

Session 5

Explaining Quakerism

This session gives participants an opportunity to explore various aspects of Quakerism with other Friends. The aim of this is for participants to think through how they might respond to different questions they are often faced with.

Resources required for the session

- Art materials, include tissue paper, glitter and sparkles
- Large sheets of paper for art work
- Old magazines
- Glue
- Postcards or pictures (blank on one side)
- Resource sheet: Explaining Quakerism (available at the end of this pack). If using this make sure you have enough copies for the group (it is available to download on the website). Alternatively write up this sheet on a flip chart.
- Flip chart paper and pens
- Participant folder/envelopes to store cards used in Worship

Preparation for the session

- Stick up a copy of the working agreement

Session Overview

60 minutes

Inner spirit	10 minutes
Explaining Quakerism introduction	5 minutes
Exercise	15 minutes
Feedback	10 minutes
Extension	10 minutes
Worship	10 minutes

Put out a range of art materials together with some magazines and paper.

Previously we thought about the Quaker Testimonies. In this session we are going to do an exercise that gives us an opportunity to think about how we might explain Quakerism to others.

Firstly we are going to think about our spiritual aspect. Sometimes it can be hard to find the words to express our innermost feelings. The following exercise is a chance for you to use images, colour, shapes or pictures to express your feelings.

Using the materials provided, create an image or collage of your inner spirit, love or energy (whatever is the most meaningful to you). Don't try too hard, just go with whatever you think or feel is right.

We will start with some quiet.

After an appropriate silence, move the group into the activity.

We hope that the activity that you have just completed will help to inspire you in this next exercise where you'll have the chance to practice explaining Quakerism. We are doing this as a group so that we can explore our understanding of Quakerism and ways to explain Quaker concepts to people who might be interested.

The purpose of this activity is to build our self-belief and enable us to feel more confident about talking to others about our faith.

I am sure most of us have been put on the spot when asked the question "What do Quakers believe" or "What do Quakers believe about..." or "What do Quakers think..."

What examples do you have of questions you have been asked?

Make a note of these on a flip chart (explain that these will be used as a basis for the discussion in the next exercise). Ask the group:

What are your thoughts and feelings on talking about yourself and Quakerism?

Organise the group into threes; within these groups each individual will have the opportunity to act as:

- An enquirer
- A Quaker
- A support person



Allocate adult volunteers between the groups – they should be prepared to facilitate any discussion as it develops, and gauge when it can move on.

Have the resource sheet Explaining Quakerism to hand (available at the back of this pack); alternatively you should write the contents of this on a flip chart sheet.

You can use the resource sheet “Explaining Quakerism” (which outlines a selection of typical enquirer’s questions) and the list created in the last exercise.

The enquirer in your group should select a question they would like to find out more about and asks this of the Quaker.

Both the enquirer and Quaker can ask the support person for help – twice. For example:

- **The enquirer might ask how to frame the question, or whether to ask the Quaker for further information.**
- **The Quaker might want to ask the support person for help to find the words to explain the concept or to check their facts.**

Each group member should have the opportunity to take on each role – so keep an eye on the time and remind the groups to swap roles. After 15 minutes, gather the group back together.

Feedback

10 minutes



This part of the activity is an opportunity for the groups to learn from each other's experiences, as each group feeds back to the whole group.

- **How did it feel to be the “Quaker”, the “enquirer” and the “support”?**
- **How did your feelings influence what you said and did?**
- **Would you do anything differently?**
- **What would you take from you with this activity?**

Extension

10 minutes

You could use this exercise as an extension if you have time.

Organise the group into different groups of threes, again distributing adult volunteers between the groups. Repeat the previous activity: each individual should take a turn in the different roles again. This time the groups should try to apply what they have learnt from the feedback.

Place the pictures or postcards picture side up on the floor and gather all the participants in to a circle around the cards. Have art materials to hand.

Bring everyone back together for worship. Start with a minute or two of quiet.

Look at the cards and choose one that you like. In silence write or draw something that you have gained from this session on the card.

After a few minutes finish worship by joining hands.



People can take the cards away as a reminder of the session. Invite participants to place them in their folder/envelope that you provided at the start of the programme for them to store their work. If you have time, people might like to share what is written on their card.

Note the preparation required for the next session and ask participants to bring the items with them as suggested.

