



Quaker Peace
& Social Witness

Meeting for Learning series: Building back better

HOW TO SET UP THE MEETING FOR LEARNING SERIES

Quakers in Britain have developed resources to support Quakers to establish a series of Meetings for Learning that respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Friends can set the series up within their meeting. If you set up a meeting, please email climatejustice@quaker.org.uk to let the Economics and Sustainability team at Quakers in Britain know.

The Meeting for Learning series will help everyone involved to reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic and the world we want to build and explore how our faith can play a role in building it. At the end of the series, people should feel more empowered and supported to speak up about changes we need to make to build a fairer, more equal society.

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How will the Meetings for Learning work?

- Meetings can be 3 people or more. If there are a larger number of sign-ups than one person can facilitate, then see if you can share the facilitation between 2 or more of you.
- Everyone will meet across 3 meetings.

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Part of Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

- Each meeting in the series involves reading or watching preparatory materials at home, followed by group discussion and activities in the sessions and homework.
- The series of three meetings for learning on Building Back Better explore the following topics:
 - Reflecting and grounding
 - How can Quaker faith guide us?
 - How can we put our faith into action?
- Meeting plans are flexible. Adapt them to the size of your meeting, the time you have available to meet, and your group's particular interests.

How to set up the Meeting for Learning series

1. Think about how to make your group welcoming for everyone

Consider how to make the group welcoming for people who don't feel confident reading (perhaps because of their eyesight, educational history, or learning disabilities), haven't had much experience of discussing subjects like social action or have a disability.

It's worth being clear with everyone at the first meeting: no knowledge about social action is required, just an interest in exploring the topic.

2. Agree a time and place for the group to meet regularly

If you are meeting online, your meeting may have a professional Zoom account you can use.

If you are meeting in person, your meeting may have space you can use. A room not much bigger than the size of your group, with chairs you can put in a circle, is ideal. It is also a good idea to have access to a kettle so you can make hot drinks.

Make sure to think about whether your meeting (whether online or in person) will be accessible to any members of your group with disabilities. Ask them to let you know what accessibility requirements they have and discuss how you could meet these. This is also a useful starting point for planning accessible online meetings: <https://www.littlecog.co.uk/accessible-meetings.html>.

In terms of how often to meet, you may wish to meet once a week for the series, or less frequently.

3. Think about roles and responsibilities.

It's useful to agree who will take responsibility for leading each meeting, and other tasks associated with running the Meeting for Learning series. These include accessing meeting plans and the handout and distributing these to other group members, organising the Zoom account if you are meeting online (or the room bookings and providing tea and coffee if you are meeting in person). You don't have to decide all this straight away – it can be organised as the meetings progress.

There may be one or two people who lead on setting up the group initially, but at the first meeting you may wish to offer others a chance to get more involved. Sharing responsibility around helps everyone feel more ownership of the group. With this in mind, it can be a good idea to change facilitators for each meeting, so that everyone has a chance to host a particular topic. You may also decide to have two facilitators for each meeting, who plan the meeting together, rather than just one.

Meeting plans are designed so that facilitators don't need any specialist knowledge about the topic of discussion. Having said all this, if your group decides to have one single, constant facilitator the whole way through – that is completely fine, as long as it's something the group has decided on together and everybody involved feels happy with how things are organised.

4. Connect with the Quakers in Britain Local Development Work team to see whether they are able to provide support

If you have a local development worker get in touch with them to find out if they can support you.

If you don't have a local development worker, you can still get in touch using supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk and the Quakers in Britain Local Development Work team will see if there is the capacity for one of the team to help in some way.

Feedback

We would be grateful if facilitators could share their feedback on the Meeting for Learning series by emailing a completed version of the form in the Appendix to Rebecca Woo at rebeccaw@quaker.org.uk.

FAQS

How long are the meetings for learning supposed to be?

We recommend that the groups meet for at least 90 minutes for each meeting. If you are able to spend longer together, e.g. 2 hours, you can extend the meeting plans. Each meeting explores three central questions and there is a suggested activity for each. We suggest extending each activity by up to 10 minutes.

I can't find anyone else in my meeting who would be interested in the Meeting for Learning series. What should I do?

Meeting plans are designed for groups of at least 3 people. If you have not been able to find others who would like to join you, could you enquire with your Area Meeting Clerk(s) whether any others in the area would like to join you?

You can also still read the handout on your own and consider the questions and resources that are shared in it.

Or you could invite friends or contacts you have outside your meeting to join the series with you. Meetings 1 and 3 are easily adapted to a non-Quaker audience and you could skip meeting 2 (or include it if your group included people of other faiths). If you run the series with people of other faiths, one of the preparatory materials and the exercises in meeting 2 will need to be adapted. You could replace the preparatory material 'Building back better after times of crisis' with an invitation to research how people of your faith have worked to build a better world and what principles of your faith underpin this work. The exercise 'Which Quaker testimony/ies do you feel most drawn to? Why?' can be adapted to substitute the relevant faith principles or beliefs for each individual. Meanwhile, the exercise 'How have Quakers been working to build a better social order' can be adapted to allow everyone to share stories of how people of their faith have been working to build a better social order.

Appendix

Facilitator feedback form

1. Who facilitated/ organised the Meeting for Learning series? Before hosting the Meeting for Learning series what was your involvement in Quaker witness/ social action?

2. How many people participated? What was their involvement in Quaker witness/ social action before attending the Meeting for Learning series?

3. Was the content useful?

4. Were the activities accessible?

5. How do you think it went?

6. Is there anything you would suggest changing in the content?

7. What testimonies or concerns did the group focus on in the final meeting?

8. If your group (or members of it) decided to take action as a result of attending the Meeting for Learning series, what would be the most crucial thing that Quakers in Britain could provide to support that?

9. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this form, your feedback will be very valuable to deepen our understanding at Quakers in Britain of how to support Quaker faith in action.