharing/>

Friends General Conference provides 'Worship Sharing Guidelines'

www.fgcquaker.org/resources/worship-sharing-guidelines

Click on the link for the PDF at the foot of this page

The Britain Yearly Meeting *Testimonies Toolkit* produced by Quaker Peace and Social Witness has a page of guidelines at the end of this section

www.quaker.org.uk/files/Sustainability-Toolkit-Nov-11-Section-6.pdf

All web links correct at time of going to press

APPENDIX 3

Pack 3: Individual and group behaviour

Human behaviour – and why it matters to explore it

We all carry round inside ourselves a jumbled mix of beliefs about ‘what human beings are like’. Often, we won’t have examined these beliefs very much, but they nevertheless affect how we behave towards others and, consequently how others in turn react to us. Thus these beliefs can become self-reinforcing. Also, government policies and institutional ways of working are based on the beliefs held by the people in power – so it’s really important to examine some of these. The following extract is taken from *Costing Not Less than Everything: spirituality and sustainability in challenging times* (The 2011 Swarthmore Lecture), Chapter 3:

Research in the fields of neuroscience, behavioural economics and animal behaviour combine to give all of us important messages about the nature of humanity, messages that give an added dimension to some of our deeply-held religious and spiritual beliefs. We are a deeply social species, to a degree that challenges fundamentally the western notion of individualism. Our beliefs, habits and behaviour are shaped, far more than we can realise, by those around us – not only by our immediate family and friends, but also by their families and friends. The other side of this, of course, is that our beliefs, habits and behaviour can influence others, our immediate associates and beyond. Making changes in our own lives will cause ripples to spread outwards from ourselves. ‘Witness’ does have an effect.

We know that cooperation is at least as significant in our evolutionary make-up as are aggression and competition. Throughout human history (and earlier, encompassing our pre-hominid ancestors, and our nearest biological cousins among the great apes), while the aggressive and competitive individual will prevail, a group composed of cooperative individuals will prevail over a group of competitive individuals riven by in-fighting. And being sociable is good for you – strong social ties have a major beneficial effect on physical and mental well-being.

Recent research suggests that fairness and empathy are hard-wired into our brains. Empathic, cooperative, fair-dealing traits are not superficial aspects of human behaviour, not merely a thin skin of civilisation – they are embedded in our evolutionary past and in our biology. This means that the spiritual perception and the religious world-view are not ‘soft’ models that can easily be swept away by antagonistic political or economic ideologies. That is not to say, of course, that these traits cannot be over-ridden or distorted beyond recognition by adverse circumstances – human beings are highly malleable and adaptable – but it does mean that timeless spiritual and religious values have a new foot-hold in the secular world.

The embeddedness of these traits in us also points to a framework within which to approach the changes we all need to make to the way we live: appeal to the best in people, in ourselves and others. To proceed by scaring ourselves and everyone else will create only paralysis, resentment or denial. To go forward, using the best of what humanity can be, expecting the best of ourselves and everyone else, leading by example and doing so in a confident and cheerful manner, has the backing of science as well as spirituality.

APPENDIX 4

Pack 3: Individual and group behaviour Facilitator's Crib-sheet for Exercise 1

It's unlikely that either extreme pole of these pairs is a tenable view, but the two ends define a spectrum, and the point is for people to locate themselves on the spectrum.

1. *'Nature' and 'Nurture'*: being shaped by 'nature' refers to the view that most of what a human being is comes with the genetic/biological package, and than most of what makes us the individual we are is already there at birth; being shaped by 'nurture' refers to the view that a human being is very malleable, and is mostly shaped by their environment and upbringing – in the extreme, this is the 'blank sheet' model, that we arrive with nothing, and everything is programmed into us by our early environment. Neither view, at the extreme, is tenable as it's clear that we're a mixture of nature and nurture, and that the two interact in many ways. However, scientists – as well as 'lay' individuals – vary in their view as to how much prominence should be given to nature vs nurture; and these beliefs can shape social and political policies.
2. *Selfish vs generous*: this links to the old question about original sin or original blessing – what is the underlying nature of the human animal? The extreme of the 'selfish' pole derives from a simplistic understanding of Darwinism that believes we're all in competition with each other, and only laws and strong social norms keep us from behaving like that. The 'generous' pole takes its cue from the fact that humans are a social species, and have evolved to be cooperative within our own social group. This view often extends to the belief that we can learn to see the whole of humanity as our 'own' social group, and therefore be cooperative and generous to all human beings.
3. *Violent vs wimpish*: are we inherently 'red in tooth and claw' (like the 'selfish' pole of no.2) or are we really softies unless we've been turned violent by events in our lives?
4. *Competitive/cooperative*

nice/nasty

aggressive/passive

These are all other ways of approaching the issue addressed in no.4 above. What is particularly interesting is if people put themselves in different places when the words change – perhaps they different associations with these particular words.

Change the designated ends of the room around so that the same people aren't always at the same place in the room – make sure people move about.

APPENDIX 5

Pack 3: Individual and group behaviour

Handout for Exercise 2: Groupthink and Discernment

Groupthink is a type of thought exhibited by group members who try to reach consensus without critically testing, analysing, and evaluating ideas, because they want to minimise conflict.

Individual creativity, uniqueness, and independent thinking are lost in the pursuit of group cohesiveness; so are the advantages of reasonable balance in choice and thought that might normally be obtained by making decisions as a group.

During groupthink, members of the group avoid promoting viewpoints outside the comfort zone of consensus thinking. A variety of motives for this may exist, such as a desire to avoid being seen as foolish, or a desire to avoid embarrassing or angering other members of the group. Groupthink may cause groups to make hasty, irrational decisions, where individual doubts are set aside, for fear of upsetting the group's balance. The term is frequently used pejoratively, with hindsight.

Groupthink has been defined as a way of thinking and behaving that happens especially in cohesive groups, when the members' desire for unanimity overrides their motivation to be realistic about possible alternative courses of action.

The closer the group is, the less likely they are to raise questions that might break the cohesion. Then, consensus-driven decisions can be the result of the following practices of 'groupthinking':

1. Incomplete survey of alternatives
2. Incomplete survey of objectives
3. Failure to examine risks of preferred choice
4. Failure to re-evaluate previously rejected alternatives
5. Poor information search
6. Selection bias in collecting information
7. Failure to work out contingency plans.

It's now thought that groupthink and its symptoms are very widespread.

Group Think and 'Risky Shift/Cautious Shift'

The judgments and decision processes of people in groups often differ from how they would make up their minds if acting alone. The notions of 'group-think' and 'risky shift/cautious shift' refer to observed processes of group dynamics.

- A. With *Risky Shift*, the group becomes more radical and willing to take a risk. The group takes a gamble, more than an individual usually would when making the same decision.
- B. With *Cautious Shift*, the group shifts to being more conservative than solo decision-makers would be.

Note: 'cautious shift' is associated with 'bystander apathy', the subject of Exercise 3

Discernment

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... We must recognise, however, that a minority view may well continue to exist. When we unite with a minute offered by our clerk, we express, not a sudden agreement of everyone present with the prevailing view, but rather a confidence in our tried and tested way of seeking to recognise God's will. We act as a community, whose members love and trust each other.

From **Quaker Faith and Practice 3:06**

A threshing meeting denotes a meeting at which a variety of different, and sometimes controversial, opinions can be openly, and sometimes forcefully, expressed, often in order to defuse a situation before a later meeting for worship for business.

From **Quaker Faith and Practice 12:26**

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.

From **Quaker Faith and Practice 3:02**

In all our meetings for church affairs we need to listen together to the Holy Spirit. We are not seeking a consensus; we are seeking the will of God. The unity of the meeting lies more in the unity of the search than in the decision which is reached. We must not be distressed if our listening involves waiting, perhaps in confusion, until we feel clear what God wants done.

Quaker Faith and Practice 2:89

What is required is a willingness to listen to what others have to say rather than to persuade them that one's own point of view represents what is right and proper. It also requires restraint... When conflict comes, as it does, and the temptation to compromise – to seek consensus – is resisted, the sense of divine guidance is unmistakably registered. New possibilities for a way forward which nobody has thought of emerge out of discussion.

From **Quaker Faith and Practice 2:90**

APPENDIX 6

Pack 3: Individual and group behaviour

Handout for Exercise 3: Bystander behaviour

There is substantial field of research into human behaviour that goes under the name of 'bystander intervention' or 'bystander apathy'.

Modern research on bystander behaviour began after an incident in the USA that shocked the public and became a matter of serious national debate and soul-searching. This was the murder of Kitty Genovese in 1964, when 38 neighbours watched and listened but did not act to help and did not call the police. However, the neighbours' reactions were not much different from those in other emergency situations where people 'watch the drama in helpless fascination'. Why do people, who are so willing to help in non-emergency situations, not offer help in emergencies?

First, there are few positive rewards in an emergency. Life may be threatened for both the victims and the helpers.

Secondly, an emergency is, by definition, an unusual event, so reactions are untrained and unrehearsed. An emergency comes without warning and so there are no practised responses to fall back on, yet it requires instant action, putting the potential helper under a lot of stress.

Research in many situations has demonstrated that when someone happens upon an ambiguous or unfamiliar situation, the person may look to others' behaviours to see if they observe it as an emergency. An individual, seeing the inaction of others, will judge the situation as less serious than if that person were alone.

Other studies have shown that togetherness reduces fear even when the danger isn't reduced. It may have been that people in groups were less afraid and thus less likely to act. Or people were inhibited to show fear in a group situation. However, from post-interviews it was clear that people didn't act because they concluded the situation wasn't really a threatening situation.

A potential intervener must make a series of decisions:

- notice the event and then interpret it as an emergency
- decide if s/he has a responsibility to act
- if so, decide what form the assistance should take
- decide whether help should be offered directly or the emergency services be called
- decide how to act and implement their choice.

More recent detailed research has uncovered the many factors that influence people's willingness to help in a situation they find themselves in:

- in ambiguous situations, (i.e., it is unclear if there is an emergency) people are much less likely to offer assistance than in situations involving a clear-cut emergency; they are also less likely to help in unfamiliar environments than in familiar ones
- the likelihood of helping increases as the perceived personal cost (time, money, inconvenience) to ourselves declines
- the presence of others may diffuse and diminish the sense of individual responsibility
- people are more willing to help others whom they perceive to be similar to themselves (in dress, appearance, ethnicity, etc).
- people are generally more willing to help others when they are in a good mood
- women in need are more likely than men in need to receive assistance from strangers
- people are much more likely to help others they judge to be 'innocent victims' than those they believe have brought their problems on themselves.

APPENDIX 7

Minute 36 of Britain Yearly Meeting 2011

"Sustainability is an urgent matter for our Quaker witness. It is rooted in Quaker testimony and must be integral to all we do corporately and individually."

(A framework for action 2009–2014)

A concern for the Earth and the well-being of all who dwell in it is not new, and we have not now received new information which calls us to act. Rather we are renewing our commitment to a sense of the unity of creation which has always been part of Friends' testimonies. Our actions have as yet been insufficient.

John Woolman's words in 1772 sound as clearly to us now:

"The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age."

(Quaker faith & practice 25.01)

So we have long been aware that our behaviour impoverishes the earth and that it is our responsibility both to conserve the earth's resources and to share them more equitably. Our long-standing commitment to peace and justice arises in part from our understanding of the detrimental effect of war and conflicts, in damaging communities and squandering the earth's resources. As a yearly meeting we have considered this before, and in 1989 we adopted The World Council of Churches' concern for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, minuting that this concern

"grows from our faith, and cannot be separated from it. It challenges us to look again at our lifestyles and reassess our priorities, and makes us realise the truth of Gandhi's words: 'Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is'."

In 2009 the Yearly Meeting endorsed the statement made by Meeting for Sufferings on 'A Quaker response to the crisis of climate change'. This statement was addressed to the Copenhagen Conference and all Friends and meetings were urged to take up its challenges.

In preparation for this yearly meeting gathering, in the background reading, in many of the events and activities, in the Swarthmore lecture and in yesterday's introduction and threshing groups, prophetic voices have prompted us to wrestle once again with the immensity of the challenge we face.

We are grateful to those Friends who have responded in their own lives and who have encouraged and informed us. We know that some Friends and meetings have made changes to reduce their impact on the environment, and that there is much more which may yet be done.

We need to arrive at a place in which we all take personal responsibility to make whatever changes we are called to. At the same time, we need to pledge ourselves to corporate action. The environmental crisis is enmeshed with global economic injustice and we must face our responsibility as one of the nations which has unfairly benefited at others' expense, to redress inequalities which, in William Penn's words, are 'wretched and blasphemous.' **(Quaker faith & practice 25.13)**

The action we are ready to take at this time is to make a strong corporate commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community. This will require a process to establish a baseline of current witness and a framework in which individual Friends and local meetings can share their successes.

We need to allocate adequate resources to this process. This process needs to be joyful and spirit-led, with room for corporate discernment at local, area and national level. We believe this corporate action will enable us to speak truth to power more confidently. Growing in the spirit is a consequence of taking action, and action flows from our spiritual growth; here is the connectedness we seek. Only a demanding common task builds community.

'Whom shall I send?' We hear the call to this demanding common task. How will we answer it?

We have been reminded of the current work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to work with area meetings and our staff to make better known our current witness and to give thought to appropriate aims for our corporate commitment and the framework which will allow our successes to be shared. We ask them to look at the priorities in *A Framework for Action* and ask Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees to see where there are resources that can be allocated to these priorities to support our corporate commitment and to take our action forward. In addition we ask Meeting for Sufferings to look at the issues of public policy that we might be led to adopt and advocate in the political arena.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees to report back to Yearly Meeting each year on the progress of this concern.

We ask area meetings to consider how truth prospers with regard to sustainability, taking care to relate this to all our testimonies – peace, truth, simplicity, equality and care for the environment.

We encourage local and area meetings to practise speaking truth to power at local level by establishing relationships with all sections of local communities, including politicians, businesses and schools, to encourage positive attitudes to sustainability.

To individual Friends we issue a clear call to action to consider the effect of their lives on the world's limited resources and in particular on their carbon usage. We ask Friends to keep informed about the work being done locally, centrally and throughout the Quaker world and to educate themselves.

But above all that, Friends keep in their hearts that this action must flow from nowhere but love.

If we are successful in what we set out to do, we will need to be accountable to one another through the grief and fear that radical change will provoke.

"I may have faith enough to move mountains; but if I have not love, I am nothing... Love keeps no score of wrongs, takes no pleasure in the sins of others, but delights in the truth. There is no limit to its faith, its hope, its endurance. Love will never come to an end."

(1 Corinthians ch.13: verses 2–8 (parts), New English Bible)

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