

# Being Friends Together

Reading *Quaker faith & practice* > Autumn/Winter 2015/16 > Chapter 21: Personal Journey > Q111 Group session

## Session 1      Personal Journey Chapter 21, *Quaker faith & practice*

**Group session** **90/120 minutes**

**90-minute session: do Activity 1, then choose one activity from 2A, B, C and D**  
**120 minute session: do Activity 1, then choose two activities from 2A, B, C and D.**

Before the session it may be helpful to remind yourself of the guidance on working with groups available in the Ways of Working area of *Being Friends Together*. Check that anyone with particular needs in your group is able to access any handouts, or has a version that is accessible for them. For Activity 2C you may wish to give advance notice of the option to bring a favourite poem or an image of a favourite piece of art along to the session.

### Resources:

- Copies of *Quaker faith & practice* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition) for reference - also available online at <http://qfp.quaker.org.uk/chapter/21>
- Paper and pens Activity 2A
- Contemplative gaze practice handout x one each Activity 2B
- Natural and made objects for contemplative gaze practice – a selection Activity 2B
- Pens and sticky notes/pieces of paper and sticky tack Activity 2D
- A large piece of paper/notice board/wall Activity 2D

**Welcome and worship** **5 minutes**

**Session introduction** **5 minutes**

*Focus for this session:* Chapter 21 of *Quaker faith & practice*, which explores aspects of our personal journeys as Friends, including: our youthful experiences, coming to know and accept ourselves, living a full life, creativity, getting older, and our approaches to death, suffering and healing.

<http://together.woodbrooke.org.uk>



Being Friends Together is a joint project of Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre (Registered Charity Number: 313816) and Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) (Registered charity number: 1127633).



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## Activity 1: It spoke to my condition

30 minutes

### Group sharing go-round using creative listening

In creative listening mode, take it in turns in a go-round of the group to:

- read aloud an extract from Chapter 21 that spoke to your condition or resonated with you in some way when you read this chapter in preparation for the session
- share for no more than two minutes about why it spoke to you

Allow a brief pause between each contribution. A facilitator may need to indicate to participants when they have had two minutes so that everyone gets a chance to speak.

## Activity 2A: Knowing and accepting ourselves

30 minutes

### Reading/listening + personal reflection + sharing in threes

Read aloud *Qf&p* 21.20 and 21.22. Either the facilitator(s) could read them out, or they could be read by one or more volunteers. 5

Spend some time as individuals considering either: 10

- an action you wish to take that could bring light to your own or someone else's darkness (see 21.20) *or*
- a way in which you could 'take your eye off the clock' and cultivate 'true leisureliness' (see 21.22)

You may like to note down some of your reflections.

Then get into groups of three and share something of your reflections. 15

## Activity 2B: Living in awareness

30 minutes

### Reading/listening + spiritual practice + whole group worship sharing

Read aloud *Qf&p* 21.24, 21.27, 21.28 and 21.37. Either the facilitator(s) could read them out, or they could be read by one or more volunteers. 5

Do a simple contemplative gaze practice, as individuals, alongside one another in silence, following guidance from BFT's Spiritual Practice and Prayer pathway (You can download this from the *Being Friends Together* webpage for this session). 15

You may like to do this practice outside, if conditions are suitable. Alternatively, you can bring some natural and human made objects along to the session for people to use as a focus for the practice.

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Finish with an opportunity to share something of your experience of the practice and/or your response to the extracts in the whole group, in worship sharing mode. You may wish to extend the time available by doing this Activity 2B last and running on into the final whole group plenary before the notices. 10

## Activity 2C: Creativity

30 minutes

### Reading/listening + whole group worship sharing

Read aloud *Qf&p* 21.32, 21.34 and the last paragraph of 21.38. Either the facilitator(s) could read them out, or they could be read by one or more volunteers. 5

Individuals then have the opportunity, in worship sharing mode, to describe or read aloud one of the following: 25

- one of the poems in Chapter 21 (or elsewhere in *Quaker faith & practice*)
  - any poem that is significant to you
  - any painting or work of art that is significant to you
- and share for no more than two minutes about why it speaks to you.

Allow a brief pause between each contribution. A facilitator may need to indicate to participants when they have had two minutes so that everyone gets a chance to speak.

*The poems in Chapter 21 can be found at 21.33, 21.47, 21.53, 21.60 and 21.67.*

## Activity 2D: 'I am glad I was here'

30 minutes

### Reading/listening + personal reflection + shared writing wall

Read aloud *Qf&p* 21.49, 21.55 and 21.66. You could also include two or three other extracts from the subsections about youth, getting older, death and suffering and healing. Either the facilitator(s) could read them out, or they could be read by one or more volunteers. 5

Spend some time as individuals reflecting on how you could finish a sentence beginning 'I am glad I was here...because/despite/when...' Write down on a sticky note or piece of paper a version of your sentence(s) that you are happy to share. 10

Then come back together in the whole group and, while the group holds a period of silence worship, take it in turns to stick your note/paper to a large piece of paper/notice board/wall and speak your sentence into the silence. 15

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## Whole group plenary

**10 minutes**

A brief opportunity to reflect in the whole group on your responses to any of the activities. Use worship sharing or creative listening mode, depending on your group dynamic and preference.

## Notices about next session/practicalities, etc.

**5 minutes**

## Concluding worship

**5 minutes**

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