
From the Yearly Meeting Gathering Co-Clerks

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this study pack designed to help your meeting engage creatively with the theme of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2009: 'Creating Community: Creating Connections'. We hope these materials will be used in meetings across Britain Yearly Meeting, whether or not Friends are taking part in YMG.

In partnership with Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre we have produced materials for nineteen 90-minute study sessions for you to select from, according to the needs and circumstances of your meeting, or you might choose to do them all. The enclosed set of sessions is for use before and immediately after YMG; two further sets will arrive in your meeting in time to start sessions again in the autumn.

There are four main outcomes that you can hope for when Friends in your meeting take part:

Friends will feel

1. prepared to engage with different aspects of YM and JYM business
2. that they are part of YMG, whether or not they are able to attend, and are upholding the work and discernment done there
3. that they have got to know important dimensions of the Quaker Way, and one another, better
4. that they are contributing to a stronger and more confident local meeting

Sessions build on work that many meetings have done in *Hearts and Minds Prepared* groups. They are suitable for similar-sized groups: between six and ten participants including two facilitators, and can include young people of JYM age (16-19). Please encourage young people to participate and invite them to be involved in running sessions too.

The Quaker Life children and young people's work staff team has produced material on the themes in this pack specifically for engaging with children and young people to age 18, and with the intention of creating opportunities for multi-generational learning and sharing in meetings. Materials for engaging with children aged 4-12 will be in the topical activity sections of the *Journeys in the Spirit* children's editions of May, June and July; materials for engaging with young people aged 12-18 will be in the *Journeys in the Spirit* youth edition in June.

You will have received this first set of materials in time to run seven sessions before YMG (if you meet approximately fortnightly). There is also one session for immediately after YMG and an optional Concluding Session for groups not intending to continue together beyond Set One.

The ten sessions in Sets Two and Three are for use after YMG. They could be spread over the period September 2009 to April 2010 - in time for Yearly Meeting in London in May 2010.

We realise that not every group will want to use all of the materials in the complete pack, so each session has been designed as a 'stand alone'. But we know from experience that the more sessions you do as a group the richer your experience and time together will be.

We look forward to seeing many of you at Yearly Meeting Gathering, and we hope you and your meeting enjoy working with these learning materials.

Paul Parker and Lizz Roe
Yearly Meeting Gathering Co-clerks