**A simple guide for online Meeting for Worship for all ages**

Quaker Life and Woodbrooke have produced a guide to online worship here: https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/Online-worship-advice​​. This includes a helpful YouTube video guide to using zoom, that could be shared with people before your meeting.

**Before**

1. Send emails with the time of the meeting, the zoom link and the meeting password to those attending. There is a sample email at the end of these guidelines. Remind people that this is an all age meeting and there might be unfamiliar faces on screen. Let parents know they should stay with children throughout the meeting.
2. If others are leading aspects, such as readings, be sure to send them what they need in advance.
3. If people need resources to join in with activities, this should be communicated remembering that it might be hard to get hold of certain things, so keep it simple.
4. State how long the meeting will last – half an hour is probably a good length of time for many people on screen.
5. Share with people what you will be doing in the meeting so people can come knowing what to expect. Explain that everyone will be on mute so there is no need to worry about children making noise or asking questions. A way of encouraging smaller children to join in with the silence is to have them on a lap or snuggled up.
6. There are two sample examples of online meeting for worship which follow or the *Journeys in the Spirit* resource has outlines for all age worship adaptable to suit an online meeting: https://together.woodbrooke.org.uk/resource.php?r=JC.

**Event**

1. Set up the zoom meeting, the host and co-host(s) to be in place before the advertised start.
2. Welcome families as they arrive. Introduce the hosts.
3. The host should give brief and simple instructions on how zoom works. If there is going to be time for sharing, then they should let people know how this is going to happen i.e. raising a hand and that the host will unmute when appropriate.
4. Let people know what will happen in the meeting and any simple ground rules.
5. Proceed with your prepared meeting for worship for all ages.

**After**

1. The facilitators / hosts of zoom should stay online or meet afterwards to debrief. For yourself reflect on how the meeting went. Was it possible for everyone to participate fully? Are there things you might have done differently?
2. Remember to deal with any safeguarding issues as normal.
3. Email a blind copy ‘thank you’ to participants with details of your next meeting.
4. Be kind to yourself. Use zoom to the best of your abilities. This will develop over time. Don’t expect yourself or others to be an instant expert!

**Some thoughts about what might be included in an online Meeting for Worship for all ages**

**Preparation**

The week before, let the people know about the online meeting and other information that will enable them to come with hearts and minds prepared (see the example email that follows).

Send readings out to those people you want to read in the meeting.

**Suggested elements for online Meeting for Worship for all ages**

* Introduction as you would normally do to start all age worship by Elders with a settling down exercise. You could use *Peaceful Inside* by John Lampen (https://bookshop.quaker.org.uk/peaceful-inside\_9780956302298).
* A brief period of quiet.
* 3 readings: these could be from *Faith & Practice*, the Bible, relevant short pieces or poems, or *Quaker meeting and me* (www.quaker.org.uk/children-and-young-people/work-quaker-setting/resources-children).
* Story: read and show stories that you have at home or look for stories on youtube that can be shared online. Some examples of authors to look at are: Sandy Eisenberg, Michel Rosen, Eric Carle, Oliver Jeffers, Helen Oxenbury, John Burningham, Dr Seuss.
* Craft: see Pinterest for simple craft ideas.

**Two examples of Meetings for Worship for all ages:**

**Example 1**

Introduction: Do as you would normally do to start all age worship by Elders.

Say:

We will hear three short readings when friends are ready to give them. We will hear a story and we will have a craft activity if you wish to join in with this. This activity is for all who want to take part; others can uphold us in silent worship. You may want to share what is in your mind – this is ministry. There will be time to share what you have made in the craft activity, we will invite you to do this at the right time.

Pause then continue:

We are going to take a little time to settle into ourselves. We will do some simple breathing and relaxation. This will help us to feel calm. So now make yourself comfortable. If you are a small wriggly person now is a good time to climb onto a lap and have a cuddle.

Forget the screen for a moment and close your eyes if that feels okay. Focus now on your breathing as you breathe in and out. Be aware of the cool air going into your lungs and letting go as you breathe out. Now take a slightly deeper breath and breathe out slowly allowing your body to relax into the chair. Take two more deep breaths……and then open your eyes.

Pause then continue:

We need to look after ourselves and it is okay to do this. Read the poem called Pandemic by Lynn Ungar http://www.lynnungar.com/poems/pandemic/.

Pause then continue:

We are living in a strange time just now, and aware that many people are getting ill with this horrid virus. Many of them are in hospital and some people are dying. There are some very new rules to help keep us safe – we have to stay at home and protect ourselves from getting ill. So, it is quite hard to keep away from our Ffriends and family. And now meeting for worship seems so much more important for us all. Meeting like this is strange but it is lovely to be able to see everybody and come together as a Quaker community.

Pause then continue:

Now you are feeling relaxed we are going to listen to the story. *Name* is going to read this to us. You might even want to do some more deep breathing when you listen to what the story is about. Read *What’s in your Mind Today? By Louise Bladen and illustrated by Angela Perrini* (ISBN 978-1-925545- 87-6).

Pause then continue:

Now I wonder what is in our minds today. You may have some words or a picture you want to put on paper. You may want to share what is in your mind – this is ministry. So, if you have some paper and pens or crayons now is the time to create your picture or write some words. This activity is for all who want to take part, others can uphold us in silent worship.

Give time for people to do this and then invite everyone to hold up their pictures. It would be good to share this with others that aren’t here, so suggest people take a photo of their picture or words and send it to you.

Finish with some quiet.



**Example 2**

Introduction: Do as you would normally do to start all age worship by Elders.

Start by saying:

We are going to take a little time to settle into ourselves. We will do some simple breathing and relaxation. This will help us to feel calm. So now make yourself comfortable. If you are a small wriggly person now is a good time to climb onto a lap and have a cuddle.

Forget the screen for a moment and close your eyes if that feels okay. Focus now on your breathing as you breathe in and out. Be aware of the cool air going into your lungs and letting go as you breathe out. Now take a slightly deeper breath and breathe out slowly allowing your body to relax into the chair. Take two more deep breaths …… and then open your eyes.

Pause then continue:

Now you are feeling relaxed we are going to listen to *Quaker meeting and me* being read. This little book talks about being together in worship, usually at the meeting house. But we can be together even when we aren’t sitting with each other. As we read the book you could think about what it feels like to be worshipping together on a screen. We are all in different places but doing the same thing. We are all hearing different things outside our houses or flats, but can feel the same things inside our hearts.

Read *Quaker meeting and me* (www.quaker.org.uk/children-and-young-people/work-quaker-setting/resources-children).

Pause then continue:

Now we can think about what those things might be. What are the things that are different about us and what are the things that are the same? These things can connect us to each other. You may want to share what is in your mind – this is ministry. So, if you have some paper and pens or crayons now is the time to create your picture or write some words. This activity is for all who want to take part, others can uphold us in silent worship.

Have some time for people to do this and then invite everyone to hold up their pictures. Finish with some quiet.

**An example email to send out in advance**

Dear Friends,

This Sunday we will celebrate being an all age worshipping community in an online Meeting for Worship for all ages by zoom.

The meeting is based on silence, yet has a structure which enables all present to participate and draw closer to God.

Meeting *for* Worship for all ages is to a large extent programmed, and will include a quiet activity for some of the time. The activity this month requires paper and pencils. Please gather these beforehand and have them ready beside you if you wish to join in. This activity is for all who want to take part, others can uphold us in silent worship.

If you would like to join this online All Age Meeting for Worship, click on this link *(add* *link and password*) after *10.40am*, ready to start at *10.45am*. If you are not yet familiar with zoom, just follow the instructions below.

Also read Zoom privacy policy before joining the meeting. The link for this is https://zoom.us/privacy.

Parents, please let your children know that there may be people on screen that they aren’t familiar with. They could join by sitting on a parent or carers lap so they feel comfortable with this unusual way of worshipping in community. Please stay in the room with your child during the meeting.

By clicking on the link you are giving permission for your child/children to take part in this online meet up.

Please if you have any questions, contact*add name.*