

Survival Sourcebook

**The Care and Maintenance of
Small Meetings and Worship Groups**

North Pacific Yearly Meeting
Outreach Committee

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Introduction

The vision for this Sourcebook rose from the Hadleys', the Janoes', and the Davis' travel throughout North Pacific Yearly Meeting in 1986 and 1987. There was a manifest need among our many small groups (most of which were not new groups) to share ideas and to keep in touch with each other. You sent your suggestions on Outreach Committee's round-robin letters.

This handbook has been written by and for the multitude of small meetings and worship groups stretching over the 1,000 miles and more of the Yearly Meeting. Survival of meetings in small communities or in towns where there are few Friends takes creativity, perseverance, and a deep belief in the power of Quaker faith and practice. In a small meeting one family moving away, a multitude of children, one divorce, or the burn-out of one key person can place the survival of the group in question.

Often, a few ideas for new ways of doing things, or perhaps temporary outside assistance can help a small (or any) meeting over low points to find a renewed faith.

*This handbook shares the experiences of meetings throughout the Northwest in sustaining and nourishing Quakerism. Our thanks also go to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for their willingness to have us quote from their **Outreach Ideabook**. It has been a valuable source of ideas which have not been tried in this part of the country.*

We hope this handbook will provoke discussion in many worship groups and meetings of all sizes. Thank you, everyone, for your contributions!

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Section I: Building a Community

1

Enriching Worship

The experience of worship is at the center of Quakerism. It ideally permeates not only Meeting for Worship, but also Meeting for Business, committee meetings, and our daily lives. Yet meetings and worship groups all experience periods when worship seems to lose its vitality, when hoped-for centering and renewal seem frustratingly beyond reach.

At such times, a worship group should feel free to seek counsel from the meeting which has the group under its care. This may help; sometimes it may not help or may not be enough. The commitment must arise from those who worship together.

Many forms have been developed among Friends to aid in deepening the sense of worship. Several of these which small meetings have found of value are described below, including:

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| .. | Worship Sharing | .. | Queries and Learning Session |
| .. | Exercises for Spiritual Renewal | .. | Called Meetings for Worship |
| .. | Understanding Worship Based on Silence | .. | Spiritual Commitment: The Basis for Action |

Worship Sharing

Sometimes very deep spiritually, sometimes scattered and distracted, our meetings for worship are almost always completely silent. How can we encourage our members toward vocal ministry, when even those among us with a long experience among Friends rarely break the Silence? (Juniper Worship Group State of Society Report)

Many meetings have periods of extended silence and seek ways to encourage vocal ministry. Worship sharing is felt by many to be a vital means of enriching the ministry and the quality of worship for the meeting as a whole. Leadership for the worship sharing can be rotated and the topics generated by all. Small groups may want to try these ideas:

For keeping some of those who come, and for building a collective sense of identity, we have enjoyed a period of Worship Sharing after Meeting for Worship and a monthly potluck lunch. Each week one person takes responsibility for Care of Meeting which includes introducing a topic for sharing and describing the process of listening rather than responding and allowing silence between each person's contribution. This process has provided an outlet for some of those things which people were not quite sure belonged in Meeting for Worship. Since it is a time for speaking from experience rather than debate, it has helped us get to know one another more deeply. At times we have had formal study groups, usually dealing with Quaker history. At the moment we are taking one First Day each month to discuss a chapter from Leonard Kenworthy's *Quakerism* between a Meeting for Worship and a potluck lunch. (Bellingham Worship Group)

Olympia Meeting has worship sharing the third Sunday of each month. Ministry and Oversight Committee develops the query. Thirty to forty-five minutes after worship has begun a member of the committee explains what we are doing and reads the query. We

continue worship about thirty minutes longer than other Sundays. (Olympia Monthly Meeting)

Some who feel hesitant to minister during the regular worship hour may feel freer to share afterwards, if the group establishes sharing after meeting as a routine. One Friend from Vashon asked if anyone has tried Worship Sharing before Meeting for Worship, and if so, could they share their experiences.

..

Exercises in Spiritual Renewal

The Ungame has been used by Umpqua Valley Worship Group as a vehicle for spiritual renewal. The Ungame consists of a set of cards with questions relating to personal beliefs, experiences, and feelings. The process works much like Worship Sharing and each group can readily create its own cards for members to respond to.

Multnomah Monthly Meeting in Portland is one of several meetings that have been struggling with divisive issues. As they struggled, members found a loss of trust in themselves and each other, and in their ability to reach that of God within. Spiritual renewal has been an ongoing process. Some of the efforts which touched many people follow, then a different approach taken by Spokane Worship Group:

We hold a gathering for “a shared meal, shared fun, and sharing on how to strengthen trust within the meeting. After a picnic and wandering about a meadow on the slopes of Mt. Hood, Friends gathered around a large basket. Worship and songs were joined. Then each was asked to seek some item from the meadows around that reflected a gift they could bring to the meeting. Each person shared of themselves in describing their choice of seeds, or leaves, or the wind. The gathering closed with a song and silent worship. (Multnomah Monthly Meeting)

◆

The annual retreat the Meeting plans has had a unique focus each year. A silent retreat, a women’s retreat, couples’ enrichment, and many others have been held. The most recent retreat was centered on “spiritual listening.” One Friend shared at length on her experiences in spiritual listening, the unexpectedness of it at times, and some of the things we might look for to increase our awareness.

Later in the afternoon small groups also met for worship sharing, and to explore further ideas on listening. Shared meals and a closing Meeting for Worship completed the day. (Multnomah Monthly Meeting)

◆

New experiences have enriched our worship in the past few months. A sunrise meeting for worship on Easter provided spiritual rebirth to a number of our group. An outreach Sunday morning gathering with the Spokane programmed meeting provided a focal point for ongoing dialogue with our Quaker neighbors, and a stimulus for deeper consideration of our own worship patterns. Worship-sharing time has been scheduled. (Spokane Worship Group State of Society Report)

The following three examples were actually projects of a Quarterly Meeting-Salem Quarter of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting-but could well be adapted for use by a smaller group.

Summer Sharing

Summer Sharing was the name of a seven-session program that enabled Salem Quarter Friends to meet throughout the summer without a heavy burden of preparation or commitment. It was easy to manage and no leadership was necessary. Since new topics were considered each time, it wasn’t necessary to commit to the entire series. Some of the questions included:

.. When you feel alone, without direction, or beset with troubles, how do you get back to living in the Light? (Or tuned in?)

- .. Where is God in our everyday life? When you don't have a crisis, where is the Spirit in your average day?
- .. What can you do for someone when you can't do anything (physically or materially) for them?

The group then split into three or four smaller groups for discussion, then reconvened for a closing Meeting for Worship of 20 to 30 minutes. This offered the freedom of spontaneity and no need for specific preparation, while enabling Friends to share out of their own experience. New members were able to see people reaching out and willing to share their own spiritual personality. This made it easier for them to do the same themselves. (Philadelphia *Outreach Idea Book*)

Gifts Groups

Gifts Groups free us to employ our gifts in surprising ways. Gifts Groups, based on Elizabeth O'Connor's *Eighth Day of Creation*; are led by one person and limited to fifteen persons, all of whom are committed to attend all ten sessions.

Usually the group split into smaller groups. Some of the exercises included passing around a piece of paper with a figure of a person on it, labeled with the name of someone in the group. As each person received the figure, they wrote something that they saw in that person. At the end, everyone in the group had a representation of themselves "filled in" by the group. Another exercise was to design a crest or coat of arms for yourself.

Participants were encouraged to think about themselves and their interests recognizing that needs, in a way, are gifts too (for example, "I need to be with people" is a feeling that many would consider a gift). Participants were also encouraged to try things they always thought they were bad at. As a result, many people tried things they had always wanted to do.

The effect of the Gifts Group for Salem was community, vitality, involvement, and leadership, and an inpouring of strength which, they report, "frees us to employ our gifts, often in ways we hadn't thought we could." A direct outgrowth of the program, according to one participant, was the "Friendly Legacy" project, which presented the history of Quakers in South Jersey. This was a massive project that was done in a short time, using some of the gifts uncovered. (Philadelphia *Outreach Idea Book*)

Support Groups

Salem Meeting's latest endeavor in developing ministry and spiritual nurture is a small support group (eight people) who meet weekly in the evening to address each others' needs through worship sharing. The group commits itself to be there each week. There is no designated leader. Usually they begin with a Bible passage. The trust that has been built, and the Spirit that has been felt, help remove feelings of inadequacy and enable group members to speak in Meeting for Worship when they are so moved. (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting *Outreach Idea Book*)

Understanding Worship Based on Silence

A small handout piece prepared by Quaker Home Service in London can serve as a starting point for sharing on the use of the silence during Meeting for Worship. What follows is a reprint of a brief extract from *The Power of Stillness*:

"This is one way to know God. 'Be still and know that I am God.' 'God is in his Holy Temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.'

"A score of years ago a friend placed in my hand a little book which became one of the turning points of my life. It was called True Peace. It was a medieval message, and it had but one thought, and it was this—that God was waiting in the depths of my being to talk to me if only I would get still enough to hear his voice.

"I thought this would be a very easy matter, and so I began to get still. But I had no sooner commenced than a perfect pandemonium of voices reached my ears, a thousand clamoring notes from without and

within, until I could hear nothing but their noise and din. Some of them were my own voice, some of them were my own questions, some of them were my prayers. Others were the suggestions of the tempter, and the voices of the world's turmoil. Never before did there seem so many things to be done, to be said, to be thought; and in every direction I was pushed and pulled, and greeted with noisy acclamations of unspeakable unrest. It seemed necessary for me to listen to some of them, but God said, 'Be still, and know that I am God.' Then came the conflict of thoughts for the morrow, and its duties and cares; but God said, 'Be still. And as I listened, and slowly learned to obey, and shut my ears to every sound, I found, after a while, that when the other voices ceased, or I ceased, or I ceased to hear them, there was a still small voice in the depths of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness, power and comfort. As I listened, it became to me the voice of prayer, and the voice of wisdom, and the voice of duty, and I did not need to think so hard, or pray so hard, or trust so hard, but that 'still, small voice' of the Holy Spirit in my heart was God's prayer in my secret soul, was God's answer to all my questions, was God's life and strength for soul and body, and became the substance of all knowledge, and all prayer, and all blessing; for it was the living God himself as my life and my all.

"This is our spirit's deepest need. It is thus that we learn to know God; it is thus that we receive spiritual refreshment and nutriment. It is thus that our heart is nourished and fed; it is thus that we receive the living Bread; it is thus that our very bodies are healed, and our spirit drinks in the life of our risen Lord, and we go forth to life's conflicts and duties like the flower that has drunk in, through the shades of night, the cool and crystal drops of dew. But, as the dew never falls on a stormy night, so the dews of his grace never come to the restless soul."

- John Edward Southall

(note: a Spanish translation is also available through Outreach Committee.)



Queries and Learning Sessions

Eastside Meeting in Bellevue, Washington suggests a query for the period immediately following Meeting for Worship: "Has any Friend a thought or insight he or she would like to share?" (Many times one feels hesitant to speak during Meeting for Worship but able to do so after the formal adjournment.) In a smaller meeting another variation is possible:

In Olympia we go around the circle giving our names and sharing anything special. This would take a lot of time in larger meetings where Eastside's query might work better. Many give just their names even when our group is small. People used to give announcements when their turn in the circle came, but recently we have started giving announcements after we've been around because we found that announcements often led to questions and discussion. Some people had to wait a long time to introduce themselves.

Other meetings use the Queries from *Faith and Practice* to start Meeting for Business, have a query posted on the wall during worship, or include the query along with a response from a different Friend each month in the newsletter.

Friends in Montana find that "learning sessions" before Meeting enhance the spirit of worship. They report that:

We are currently having short learning sessions before worship on the Sundays we do not have Business Meeting. We find that the opportunity to discuss a topic before Worship tends to enhance the spirit of the worship, as well as interest more attenders. In the past we have had learning meetings on Saturday evenings on the same weekends as Business Meeting. This was of particular value in enabling more participation of out of town Friends in a "big weekend." The out of town Friends have mostly moved away, and we find Sunday morning discussions are now better attended than evening ones. In the past, newspaper coverage of some of our sessions, and interviews with some members, have made us more visible. (Billings Monthly Meeting)

Called Meetings for Worship

Many of us find Meetings for Worship on the occasion of marriage, ceremonies of commitment, and memorials to be particularly meaningful. Some meetings have specially called Meetings for Worship for other celebrations or sharing. These have included celebrations of 45th or 50th wedding anniversaries. There are numerous examples of certificates signed by all the celebrants at 50th anniversaries, designed in the same manner as traditional wedding certificates. There are even cases where this 50th anniversary was witnessed on the reverse side of a Quaker wedding certificate, with some of the same signers. Special Meetings for Worship have also been called to celebrate marriages which were not under the care of the meeting, but where the individuals involved wanted to share the joy of the occasion.

In University Meeting (Seattle), there have been Meetings for Worship for Healing following times of difficulty for the entire meeting or for individual members. Multnomah Monthly Meeting in Portland has held Meeting for Worship in support of several members of a family going through a divorce.

Olympia Meeting had a called Meeting for Worship for children on a Saturday followed by potluck. This was requested by the mother of a six-month old baby, with special invitation to all the children. We didn't have many in attendance, though.

Meeting for Worship, in short, can take place on any occasion. Though it needs no special event, a focus of some sort can serve to draw the meeting to a deep center and create a special sense of renewal.



Spiritual Commitment: The Basis for Action

Many individuals have come to spiritual understandings through actions and interaction; others find worship leads to the requirement for living out one's beliefs. One Meeting shared its perspective:

San Juan Worship Group is primarily concerned with perpetuating the experience and traditions of the Religious Society of Friends in our individual and family lives, and in deepening the spiritual experience and understanding of its members. Irradiated lives, should that ever happen, both witness and speak.

The different emphasis on the importance of social action and spiritual deepening has always made itself felt in Friends meetings: our understanding and memory is that, when North Pacific Yearly Meeting separated from Pacific Yearly Meeting, the decision was made to put first emphasis on spiritual growth and second emphasis on social action, believing that only actions that spring from deep spiritual commitment will truly signify.

We of San Juan Worship Group maintain this view.



Children in Meeting

Many meetings set a priority on seeking ways to care for children and to enrich their spiritual lives. Most meetings share the first or the last few minutes of worship with their children and do not expect the children to sit quietly for an hour of worship.

There are a few small meetings which, for a time, have no young children or small quiet children who join with the elders in worship. Some times a few books or crayons are enough to keep the entire meeting together for the hour. More often, parents wish to provide religious education, or feel the need to be with a restive child, and take away up to a quarter of the meeting! Simply providing regular child care allows the parents the freedom to worship.

Often the children, or their parents, feel strongly that there should be a more active program. First Day School may be essential to attract families with young children. A firm base in Friends' ways and beliefs is for many a fundamental part of the meeting. Just from the practical side, many parents have no other place to leave their children. This section covers:

..	Family Worship	..	Junior Friends
..	Intergenerational First Day School	..	A Final Thought
..	Finding Teachers and Care Givers	..	Sources for First-Day School

Material

..

Family Worship

Family Worship once a month is the means Friends in Portland use to add to their children's understanding of worship. Multnomah is large enough that Family Worship occurs simultaneously with the regular Meeting for Worship. Adults and children are invited, irrespective of their family status. Family worship is a blend of silence, songs, and sharing designed for participation by people of all ages.

Each time at Family Worship there is a "guide" to take Friends through the hour roughly as follows:

- ◆ The chosen theme is stated
- ◆ A description of Family Worship is given to orient attenders
- ◆ Someone, possibly with a guitar or playing the piano, leads a song on the theme for the day
- ◆ A query is presented for everyone to consider
- ◆ There is an activity involving everyone such as drawing, talking to a neighbor about the query, or roleplaying
- ◆ A period of worship with sharing out of the worship
- ◆ The entire group from Family Worship then joins the unprogrammed meeting on the second floor for the last few minutes of worship together and announcements. (Multnomah Monthly Meeting)

Friends in Umpqua Valley Worship Group with small children just learning to read and write include them in the Worship by passing notes with questions for the children to respond to silently. These responses are simple drawings and an evolving written dialogue between adult and child. Each child participates in the worship with silent guidance from an adult.

Missoula Friends have also created a variety of family worship:

In keeping with our feeling very fortunate in having a number of young friends among us, we have set aside one Saturday a month for special projects like field trips and other educational experiences. Also, on one Sunday a month the children share a presentation with the adults as part of the Meeting for Worship. (Missoula Monthly Meeting)

Southwest Washington, a former worship group with ten children and eight adults, tried having one person being responsible for the children each week. This allowed adults to participate in worship much of the time and provided the children contact with adults other than their parents. This was not nearly so successful as the idea for worshipful sharing, described below, developed during their Business Meetings.

During Business Meetings they also regularly considered their differing expectations for their children, responses to crying infants, the kind of teaching they wanted, how to deal with children ranging from tots to teens, and how to provide care without drawing adults away from worship.

For the first half-hour of Meeting for Worship in SW Washington all children, even the youngest, joined the adults in worshipful sharing based on a query. The last half of meeting the younger children left to play and draw under the supervision of a junior friend. This combination of family worship and play freed all the adults to worship together for the full hour. (member of former Southwest Washington Worship Group)



Intergenerational First-Day School

Like most small Meetings we find it difficult to meet the religious education needs of our children, who are few and of scattered ages. To give them a sense of fellowship with the adult Friends we have set aside the fourth Meeting Day for intergenerational activities. These include sharing the life of the Spirit through music, drama, art, and nature. We also packed a box of school supplies for the children of Nicaragua and included messages and drawings from our Meeting. These events have been fun for young and old alike. (Rogue Valley Monthly Meeting)

A recent "Letter to Lucretia" from Mel Mueller in the Friends General Conference Quarterly suggests:

What does a small meeting do when it has a few children interested in a First Day school but not enough to have viable classes? Concord Meeting at Concordville, Pennsylvania faced this dilemma recently. We turned the problem into a plus for all of us by having intergenerational programs for an hour before meeting instead of a program aimed at just children. All sorts of talents and interests have emerged as members willingly take their turns at providing an activity for all to share.

A retired nurseryman shared his interest in the environment, challenging us to identify the leaves of some of our meeting ground trees. We have had fun with music, the story of Noah's ark and puppets. We discussed "my most memorable Thanksgiving" and how we celebrate Christmas. The Sunday after Thanksgiving we found ourselves making stone soup [where you start with a pot of water and each person puts in *one* ingredient] and natural Christmas decorations simultaneously, our kitchen buzzing with happy activity. We are enjoying our special joint activities so much I doubt we'd want to return to children's classes, even if we had enough children and we're headed in that direction! (Friends General Conference Newsletter)

Eugene Monthly Meeting has successfully used the *Growing in the Light* firstday school curriculum, which is designed to include all ages studying the same themes each week.

Finding Teachers and Care- Givers

One Philadelphia area meeting concludes that:

Child care is so important, this meeting pays someone to do it. 'Often it seems,' reports Hockessin Meeting, 'that a way to include new young attenders with children is to ask them to teach or help out with FirstDay school but in fact, this practice neither nourishes nor informs attenders, and actually can turn them away.' This leads directly to the question: Who has decided to come to this meeting~ It is the mothers and fathers who made the decision to come to this place, and initially they are the people who need sustenance and nourishment. For this reason, Hockessin Meeting decided to hire a person to care for the children. A fee is guaranteed whether any children show up or not. It is worth the investment. As the meeting reports, 'This is one way that young families feel welcome, even when there is a predominance of grayhaired people, to be told, 'we have child care.' (Philadelphia *Outreach Ideabook*)

Other meetings report a variety of approaches to finding caregivers for their children:

Missoula Monthly Meeting reports that several problems arose in conjunction with setting up and maintaining these activities for our children. First, we were dissatisfied with the inevitable lack of continuity of the children's program when different adults worked with them. It was too much to ask a Friend to carry the load for a month at a time. The absence of any number from our small meeting of eight or nine would have been a loss to the sense of the meeting. Having a different person assuming this work with the children would constitute a loss of worship from the standpoint of the individual.

Our solution was to pay for child-care and we were blessed with our discovery of just the right person to do it, a college student from Hong Kong studying at the University of Montana. The \$40.00 to \$60.00 per month we pay Canosa not only assists the good order of our Sundays, but in addition, exposes the children to a particularly charming person from another culture. (Missoula Monthly Meeting)

Providence Meeting in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting rents quality kids' videos and shows them to their little ones with a teenager on hand to supervise while adults enjoy potluck suppers and socializing. It's cheaper than a babysitter! (Philadelphia *Outreach Ideabook*)

..

Holiday Celebrations

We have made a strong effort to foster an atmosphere in which the children of several of our members can feel at home, both spiritually and recreationally. Last Christmas our meeting was pleased to recognize nine children of our First Day school with a gift of calendars from the Vancouver Peace Project. (Missoula Monthly Meeting)

For their Christmas program, the children studied Hanukkah and shared with the whole meeting the similarities and differences between two important religious celebrations. (Eastside Monthly Meeting)

We have had a real, rip-snorting Halloween party each year in the annex-adults and children. On Friday night before Halloween we gather and the children can bring their friends. Everyone dresses up and really tries to come well-disguised. We might have 21 adults and 20 to 25 kids. We see more children here than at any other time of the year except Christmas.

Each child carves a little jack-o-lantern and each one has an adult's help or supervision. When they are finished we put candles inside them and then turn out the lights. An adult begins a spooky story and eventually passes it on to the next story-teller, each one adding a part as we go.

There's bobbing for apples and other Halloween fun. Some of our strongest members now came in as a result of their children's attending our Halloween party. (Salem Meeting, New Jersey)



Every year at Christmas Eve, Doylestown Meeting asks Buckingham Meeting to open up the old Plumstead meetinghouse, which is normally closed. Teenagers decorate the place, the lamps are lit, the woodstove is fired up, the whole family comes. "We've never had a year that it wasn't filled," Doylestown Meeting reports. They meet at 7:30 p.m. for an hour, which they divide between singing and worship. "In the soft light and the simplicity of the meeting, we really feel close to the first Christmas."



For many years, Crosswicks Meeting has had a special "Family Meeting Breakfast" followed by a partly programmed Meeting for Worship at Thanksgiving and Easter. At Christmas, Crosswicks holds a First-Day evening candlelight program that is "regularly the biggest event of the year." The program is well-planned, with letters beforehand to all members, attenders and signers of the guestbook.

At Christmas, "Families come forward with their guests to light the candles prepared for them," and each family tells a verse from the Christmas story, or sings an appropriate carol. During the carols, each family lights a candle and places a gift of toys or money on the Christmas tree; the gifts are donated to Mercer Street Friends Center or famine relief.

The program may begin with a vocal solo, followed by a song by the First-day school children. Individuals reading a few verses of the Christmas story according to Luke then alternate with ensembles of four to six singers doing traditional favorites. Then at the end, everyone sings together. After this much hungry work, naturally, come refreshments in the First-Day school building.



An Easter celebration with a focus. The "focused" Meeting for Worship at Crosswicks on Easter

Sunday, 1985, had a theme, New Beginnings, expressed as follows:

Welcome and opening remarks
Hymn "Morning has Broken"
Quiet Worship
Quotation, poem or remarks
Hymn, "Spring Has Now Unwrapped the Flowers"
Flower Program
Hymn, "Easter Hymn"
Brief Closing Worship

As Friends entered the Meeting House, they were handed a flower, probably a daffodil or forsythia. During the "Flower Program" Friends who were so inclined took their flowers to the front of the meeting room and placed them in a vase to make a large arrangement. Some said something briefly about Easter or new beginnings. They then picked up a flower seedling in a cup to take home. The call went out beforehand for flowers, buckets and volunteers. (Philadelphia *Outreach Ideabook*)



Junior Friends

The following comes from a junior friend who lives in Columbia Falls Montana:

Teenagers who feel too old for First-day school, yet may not be willing to sit through Meeting for Worship often end up with Yearly Meeting or Quarterly Meeting being their main contact with Friends. I find these gatherings to be special, wonderful times, in which other people my

age and I can share the Quaker experience, socialize, and have a great time. These larger groups can, and do, sponsor the same kind of weekend activities that the larger Monthly Meetings do, only less frequently. There is usually a camping or biking trip for teens immediately preceding the Annual Session of Yearly Meeting. There are also many opportunities for work camps and similar experiences for teens able to travel outside the Yearly Meeting.

I am sixteen years old, and the only Junior Friend in my area. I attend Meeting for Worship and Worship Sharing of my own accord, and do in fact enjoy myself. I find these Quaker groups to be an excellent time to sort out my thoughts, and become a more spiritually intact being; even though I have no peers with whom to share the experience. Actually, being with only adults most of the time, and sharing with them, has helped me realize that they are indeed people, just like me.

I would say that all, or at least most, of the Junior Friends I know, value and cherish silent worship, and Worship Sharing, as much as I do; and quite possibly miss such things when they aren't at the few and far-between gatherings. So if there is a teenager in your meeting who doesn't regularly attend simply because there are no other teenagers, please encourage him, and attempt to make her as welcome as possible.

We teenagers are social creatures, and love having fun together, but I feel that meeting and sharing with adults, and basically appreciating the silence, is an essential part of being a Junior Friend. (Catnip Frederick)



Many meetings have probably tried having a person available every Sunday to meet with junior friends only to find that often one or none show up. Multnomah Meeting junior friends are now trying to meet only twice a month, with an emphasis on attending those times. This has been more successful. Other weeks teens are encouraged to join Family Worship, help with the children, or serve at a local soup kitchen the Meeting helps support. A number of special events have been organized, including visits to nursing homes, a weekend ski trip on Mt. Hood, a planning retreat including a silent walk to a river and a work party, and evening meetings or parties. The special invitation and the knowledge that others will be there helps in bringing out these Friends.

Recently, at the spring retreat, Multnomah Meeting included a workshop session for the teens led by an AFSC staff person. It focused on questions of name-calling and creative responses to these and other difficult situations teens often find themselves in. It also provided a forum for discussion of some of the repercussions of the adults' difficulties in dealing with same-sex relationships. About ten teenagers participated. They then headed off for pizza and an afternoon of roller-skating.

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A Final Thought

San Juan Worship Group reports that the nine adults who regularly attend have no problems with their three children. "The reason we have no child care problem is that they are with us in Meeting for Worship or reading quietly elsewhere." They appreciate the thoughts expressed in 1853, when *the journal of the Life and Religious Labours of John Gomly* was published, giving the following advice:

The incalculable advantages of taking little children to meetings, and of habituating them early to the discipline of stillness, can never be fully appreciated. It may be the means of laying a foundation, very early in life, for the most exalted virtues. The seeds of Divine goodness thus planted, or that germinate in good wishes and good desires, when the infant mind is thus retired, may take deep root and bring forth early fruits of genuine religion—of love and obedience to parents—of sincere affection toward brothers and sisters and relatives. Under these solemnizing tender feelings, the pure, innocent, uncontaminated infant mind worships in spirit and in truth. It learns to love such opportunities—it delights to feel such a calmness and quietude—and it enjoys a heaven within.

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Sources for First-Day School Material

Questings, published three times yearly in loose leaf form, is a source of new children's religious education aid available from Quaker Home Service, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ, England.

Friends General Conference (FGC) is a source of much resource material for children. FGC is participating in creating the Joint Educational Development curriculum, "Discipleship Alive." Information on First Day School materials is available from FGC.

Songs of the Spirit, (\$5.50) a Quaker song book with 134 songs, and *Go Cheerfully*, (\$6.95) with 18 original songs by Friends that tell the Quaker story, are also available from FGC.

Friends General Conference
1216 Arch Street, #2B
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 561-1700

Friends in Unity with Nature: A First Day School Curriculum by Sandra Moon Farley and Diana Gail Egly of Palo Alto Monthly Meeting in California was developed as a first day school curriculum on environmental studies. It is somewhat lengthy and complex, but is a good resource even for a small group. Copies can be obtained for \$12 by writing:

Palo Alto Monthly Meeting
857 Colorado Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Growing in the Light by Dorothy Reichardt and Barbara Henderson is a First Day School curriculum designed for all ages. It is available through Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for a fee.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Religious Education Committee
1515 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Laser, a peace newsletter for kids, ages nine and up, updates them on children's peace activities. Also includes some projects by non-kids. \$12/year for 10 issues. Available from:

15 Walnut Street, P.O. Box 553
Northampton, MA 01060

Bibliographies for other materials are available from:

Evangelical Friends Alliance
P.O. Box 190
Newberg, OR 97132.

Religious Education Committee
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
1515 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 241-7221

Quaker Hill Bookstore
101 Quaker Hill Drive
Richmond, Indiana 47374

**Other Ideas to Help with Children in Small Worship Groups
from Friends in Columbia Falls, MT:**

Animal Town Game Co. has a catalogue that offers a wide array of non-competitive games and activities. They may help to promote Friendly values in play during worship time without adult guidance.

Animal Town Game Co.
P.O. Box 2002
Santa Barbara, CA 93210

Winston Press publishes a book *Today's Gift*, as part of the Hazelden Meditation Series; a book of daily meditations with stories and messages easily understood by school-age children. Inviting a child to choose a page and read it aloud before Sunday worship helped everyone feel a part of the process.

Winston Press
430 Oak Grove
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Meditating With Children by Deborah Rozman, has ideas on how to help children become comfortable with some processes of meditation. There is also an audiocassette of guided meditations for children by Deborah Rozman.

University of Trees Press
P.O. Box 66
Boulder Creek, CA 95006

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Community Building within the Meeting

Many Friends and would-be Friends seek a sense of community as well as a firm base for worship from their meeting. Building a sense of fellowship, and broadening the experience of what Friends are takes many forms. Working together even in small things, communicating about our beliefs and our daily lives, sharing responsibility, and discovering some of the many forms of ministry all serve to tie a meeting community together.

Meetings whose members are geographically spread out or not in frequent contact must be creative in seeking ways to enhance communication within the meeting. Broader participation in the meeting's business and willingness to share the workload can result from increased interaction. This sense of the meeting community is diminished when communication is limited to a few minutes after Meeting for Worship. The entire group is strengthened when members share their lives and activities frequently.

- .. Newsletters
- .. Other Written Communications
- .. Discussion Sharing
- .. Potlucks and Other Gatherings
- .. Working Together

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Newsletters

A newsletter is of primary importance to the coordination of a meeting community. If sufficient resources and interest exist, the newsletter may not only be the schedule announcement, but can carry much more communication. Some of the items in meeting newsletters include:

- .. A schedule for the month, noting Meeting for Worship and other events.
- .. The Query for the month.
- .. A response to the Query by an attender
- .. A column by the Clerk
- .. A column by the newsletter editor
- .. Minutes or a summary of the Business Meeting
- .. Items or letters from any attender
- .. Reprints from newspapers
- .. Reprints from contemporary Friends' publications
- .. Quotes from early Friends
- .. Personal news about individual members
- .. Friends history
- .. Discussion on current issues
- .. News from nearby meetings
- .. Pieces by the children

If resources and energy are not available in large quantity, the newsletter may be as simple as a single page or a postcard. Essentials are time, place, host's name, and phone number for the next month's meetings. Other extremely valuable items include information on child care and children's program, time and place of Business Meeting (or Ministry and Oversight Committee meetings, if applicable), announcements of Quarterly and Yearly Meeting, and requests for volunteers.

Newsletter editing responsibility can be rotated to a new volunteer once a year or shared among a team of writers, typists, and duplicators. Friends write from Washington:

On the first Sunday of the month, after Meeting for Worship, we decide which homes meeting will be held in during the month. We then send out postcards listing the location and phone number for each meeting. Whoever is present on Business Meeting Sunday helps fill out and address the postcards, so the responsibility doesn't rest with one person. Sending the postcards has insured that attendance at meeting stays in the range of about eight to fifteen people rather than three to five. (Indianola-Bainbridge Worship Group)

Newsletter Budget

Budgets for a newsletter will vary substantially. A newsletter of one sheet, handed out in person at meeting will only cost a nickel a copy at today's cheap photocopy rates. This means a budget of twenty dollars for a year might cover costs for a small group.

A cost of maybe \$50 a year allows not only for reaching regular attenders, but also some outreach to potential attenders and for sharing with other worship groups. Mailing and duplication costs for a short simple newsletter can run about \$0.30 to \$0.40 per copy. Few small groups mail newsletters more than quarterly, which means the budget probably can be kept around \$50 for the year for a mailing list of thirty to fifty.

By comparison, an extensive newsletter with full schedule, complete minutes of the Business Meeting, and lots of articles can run to four to six sheets of paper printed on both sides. Bulk mailing at reduced rates requires 200 pieces or more, and is thus only available to large meetings. Multnomah Meeting, for instance, has a lengthy newsletter and mails copies to everyone who signs the guestbook asking to receive a newsletter. The mailing can easily exceed 300 copies. The cost of sending the newsletter to one person one month is around \$0.50 for printing and mailing. The total annual newsletter budget is over \$1,000.

We caution small groups against letting the newsletter editor absorb all the costs of copying and mailing, even if they are minimal. A meeting should know and be responsible for the costs of its newsletter.



Other Written Communication

A small information pamphlet or packet for new attenders is another communication aid that can provide information otherwise overlooked. It could contain items like.

- .. The latest list of addresses and phone numbers of members and regular attenders.
- .. A list of who has taken on various responsibilities. This should also state that every person in this meeting is a minister, and that each should seek ways to share their ministry, in worship and in sharing the responsibilities of the meeting community.
- .. A list of various skills of attenders.
- .. A summary of the meeting's history and plans.
- .. An explanation of Quarterly and Yearly Meetings.
- .. How to make a financial donation (noting that none will be requested)
- .. How to become a member
- .. A few Pendle Hill pamphlets on Quaker beliefs or history.
- .. A listing of books available in the meeting.



Discussion Sharing

Scheduled but informal discussion times enable group members to know one another as people with ideas, information, expertise, perspective, and a sense of humor. Aside from helping build a sense of community within the meeting, this can lead to improved participation in Meeting for Business and wider sharing of the group's workload.

We decided that one of our first priorities should be to build a community by getting to know each other better, so for a few Sundays we are taking time after meeting for a bit of structured getting acquainted.

One thing we did was to have each person tell three things that are important to them—they can be things they like or things they find interesting or things that excite them or things they like to do—any three things that are important. They were not supposed to think of the three *most* important things, because that would involve too much sifting and pondering and weighing. We used the “Quaker Dialogue” guidelines, as far as keeping it non-judgmental and not responding to each other. We learned some things about each other that otherwise we wouldn't have known until we had been acquainted for much longer.

A second thing we did was to draw a picture of our life journeys on a big map of the USA. Each person took a different color felt pen, and, one by one, we would draw a big dot on the place we were born, and then trace every move, telling how long we lived there and important things that happened when we were there. We did not include trips and travels—just actual homes. This was a really good experience for us as a group, and gave us a good idea of who these other people are. What rich varied backgrounds we have! (Juniper Worship Group)

Following is a list of matters for consideration in setting up a discussion series, which we list without implying that there is any best set of answers:

- 1. Day and Time** Should a regular day of the week and time be used so that planning can become routine, or should discussions be scheduled only a week or two in advance to maintain maximum flexibility? If a regular time is set, what time is best for most people? A session just before or after Meeting for Worship can eliminate extra travel and is critical for groups like Yakima Worship Group where Friends travel an hour or more with small children. Discussions during the week, at lunch times or in the evenings may better suit those with commitments on weekends.
- 2. Focus of Discussion** Should there be a focus for a series of discussions? It may be on learning, on sharing experiences, on getting to know one another better, or on exploring an area of Quakerism. Should the group actively seek to attract travelling Friends or other outside people? Or do Friends feel that each discussion should take shape “as way opens?” Is one person in charge of arrangements or is this a group decision each time?
- 3. Topics** There is no limit to possible topics. Topics used have included book reports and discussion, the Queries from *Faith and Practice* of North Pacific Yearly Meeting or other yearly meetings, experiences of vocal ministry, oral presentation of the history of the meeting, experiences with Friends Committee on National Legislation or American Friends Service Committee or Quaker Universalist Fellowship. Other topics may range from peace action and sanctuary activities to agnosticism and Persian religious writings.
- 4. Age Range** Are the discussions to be focused on adults or are they to be broad enough to include most or all of the children? Life stories of Quakers past and present, including those in the meeting have strong intergenerational appeal. Many who grew up in Multnomah Meeting remember Ellis Jump's skeletons. Videos of movies such as “Brother Sun, Sister Moon” on St. Francis can also form the basis for intergenerational discussion.
- 5. Threshing Sessions** Is there an issue of concern to the meeting that deserves in-depth, worshipful discussion? Concentrating on a single topic using the format and approach of Meeting for Business may be valuable in considering the direction a group wishes to go, unity on a concern, or preparation of an annual State of Society report.

Some meetings have had weekly open morning discussions at a convenient spot such as a donut shop. A special weekend focused on a topic with film and panel discussions Saturday and social time Sunday morning in homes before Meeting for Worship is another creative way of dealing with isolation and distance. Sandpoint Idaho Worship Group has held such special weekend events, inviting other meetings in the region and isolated Friends. Overnight hospitality in homes was provided.



Potlucks and Other Social Gatherings

Regular potlucks are one delightful way to promote a sense of community within the meeting. Breakfast potlucks before Meeting for Worship may be easier than evening potlucks when there are large numbers of children. One meeting has a small group regularly gathering once a month after Meeting at a local restaurant.

Some newcomers; at Multnomah are turning the tables on the old-timers and have introduced the idea of “Friendly Eights.” This is an idea borrowed from east coast meetings for a regular series of potlucks in different homes. Eight people can volunteer to come each time, noting in advance on sign-up sheets which dishes they will bring.

Special occasions are wonderful excuses for the meeting community to gather. Baby showers, going away parties, returning to town parties, the advent of spring, Thanksgiving and other traditional holidays, weddings, visiting Friends, birthdays—there are many opportunities. Friends may also gather to share a meal around a common interest. In small communities, these may reach beyond normal attenders. Some examples are single parents potlucks, folksinging potlucks, and stone soup gatherings.

It is important to remember one-to-one invitations to attenders, particularly newcomers. Rides should be offered when necessary; they add to the fun of getting together. General announcements made aloud after Meeting, tacked on bulletin boards, or placed in the newsletter, are also vital.

The result of these activities is to deepen the sharing and communication within the meeting community. Participation of attenders is enhanced, and some groups report a deepened experience of worship following discussion.



Working Together

Many people find working side by side on a project the best means for building community. Those who grew up in Quaker families have strong positive memories of weekend or summer work camps. Friends, often with those of high school and college age, would work to repaint, repair, or cleanup structures such as community centers or apartments for low-income people. Sleeping accommodations might be the floor of one room of the building they worked on; food was simple and the experience strong. The following is a large-scale commitment, but there are many opportunities for a small meeting to aid in a similar fashion in cooperation with other churches or non-profit agencies.

In April 1965 the opportunity to serve as a sponsoring group for a low-income housing project through the agency of Citizens for Better Housing was presented to Bethesda Preparatory Meeting by a First Day School class . . . Two months later, Bethesda Friends approved a special minute to be forwarded to Friends Meeting of Washington, expressing their readiness to support a low-income housing project, as proposed by the ad hoc committee. In another minute Bethesda Meeting committed itself to the work necessary to carry out the project. The Meeting was authorized to go forward with the development of a specific plan.

[After five years of effort] construction took less than one year and on Sept. 11, 1971, Friends gathered with members of the community to inaugurate the Friendly Gardens project and started to assist in such tasks as tenant selection, selection of a management company, development of policies and preparation for a day Care Center.

Bethesda Friends Meeting has continued to have a corporate interest in Friendly Gardens, raising money and collecting materials for the Day Care Center, establishing in 1982 an emergency fund to meet needs of certain tenants and, since 1984, contributing to Christmas

food baskets for some of the tenant families (*Bethesda Friends Meeting The First 25 Years*, by Lloyd B. Swift and Stephanie Brandes, 1988)

Joint projects within meetings have been as simple and rewarding as helping a Friend with a broken arm put in her garden for the summer or doing yard work for elderly members.

Northwest Friends have also worked together on building or remodeling their meeting houses. Multnomah Friends found the process of demolishing the interior of their meeting house exhilarating. Several new friendships were formed, and they saved approximately \$10,000 towards the cost of rebuilding.

Every meeting owning a building holds regular work days for upkeep. Friends in Olympia write of how they paid the "rent" on their place for meeting for worship in the early days of the meeting:

The YWCA had no rental policy at that time. After we had been meeting there awhile, we asked what we cc'uld do to help them. We had a weekend project of rebuilding their back stairs, which had become hazardous, even to the extent of bending pipe to make a right hand railing to match the left side. We had quite a few skills represented in our group. (Olympia Monthly Meeting)

Section II: Survival and Renewal

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Surviving the Rough Spots

No meeting or worship group thrives forever without setbacks and even struggles for existence. Friends moving away; a major decline in attendance; the burden of too much work done by too few; disagreements on priorities; divorce, death, alcoholism or personal problems—these may all place a meeting under stress. Some groups have struggled and been strengthened while others have found it necessary to lay down the meeting. There is no right answer. In this chapter Friends share their experiences and pain, and present a few ideas which have helped them across the rough spots.

- .. Sustaining the Meeting
- .. Finding a Focus
- .. Worship: Not Meditation or Therapy
- .. Sharing the Workload
- .. Strife in the Meeting
- .. Laying Down a Meeting
- .. Queries
- .. Other Resources

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Sustaining the Meeting

Frequent changes are seen in our Yearly Meeting's list of worship groups and preparative meetings. Every year new groups are created and usually others are laid down. Partly this is a consequence of Friends' mobility, but it also reflects the many difficulties inherent in keeping small groups thriving. This opening to a State of Society Report could have been written by any one of a number of groups over the years:

The Spokane Worship Group is emerging from the cold and dark of winter with new signs of growth and new stirrings of the Spirit. New attenders have given us renewed energy to improve our meeting locale and our provisions for first day school. Meeting attendance by established Friends of the worship group is noticeably increased.

Many worship groups find that most of their attenders are new to the Society of Friends. This can place more of a burden on the few experienced Friends than they might like.

The ongoing love, care, energy, persistence, and luck needed to keep any small meeting vital awes some of us who have always been based in large meetings. In large meetings, it is possible to take a year or two off from responsibility in the meeting or to move away for a time with confidence that the group will still be much the same when you return. In small meetings, if you are not present, the group may falter.



Finding a Focus

Each group must define for itself the focus its members are comfortable with. The experience of two worship groups in Washington is not unusual among Friends in the Northwest:

Our small Worship Group began in 1980. Our number now is smaller than when we began. The core members remain committed and come week after week as they can.

During the seven years, the continuation of the meeting has absorbed most of our care and attention. We have viewed outreach as possible in the openness of our communication with others and as a responsibility shared by all.

Our review of thoughts and ideas for this report focused our awareness on the need to nurture our spiritual growth as a source of sharing and outreach as well as sustaining the meeting itself. (Ellensburg Worship Group)

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We have not focused heavily on the issues of attracting new members or promoting Friends testimonies in the community. We have been more interested in sustaining our Meeting for Worship as a small but ongoing experience of spiritual renewal. We have been concerned with having enough people present on Sunday morning to create a group feeling and with keeping our operations very simple in order to avoid burn-out. (Indianola-Bainbridge Worship Group)

Distances to be traveled within a single meeting can and do influence the priorities of groups in the Northwest. Heartland Preparative Meeting in Montana is the extreme example. Friends from the towns and vicinities of Helena, Butte, Bozeman, and Deer Lodge, a territory spanning over a hundred or more miles and several mountain passes, gather for Business Meetings. The closest match to their experience was the old Willamette Valley Monthly Meeting. Friends from Eugene to Portland met together for business in the days when travelling that 100 miles was much slower than now. Some of their experiences are described in Chapter 7. Today, Heartland describes its priorities in these terms:

The general assumption is that Heartland is trying to attract new members. The fact is that Heartland is trying to nurture all the members that it already has.

Heartland is a new Preparative Meeting which has met only ten times. Our members must travel about 100 miles to attend. We feel it is important for us to build a solid foundation before we reach out to the wider community.

Rogue Valley Preparative Meeting has experimented with meeting at two locations simultaneously on some Sundays, alternating with meeting all together at a single location other weeks—primarily because of the distances some had to travel. Eventually this experiment was deemed unsuccessful and dropped. Pullman-Moscow Monthly Meeting tried holding meetings alternately in each of the neighboring towns. A pattern emerged that people did not come as frequently to Pullman as they did to Moscow. The alternating was dropped.

Other groups have found their shared focus to be in acting out their concerns. Walla Walla Preparative Meeting is one group which has found a strong commitment to social action. Their newsletters include regular reports from their Committee on Non-Violent Conflict Resolution and on actions such as the Washington State Peace March, the *Cinco de Mayo* celebration, and work in the state prison.

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Worship: Not Meditation or Therapy

Sandpoint Worship Group has had the challenge of finding that many who come to join them are primarily interested in individual meditation. Experienced Sandpoint Friends have actively encouraged attenders to join in Yearly and Quarterly Meeting sessions, periodic threshing sessions, and regular Meetings for Business in order to introduce more fully the practice of corporate worship that is unique to Friends' ways.

Many of us come from diverse backgrounds and have no prior experience with Friends. Creating a strong sense of the Meeting for Worship at its best, and to distinguish it from group therapy or individual

meditation, can be difficult when even one vocal attender lacks a background in Friends worship. At least one small worship group eventually disbanded, partly because of the struggle to care for one member, new to Friends, who needed more help than they could provide. This and other struggles overwhelmed their energies and ability to worship together. Assistance from the Quarterly Meeting Ministry and Oversight or the Monthly Meeting caring for the worship group can be requested. Cooperation of everyone in the small group can sometimes help with the perception and solution of the problem-finding ways to reach out without rejection.

Expectations of Meeting for Worship can also get in the way of appreciating the richness that is there. Thomas Kelly recognized this; after writing about the possible mystical experience in Meeting for Worship, he went on to say:

The disciplined soul and the disciplined group have learned to cling to the reality of God's presence, whether the feeling of presence is great or faint. If the wind of the Spirit, blowing whither He wills, warms the group into an inexpressible sense of unity, then the worshipers are profoundly grateful. If no blanket of divine covering is warmly felt, and if the wills have been offered together in the silent work of worship, worshipers may still go home content and nourished and say, "It was a good meeting." In the venture of group worship, souls must learn to accept spiritual weather without dismay and go deeper in will into Him who makes all things beautiful in their time.

(Taken from: *The Gathered Meeting*,
published by The Tract Association of Friends, Philadelphia)

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Sharing the Workload

A meeting can easily be hurt when, for whatever reason, one or very few of the members continually assume the burden of organizing and providing energy for the group. All too often, this is a problem that goes unrecognized until it is too late-after the "critical" member has left, become ill, burned out, or is otherwise unable to continue carrying the group's workload. Thus, recognizing that there is a problem may be the most important step. Any meeting should regularly ask itself, "Do we fairly share or rotate among ourselves the tasks required to keep our meeting functioning?" An appropriate time for this evaluation is while writing the annual State of Society Report.

The process of distributing the workload more evenly is usually a combination of encouraging the experienced few to "let go" (even though some mistakes might occur) and encouraging others who may be shy, uncertain, or inexperienced to try new jobs (even though mistakes might occur). It can help to point out that more is at stake than just fairness and reducing the group's vulnerability. Direct experience is fundamental to Quakerism. Personally learning the business of being a Friend is a necessary part of becoming one.

When there is just more work than available energy to do it, the only remedies are to simplify activities in order to reduce the workload or find new attenders to share the current workload. Attracting new people is discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

Our Nominating Committee expressed concern as they worked to fill committee positions from a small and already strained pool of experienced Friends. Newcomers bring new energy. But this energy must be effectively translated into meeting the expanding needs of the community lest needs overwhelm capacity to respond. For guidance, we wait "upon the Divine," trusting that our growth spurt will be one of quality as well as quantity. (Eugene Monthly Meeting, State of Society Report)

Integrating new people into the life of the meeting occurs in small groups in a much more informal way. The group may ask different people to take on well defined tasks-doing one mailing, closing Meeting for Worship, providing coffee, hosting a potluck, being correspondent for a year, or being part of a community project.

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The experience of Friends business procedure is a vital aspect of relating Friends worship to our daily lives. We must each learn to take personal responsibility for the life of the meeting. Several worship groups hold Meetings for Business, even when they have no intent to organize further. The Mountain View Worship Group, for instance, specifically requested Friends from Multnomah to join them in a Business Meeting. They felt too inexperienced to go it alone, but wished to use Friends ways to decide on various practical questions about how and when they met, and about care of the children.

A Washington worship group rotates a major part of its workload in the following way:

For about the first three years one of us (who was, at first, our only official member of the Society) acted as our Clerk/Correspondent as well as Newsletter Editor. When she eventually tired of the clerking responsibility and asked that someone else take over as Clerk for a year, it was suggested that we rotate the Clerk's job every month and, to make that feasible, rent a Post Office box for incoming mail. We agreed to do so as an experiment and have continued the arrangement ever since. The Clerk for a given month collects and opens the Worship Group's mail, prepares an agenda, and writes up minutes for the Newsletter in addition to clerking the Meeting for Business itself.

Although originally intended mainly to share the workload, our rotating clerkship has had the added benefit of keeping us all about equally informed of social action in the Puget Sound region, gatherings and other activities of our Quarterly and Yearly Meetings, and the like. In a community as literally insular as ours, and for a Worship Group as small as we are, this type of sharing has helped us survive as more than just a social group. (Vashon Worship Group)



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Strife in the Meeting

When divorce or major disagreement over direction occurs in a group, the pain is real and can lead, in extreme cases, to a split or the demise of the meeting. It is hard for the meeting not to be involved, especially in a divorce situation, when the couple is very active. It is rare that both partners can continue to attend, even in a large meeting, although one worship group found both partners still involved and noted that they did not lose a family, but rather gained a new home to meet in. Support from the meeting, loving care expressed for both individuals, and perhaps a specially called worship in support of the family may be appropriate. One Friend has suggested that "a few Friends might join one of a divorcing couple for a small meeting for worship until they feel able to be in the same Meeting." Meetings have occasionally paid the costs of counseling in such situations.

Those who have participated in divisive Business Meetings are thoroughly aware of how poorly we listen to each other at times, even when we are attempting to worship together. Practice in attempting to truly hear what others are saying and stepping back from our own concerns can be valuable. Practical techniques can help, particularly when emotions are stretched, as one meeting found as part of a retreat on "(Spiritual Listening."

A Friend brought to the group techniques of active listening developed for the Neighborhood Mediation Centers in Portland and focused on how these “worldly techniques” reached unanticipated spiritual depths. Active listening techniques which may be useful in small group discussion are to: 1) agree that all participants will empathize with each other; 2) acknowledge the validity of each person’s feelings and position; 3) clarify assumptions and suspicions; and 4) summarize or restate the discussion periodically, checking that all present are in agreement.

Some common blocks to hearing others accurately—things you’ll want to catch yourself doing and reject—are: 1) comparing, 2) mind reading, 3) rehearsing your position, 4) filtering, 5) judging, 6) advising, 7) sparring, being right, 8) placating and derailing, and 9) changing the subject. (Multnomah Monthly Meeting)

This same meeting put these ideas into practice in a series of small groups consisting of equal numbers of people who held strong positions on a controversial issue, plus member of Worship and Ministry Committee to occasionally remind friends when they were clearly not listening. For at least some it was the first time they understood the basis of others concerns after a year or more of struggling. The groups purposely were convened only for the purpose of increased understanding with no attempt to reach agreement.

Support from the Monthly Meeting, if a group is under the care of a meeting, or from the Quarterly Meeting Ministry and Oversight Committee, can help in times of stress. No meeting should be shy about seeking such aid in getting through a crisis.

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Laying Down a Meeting

Worship groups by their nature may be quite transient. Several have been created and laid down over the past ten years. For instance, a group met at Malheur Wildlife Refuge for several years until one couple, who were directors of the refuge, moved on to another position and another couple decided to move their health food store to elsewhere in the state. For a period this was a spiritual base for those few Friends who lived in the area, a destination point for travelling Friends, and a bonus for Friends visiting the refuge. When the need was no longer there, the worship group was laid down.

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Queries

The following queries from the North Pacific Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice* are appropriate for considering how we act to sustain the life of the meeting:

- .. Do we each take an active part in the life of our meeting?
- .. Do we recognize the varied skills and spiritual gifts of our members and attenders? How do we nurture their use and growth?
- .. When problems and conflicts arise, do we make timely endeavors to resolve them in a spirit of love and humility? How do we use our diversity for the spiritual growth of our meeting?
- .. Do we keep our lives uncluttered with things and activities, and avoid commitments beyond our strength and light? Is the life of the meeting so ordered that it helps us simplify our personal lives? Do we order our individual lives so as to nourish our spiritual growth?

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Other Resources

New England Yearly Meeting Committee on Ministry and Counsel has published a booklet entitled “Living with Oneself and Others: Working Papers on Aspects of Family Life” (1978). It contains discussion, resources, and queries on many aspects of personal decision making and the meeting’s role in it. Available for \$4 from Friends General Conference, 1216 Arch Street, #2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

Family Relations Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting occasionally publishes material. They have published ‘Clearness for Marriage’ by Elizabeth Watson, ‘Resource Guide for Same-Sex Couples and Their Committees on Clearness,’ and ‘Living With Death and Dying’ among others. For further information contact:

Family Relations Committee
Friends Center
1515 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

A source of publication on such topics as “Biblical Guide on Inner Healing and Healing of Relationships, Becoming a Beatitude People,” the ministry of Friends Family Service began as a result of research Judy Brutz did in 1982 which revealed that Quaker families were not immune to family violence. Friends Family Service uses research to expose our myths to the Light, to help us know ourselves, and to relate our religious-spiritual lives to our human condition. Programs by Friends Family Service for Ministry and Council have included the following Yearly Meetings: Baltimore, Illinois and New York.

Friends Family Service
P.O. Box 16010
Des Moines, IA 50316

5

Becoming Known in the Communities Where We Live

Most Friends who have talked widely in their communities about Quakerism have run into a response such as: "I thought they were extinct," or perhaps a comment about grey bonnets or Quaker Oats. With only 120,000 or so Quakers in this country, it is not surprising that few are aware of our scattered meetings in the Northwest.

Many Quakers first found out about Friends by working on peace projects, becoming involved in the American Friends Service Committee, or similar activities. Social action, while not designed to attract new members, is a powerful outreach tool

Some of the ways Quakers become known in the community include:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ** Advertising our Existence | ** Peace Fairs and Other Events |
| ** Ecumenical Actions | |
| ** Acting Out Friends' Testimonies | ** Queries |

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Advertising Our Existence

We wish we *had* a meeting. One that met every Sunday morning-or twice a month, or once a month-but regularly. One that was big enough so that one family's absence didn't matter didn't make the whole thing fall apart. . . . During recent months we seem to have become a dormant Worship Group, but when we ask ourselves if we want to forget it, lay down the group and become isolated Friends, we say, "No!" We're not ready to let go of the group. (Juniper Worship Group State of Society Report)

Many meetings have at some time come to the place Juniper was a year ago, or at least feel the need for added vitality. This chapter shares some actions that meetings have found successful in attracting new attenders. (Juniper has gained several new individuals and families at last report.)

While Friends are not known for recruiting of new members, there are actions that increase a meeting's visibility. Word of mouth to friends and co-workers is an important way to be known. Public notices also allow potential members to discover a Friends meeting. Concerning their regular notice in the church section of the newspaper, Missoula Meeting reports: "We feel that this notice has helped call attention to our meetings and has brought visitors to our weekly services."



One new worship group prepared a press release to announce their first Meeting for Worship as follows:

Meetings and worship groups have found many ways to announce their presence in the community:

- “ Peace Fairs and Other Events Some use notices on bulletin boards or posters announcing un-programmed meetings and giving the details of where and when (Boise Preparative Meeting, Indianola-Bainbridge Worship Group, Bellingham Worship Group, Billings Monthly Meeting).
- “ Peace Fairs and Other Events Billings Meeting has developed a series of small cards including their address and meeting times and a provocative quote such as: “Troubled by life’s questions~ Try the Quaker way. Wait in silence for answers from the Christ within.” or “Quakers believe that God is in every person and that God communicates with people directly without preachers or sacraments. Quakers worship by meeting in silence to wait for God to speak to them and through them. Quakers have been leaders in movements to: reform prisons, end slavery, insure equal rights for all people, make peace, and end war.”
- ◆ Salem Friends. hold a silent vigil with a large banner “Peace is the Way,” for one hour on a busy downtown corner the first Sunday of each month in order to build public awareness and address a concern.
- “ Peace Fairs and Other Events There is a series of hanging wooden signs by the road as one enters Sandpoint, ID, which list local churches. “Sandpoint Worship Group of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)” appears proudly along with the bigger and more familiar churches.
- “ Peace Fairs and Other Events Listings in the Yellow Pages are frequently used and discussed later in Chapter 6.
- “ Peace Fairs and Other Events Listings on the “church page” of local newspapers (which may require a paid advertisement) or in directories of local churches given to new families may also be useful. Notice of special speakers, potlucks, or other specific events is often publicized for free in local newspapers.
- “ Peace Fairs and Other Events Listings in *Friends Journal* and other media are used with varying success by Quaker groups in Boise, Billings, Corvallis, and Missoula, among others.
- “ Peace Fairs and Other Events One meeting uses a “bulletin board” posted frequently in the lobbies of hotels and motels.
- “ Peace Fairs and Other Events Billings Monthly Meeting has created and posted a billboard stating “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, and those who are cold and not clothed. Dwight David Eisenhower.” They have made the poster available for others to use.
- “ Peace Fairs and Other Events A novel approach was used once when a meeting had the local newspaper print a coupon “Send in this coupon and receive free information about Quakers, who we are, and what we believe.” It helped spread word of Friends’ existence and counter-acted stereotypes.

Ecumenical Actions

Involvement in existing church organizations and community institutions is important to many Friends. Representatives have been sent to ministerial fellowships in Billings, Walla Walla, Olympia, and Bellevue. Others, in the university towns of Eugene and Missoula, have joined with the local campus ministry. Eugene Meeting maintains membership in local peace groups and other community groups. Olympia Meeting has joined the Ministry of Presence, Inter-Faith AIDS Support Group. It is an outgrowth of the Associated Ministries but functions independently. Multnomah Meeting is joining with members of the Korean community in Portland to hold a called Meeting for Worship in memory of Ham Sok Nan, revered Korean Quaker who died recently.

The Yearly Meeting and several monthly meetings have joined the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment. Others are considering membership. All it takes are individuals willing to invest the time and confident enough to interact publicly.

Acting Out Friends' Testimonies

What does the worship group/monthly meeting/Society of Friends have to say to the community? How is the message delivered? Quaker testimonies derive from the central belief in the essential oneness and equality of all persons. Individuals express this through simplicity of lifestyle and integrity in personal relations. Often one individual takes part in social action as a representative of a small meeting so the energy of the group is not spread too thinly.

Group action, formal or informal, is another primary source of expression of Friends' testimonies. The group action can range from writing a letter to the editor to taking part in demonstrations. Some examples of different ways of telling the world what we are and what we stand for are listed in this section.

Umpqua Valley Worship Group (Roseburg area, Oregon) has had a successful and enjoyable event for the past several years. There is an annual summer arts festival in a local park. UVW Group has provided a lemonade stand with a banner saying "Quaker Quenchers." Strawberry lemonade and mint tea are sold as an alternative to caffeine drinks. There is a small table with some Quaker literature immediately next to the stand. Each summer two to four people "find us" in this manner.

We Quakers have also, twice, been invited to our local Unitarian group to lead an unprogrammed Meeting for Worship, followed by questions and discussion about Quakers.

Indianola-Bainbridge Worship Group sponsored a bike-a-thon to earn money to send school supplies to Nicaragua. Rogue Valley Preparative Meeting also gathered school supplies and the whole meeting, including children, packed them for mailing. Walla Walla Preparative Meeting has long been active in public political and social actions such as a sanctuary group, draft counseling, cultural relations group, Ground Zero, and an ecumenical social justice group. Missoula Meeting tries to resolve injustices in the community and surrounding areas. Montana Friends have also created a book cover for sale to public school students as an alternative to the covers promoting the military. Multnomah Meeting belongs to the Portland Sanctuary Coalition supporting a family in sanctuary and one Sunday each month serves meals to the homeless at the St. Francis Dining Hall. In Bellingham, most of the members are working on a problem involving Central American refugees, and the sense of shared action strengthens the group.

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Peace Fairs and Other Events

Meetings in the Philadelphia area have sponsored a variety of activities. One meeting, wanting to respond to the ROTC and other scholarships handed out by the military, has established a \$500 Peace Scholarship. Another sponsors a Peace Essay Contest.

Meetings with meetinghouses sponsor tours and hold discussions about Friends beliefs and processes or make the meetinghouses available for use by community groups. Another meeting has started a peace fair,

which now 5 sponsored by all Philadelphia area Monthly Meetings and by 35 churches of various denominations.

Often small groups choose to join with other groups in sponsorship of these fairs or events Umpqua Valley Worship Group was proud to see its name along with others on the box cars of the Citizens' Peace Train in a local parade. Rogue Valley Preparative Meeting helped sponsor a peace colloquium. Well-known activists from across the nation participated.



6

Welcoming Friends

The growth in the number of Friends in the Pacific Northwest from the tiny core that existed only a couple of decades ago is a result of some Friends moving into the area, but more often people are newly discovering our existence. The numbers of new worship groups reflects the existence of growing numbers of Quakers and would-be Quakers throughout the region. Few meetings find only the same people worshipping together year after year.

Helping visitors feel welcome and integrating new attenders into the life of the group is a need common to meetings of all sizes throughout the Northwest This chapter will focus on some of the more successful ideas for welcoming new friends.

- .. Welcoming Newcomers
 - .. Invitation to Worship
 - .. Newcomers' Gatherings
 - .. Participation in Business Meeting
- .. Queries for Outreach
- .. Practical Aspects of Meeting for Worship
 - .. Location: Homes or Public Spaces?
 - .. Meeting Times

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Welcoming Newcomers

A greeter at the door, a guest-book, and a time for introductions after worship are familiar practices in many meetings. A lively discussion at a recent forum at Multnomah Meeting in Portland concerned how these and other methods help create a welcoming meeting." There were varied responses from new attenders as to whether Multnomah was "friendly." Some wished more outgoing contact, while others liked a reserved approach with a general tone of welcome. The sense of the group was that there was a need for spiritual discernment. Friends should ideally be aware of each individual who walks through the door and seek to reach them each in their own way.

Designating someone to be available after each meeting to answer questions about Friends is another way many meetings reach out. The best way to help people feel welcome, however is to promote an understanding among all regular attenders that the time after Meeting for Worship is not just for conducting business or catching up with old friends. Role-playing has been used in Philadelphia area meetings to help current members feel more comfortable in talking to strangers and making them feel welcome.

We talked about ways we can make visitors feel at home and methods by which we can inform them about the Quakers. We have a small library, which we are attempting to organize so visitors (and Quakers) can more easily access material by subject. Our feeling is that such literature, if it is provided to people in an accessible way, will explain historical and contemporary thoughts, issues and trends of the Religious Society of Friends.(Missoula Monthly Meeting)

In this spirit, a Friend in Eugene has initiated "Quaker Trivia" and hands out slips with three questions about Friends history or practice each Sunday. The answers are hidden in a fold of the paper.

Vashon Worship Group seeks to encourage understanding of Quaker practice, and of sometimes obscure Quaker terminology, by meeting on First Sundays for discussion after Meeting for Worship. Each month they focus on a different section of Advices and Queries from *Faith and Practice*.

Invitation to Worship

Meeting for Worship is a mystery to some first-time attenders. Several meetings have small handout cards available to explain what to expect during the hour of "silence." There have even been posters made to easily convey to newcomers what Friends are about. Each meeting can create its own, or borrow from the many excellent examples that exist. A pamphlet no larger than 8"x 6"; folded in half, is easy to handle and read. Large type should be used and the lines should be well-spaced. Some groups include the location of Meeting for Worship, names and phone numbers of individuals to contact, information on child care or First Day school, and meeting time. Examples follow of two such pamphlets explaining Friends' beliefs and method of worship.

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

We welcome you to this meeting. It is a period for worship together both through expectant silence and through spoken words. There is no human leader, and no pre-arranged program. Each person who enters the meeting helps to determine the depth of our worship as a group. We believe that the spirit of God dwells in the hearts of everyone. When individuals open the way and listen to God, an Inner Light will shine through them. Sitting quietly here, each seeks to have an immediate sense of this divine leading and to know at first hand the presence of the spirit. If there is speaking, it should come sincerely from the depth of life and of experience. Such a meeting is always a high venture of faith, and it is to this venture that we invite you this hour. (Multnomah Monthly Meeting)



We welcome you to Bethesda Friends Meeting. We consist of about fifty families seeking to learn how to guide our lives with love. This folder is to give you some idea of our faith and practice.

One confusing feature of our organization is our frequent use of traditional terms handed down from the beginnings of Quakerism in 17th Century England. For example, the word 'meeting' as used above is equivalent to the 'church' or 'religion' of other sects. When referring to our Meeting for Worship, 'meeting' means our church service. Our First Day School is our Sunday School. Even our meeting does not consist entirely of Members. In addition to frequent visitors we include a fair number of Attenders, who worship with us regularly but have not yet decided whether to apply formally for membership. All are equally welcome.

The central feature of our corporate life is Meeting for Worship, held each Sunday at 11. This is a 'silent' meeting in the sense that there is no minister, no formal service, and no music. We sit quietly together, try to empty our minds of worldly cares and distractions and listen for spiritual guidance. There may be no vocal ministry during the entire hour, or one or more of us may be moved to speak briefly. Messages vary greatly in content and direction but we try to avoid personal or topical concerns and center upon leadings from 'the light within.' This Light is our belief—our only formal belief—that God exists in every human being and that if we search our own hearts we will find the way.

Since we have no minister you may wonder how to find out more about our meeting or about Quakerism in general. The welcomer at the door, who also gives the announcements at the Rise of Meeting, is one source of information, but feel free to talk with any of us. We use the half hour or so after meeting for Worship especially for welcoming visitors and for socializing. We hope also that you will sign our guest book. Nearby there are often copies of our monthly Newsletter that will give you a broader idea of other meeting activities such as our Monthly Meeting for Business, Sunday morning Discussion Group, and special events. On our bulletin board are posted the names and telephone numbers of our officers and committee conveners, any of whom will be glad to speak with you further. (Bethesda Monthly Meeting, Maryland)

Newcomers' Gatherings

"Newcomers' Gatherings" are one way to provide time to answer new attenders questions about Friends and become better acquainted. Multnomah Meeting sends written invitations with a return postcard addressed to the host to all local names in the guestbook from the previous six months. The event is also announced after meeting and in the newsletter. It is held in a home. "Old timers" who attend must bring a dessert with them. Most of the time is spent going around the circle with introductions. Each one present (old and new) is asked to share on how they became interested in Friends and some of their expectations. Several Friends may be asked to speak briefly or be prepared to answer questions on Friends' beliefs, the history of the meeting, resources for learning about Quakers, and how to get more involved. Last fall Multnomah Meeting expanded the outreach effort by presenting a six-week course on Quakerism. Each week's session was led by two or three people. It was open to everyone, and twenty or more attended every session.

Bethesda Monthly Meeting in Maryland has over the years held; The Reading Collective, Get Acquainted Groups, a Clearness Group, a Sewing Group, a Retirement Group, a Marriage Enrichment Group, a Square Dancing Group, and a Friendly Songsters Singing Group. Some met only for a few months, some are ongoing after years, some one and go with the level of interest. Certainly there is no end to the possible opportunities to build community and bring new and old Friends together.

Participation in Meeting

Some new attenders have the impression that attenders are not welcome in Meeting for Business. They, and non-participating members as well, may be waiting for a direct personal invitation. While Ministry and Oversight Committee meetings may need to deal with personal or private matters of individual members and thus are limited to committee members, most meetings seek to encourage *all* to participate in Meetings for Business. Friends' unique way of conducting the business of the meeting adds depth to understanding the connection between worship and our daily lives.

..

Practical Aspects of Meeting for Worship

Small worship groups and meetings usually do not have their own meeting house. Shared or rented space in a public building often serves as a meeting place, or private homes may be used.

There is disagreement on whether a private home is as comfortable and inviting a space to newcomers as it is to regular attenders. For some it is more intimidating to approach a strange home than a public space. There are also tales from experienced visitors of unsuccessful attempts to locate the home where a worship group was meeting, or to reach anyone at the designated phone number to learn where the meeting would be.

Homes

Several new meetings have grown dramatically while meeting in the same centrally located home. The warmth and friendliness possible are very real. A kitchen is always convenient for a potluck or snacks. There is no rental expense.

It is particularly important with a home meeting place to take steps to make Meeting for Worship accessible to newcomers. A listing in the newspaper church page is often used. A listing in the yellow pages with a permanent phone number to call for directions is also helpful. The advent of answering machines provides the option of a recorded message giving the meeting location and time. The following may be helpful:

Any member who has a business phone line in their home can have the meeting listed as an “alternative listing” using the same phone number under “churches” in the yellow pages. This will cost the meeting about \$3 to \$5 per month in rural areas. It must be made clear the MEMBER is functioning as the church phone (all members are ministers). If it is represented that the church is a separate “business sharing the line,” much higher rates are quoted as a “joint user” rather than an “alternative listing.” (Sandpoint Worship Group)

Ideally, Meeting for Worship starts when the first person is seated in the meeting room. Facilities for meeting in the home may not easily fit that ideal. The meeting area may be just inside the entranceway and late arrivals or extended greeting conversation can delay the start of worship. A sign announcing “Meeting has begun, please enter and join us quietly” may be placed outside the door. Introductory cards explaining the Meeting for Worship are helpful for newcomers arriving late. Some examples were given above.

Welcoming newcomers may be as simple as placing a sign on the front lawn stating “Friends Meeting-10AM Sunday morning.”

We set it [a large wooden sign with both sides stating: ‘Olympia Friends Meeting, Worship 10am, We Welcome You’] up in front of the YWCA or the home in which we have meeting. Prudence had a friend on her field hockey team who was a sign painter. The team needed money so we traded a cord of wood for the painting and they auctioned off the wood. (Olympia Monthly Meeting)

This kind of notice can reassure strangers that they are in the right place at the right time.

Space for children, particularly where they can talk or giggle or cry without being too disruptive, is not possible in all homes. This may limit a meeting to a very few places and possibly place a strain on the hosts. Several meetings, such as Billings, have been fortunate to find a family that is willing to open its large home for meeting every Sunday, even when they are not at home. This provides a familiar place for children, and gives a spot to store children’s toys and materials, or even a small library.

As the meeting grows, lack of space in the home or the imposition on one family providing its home as a central meeting place may indicate the need for better facilities. The burden to any single family can be relieved by rotating among several homes. Scheduling homes spread over a wide area gives everyone a chance to have Meeting for Worship close by. Using each home for an entire month before rotating allows less frequent transfer of items like a library collection or First Day School supplies.

Public Facilities

Larger groups need to locate appropriate public facilities. Such places as private schools, college facilities, and churches (particularly Seventh Day Adventist facilities, which are unused on Sundays,) are frequent choices. Other sites such as an Odd Fellows Hall or a YWCA have been used.

Separate acoustically isolated space for First Day School, a kitchen, and space for storing meeting books and materials are some features to seek. A location readily accessible to newcomers and space suitable for holding public programs are also important.

Hours of availability should be checked. When sharing space with other churches this may definitely be a problem. At some hours meeting attendance and certainly public program attendance may suffer. Some worship groups combine the use of private homes for potlucks or evening meetings and a public location for regular Meeting for Worship.

Cost may also be a consideration. Some meetings have been fortunate to find free public space available. But the right kind of space that is also available at the right times may not be cheap. When cost is a limiting factor, it may be necessary to gather in a rented space on some occasions and in homes the rest of the time.

Meeting Times

If meeting in a public space is a priority, worship or discussion times may be determined by when affordable facilities are available. One worship group found 1 PM was the only time slot available in a building that was otherwise very desirable. The mid-day hour was difficult for many attenders and very poor for sponsoring public programs following Meeting for Worship.

Southwest Washington Worship Group, in contrast, found 1 PM to be a good time to meet. They were close enough to Multnomah Meeting to allow Friends to attend worship both places. From time to time Multnomah people also took over the First Day School program for the worship group to allow everyone there to worship for the full hour.

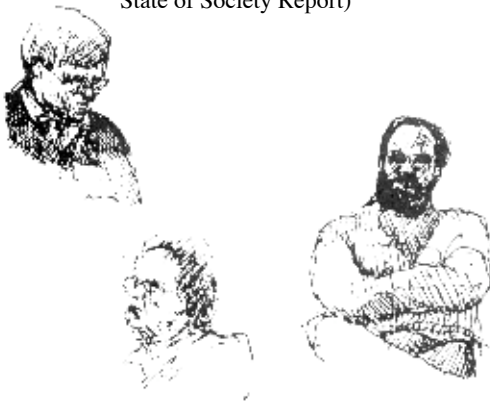
The most desirable times seem to be morning, starting anywhere from 9:30 to 11:00, or at 4:00 in the afternoon. Juniper Worship Group turned to an evening meeting when it was realized that several members had to work during the day Sunday. Larger meetings have occasionally provided two Meetings for Worship, the traditional Sunday morning time and a second time on a weekday evening. Multnomah Meeting has experienced low attendance both on weeknights and during a brief experiment with a second worship period at 8:00 AM on summer Sunday mornings.

Ministry and Oversight Committee Meetings, Meeting for Business, discussion programs, and potlucks can all be rotated to follow or precede Meeting for Worship, or be held on a different day, as best suits attenders. Some hold Thursday evenings open for meeting functions, with Business Meeting the first Thursday, Ministry and Oversight the second Thursday, etc. Each group finds its own best schedule. Several have experimented to find when the most people can attend Business Meeting and other functions. Long distances to be traveled seem to encourage holding as many functions in the same day as possible. Because families with children have difficulty with lengthy participation, a weekday evening may be better suited for these other functions. Other meetings have opted for Business Meeting to follow immediately after Meeting for Worship (sometimes without a formal closing of the latter) in order to enhance the sense of worship in conducting the business of the meeting.

Budget

Even a group of six or eight may have some expenses—phone or notes to communicate, childcare, etc. A worship group of eight adults and three children writes:

We continue small financial support for community needs and we send a monthly letter and financial support to our adopted child in the Philippines—she is 16 this spring, having been with the Foster Parents Plan for ten years, seven with us. (San Juan Worship Group State of Society Report)



Raising the funds for whatever purposes the meeting decides are important is the responsibility of the entire group. No one person should end up continually paying expenses on an informal basis. Everyone chipping in a few dollars as expenses are incurred, or having an informal treasurer may work. Periodic consideration of meeting expenses and discussion on the need for a checking account is worth while. It is easy to slip into patterns and expectations without recognizing either a change in one individual's circumstances, or gradually increasing expenses.

Queries for Outreach

Philadelphia Friends suggest a set of Queries which meetings might find useful for a discussion of outreach. These could be discussed at a business meeting, at a discussion group or perhaps included in the annual State of Society report to the Yearly Meeting:

- What is our meeting's current conception of outreach?
- What have we done in the past year to make our faith and practice more accessible to others?
- How have we created a warm welcome for new attenders and visitors?
- How have we nurtured attenders and new members? How have we included them in meeting activities?
- What stumbling blocks to outreach have we uncovered in ourselves and in our meeting?

Section III: Connections with the Wider Society of Friends

7

Worship Group, Preparative Meeting, or Monthly Meeting?

At some point in their existence as a group, members ask themselves how they wish to organize. Size is not the sole factor: there are monthly meetings with only a dozen or so present at worship and worship groups where twenty or thirty attend on some Sundays. The number of experienced Friends, the stability of the group, and its willingness to create and sustain a formal organization are all important factors.

In this section worship groups share their experiences as they considered what was right for them. Also included is some information on the process for gaining recognition as a preparative meeting or a monthly meeting.

..	Willamette Monthly Meeting	..	Queries for Worship Groups
..	Partial Story of Olympia Meeting	..	Process
..	Setting Priorities	..	A New Monthly Meeting

..

Willamette Monthly Meeting

The History of Willamette Quarterly Meeting by Grace Lawrence details the formation of four monthly meetings in Oregon. This is a reminder that the first unprogrammed monthly meeting, University Meeting, was formed as recently as 1940 and unprogrammed Friends are quite new to the Pacific Northwest. The history of Willamette Quarterly Meeting goes back to a time when four informal groups meeting in Portland, Salem, Corvallis, and Eugene came together occasionally for worship and fellowship. These independent groups had sprung up spontaneously where two or three Friends' families had discovered each other and had begun to meet in homes for periods of silent worship. Each became a nucleus that attracted other Friends and interested attenders. Through personal friendships and contacts with the American Friends Service Committee they became aware of each other. The result was occasional meetings that eventually became regular.

In 1947 a committee was formed to explore the idea of establishing the first monthly meeting in Oregon. The Willamette Valley Monthly Meeting held its first official session in Salem at the YWCA in 1948. The meeting joined in Northwest Quarterly Meeting which was just being formed and included British Columbia and Alberta meetings as well as Seattle Monthly Meeting (now University Meeting).

Friends in the Willamette Valley met for worship in homes in each of the four cities and gathered monthly in Salem for Business Meeting, a distance of 60 miles or more for many members. What is now a trip of no more than an hour for most people was a much greater undertaking in the days before the construction of Interstate 5.

Eugene Worship Group became a Preparative Meeting under the care of Willamette Valley Monthly Meeting in 1949. Portland followed suit in 1951, and Corvallis in 1954.

Continued growth in each of the Preparative Meetings and in the informal worship group in Salem posed problems for the Monthly Meeting. A recurring one was the interruption of the programs of the Preparative Meetings when they gathered in Salem on the fourth Sunday of each month for worship, potluck lunch and a meeting for business. Each of the Preparative Meetings had developed its own children's program suited to the ages and the number of children involved. Not all families were able to make the day long trip to Salem. Deep concern was expressed for maintaining the regular Meetings for Worship and developing the religious life of the children. The sense of the Monthly Meeting was to give prayerful consideration to the problem of the continuity of the programs in the preparative meetings.

~By 1955] The matter of Eugene Preparative Meeting being given Monthly Meeting status continued under consideration . . . Four points were taken under advisement. (1) In reality Eugene Friends found themselves functioning as a Monthly Meeting except for official action. (2) The geographic location, size of families, etc, made it difficult for a representative number to attend Monthly Meeting in Salem. (3) The Eugene Meeting had developed a religious educational program for the children that was working well. When all or part of the group left once a month the continuity of the program was disrupted. (4) On the other hand grave concern was expressed about the effect such a division might have on the existing Monthly Meeting. The final impetus for the creation of Eugene Monthly Meeting was the opportunity to purchase a choice piece of property. They were formally recognized in 1956.

Multnomah County Friends requested Monthly Meeting status in 1957 stating "we are ready spiritually and in point of members to accept full responsibilities." At that time they had 18 members of the Society of Friends and a number of interested attenders. Willamette Valley Quarterly Meeting was established in 1958. Corvallis and Salem continued to meet jointly until 1962. This experience within the past forty years is being repeated across the reaches of Montana today.



Partial Story of Olympia Monthly Meeting

A founding Friend in Olympia writes of the development of her meeting, noting that "Even in a meeting as young as ours, (founded in 1972) very few of the originals are still here."

We began meeting in October, 1972. When we moved to Olympia in June 1972, others began giving us names of people who might be interested in having a meeting here. At first our reply was along the lines of "If people in the area want a meeting they could start one." Then at the end of the summer we got a letter from a Friend from Pacific Yearly Meeting stating her daughter was going to enroll in Evergreen College and wanted to know if there was a meeting in town. Well, what can you do? If you have a student who wants to go to meeting you certainly should try to have one. We collected all the suggested names and sent out a postcard to each, inviting them to a potluck supper at our home on a Sunday evening. This would be followed by Meeting for Worship and then a discussion about whether or not we wanted to meet regularly. Seventeen people came, a surprisingly good beginning. We all agreed we wanted to meet regularly, but it took some discussion to decide where, what time, and how often. Several were involved in other churches where they or family members had commitments, so they wanted to meet in the evening or some other day of the week. Having seen the experience of Corvallis Meeting which started this way, some of us felt that we wanted to try to plan this as a primary worship group from the beginning. Our decision was to meet every other Sunday for potluck breakfast at 9.00, Meeting for Worship at 10.00, rotating among homes as invited.

After a while, two problems with this schedule became apparent. Five Sunday months meant uncertain meeting dates, and the Christmas vacation meant the potential for up to six weeks between meetings for some. I don't remember when it was we decided we wanted to meet every Sunday and that going around to homes was too complicated. Our budget was very small and a large proportion of our attendance was by students. We looked around town, made inquiries, and found that the YWCA would welcome our meeting there. The YWCA building is an old home and for some it provided a good transition from our members' homes. Some weren't happy with it at all.

At our beginning we had three members of University Meeting and at least one of a meeting in the East. We felt that we would like to be related to the closest meeting, and that was Tacoma. It was a serious consideration for them because they were at that time low in membership and with a number of elderly and ill. We had as many or more in attendance on a Sunday as they did. We were grateful that they did agree to take us under their care. They sent occasional visitors to our meeting and we tried to attend their Business Meeting as often as possible. They formed joint clearness committees with us for membership and for a marriage. Most of us who were members in other meetings didn't transfer.

Over the years we grew in attendance and began to have more members who planned to make Olympia a permanent home. Some of the students stayed on after graduation. We drew up a list of questions for ourselves to consider (similar to those in this chapter). Tacoma Meeting helped us in considering these questions. We decided that we did want to take on this responsibility. I believe we were a preparative meeting for awhile but then we asked for monthly meeting status.

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Setting Priorities

Sandpoint, Idaho has at times been a large, vital worship group. At times over the eight years they have been meeting, they have had up to 40 people attend Meeting for Worship. They hold regular Business Meetings, have an excellent, widely circulated newsletter, and yet they chose to remain a Worship Group. In this they knew themselves better than the outsiders who urged them to organize further. This past summer they struggled to find a new clerk when the previous one moved away, and continually must deal with long distances, bumpy dirt roads, and winter snows which make gathering for worship difficult.

Boise Valley is another Worship Group which, in contrast, was recently formally recognized as a Preparative Meeting under the care of Corvallis Monthly Meeting, 400 miles to the west. They are seriously considering becoming a Monthly Meeting.

The Meeting Status Change Committee recommended we notify Corvallis Monthly Meeting we would like to be considered in Preparative Meeting status and move toward full Monthly Meeting status by January, 1988. Conditions to consider meeting in this time interval include increasing our average attendance and membership base, establish a program for young people, be prepared to use a single meeting place when we have outgrown homes and establish necessary committees. It was suggested that we should have Ministry and Oversight and Nominating Committees. One person volunteered to head development of a program for children. We should continue to be represented at Yearly Meeting. There was discussion about our need to be clear about recognizing our uniqueness in relation to such formal organization as Quakers have found useful. Matter will be allowed to season for a time. (12/4/86)

Discussion continued on whether we wish to move to the new status of Preparative Meeting. Concerns expressed were whether we have people to fill needed committees, to have stability if some core members should leave, whether we have enough people to cover all the work that needs to be done. It was stated that the only committee we really need to have is Ministry and Oversight. We have been very stable for the last five and a half years, although small, and that if we went to Preparative Meeting status and made a real effort at outreach as part of our preparation to become a full meeting, that we might grow. [It was] thought we might have more people ask for membership if the Clearness Committee could consist mainly or only of people in Boise, instead of having to go to Corvallis. [Corvallis representatives] thought that would be acceptable if we kept Corvallis informed and maybe have one Corvallis member who serves on the committee and was informed by mail. The sense of this meeting seemed to favor moving to Preparative Meeting status, but this will be discussed again in March since [two members] were absent and the meeting did not want to make such a decision without their presence. (2/8/87)

Faith and Practice was reread regarding becoming a preparative meeting. We feel that the Ministry and Oversight Committee from Corvallis would encourage us to take this step if we are ready. Considering Boise's population size, it does not seem that there would be a major

problem in the continuance of a meeting here. There was unity among those present, plus prior assent from an absent attendee, that we move now to Preparative Meeting status and communicate this to Corvallis Monthly Meeting.

A target date for assessing our progress toward full Monthly Meeting status was suggested for a year from now. Outreach will continue and we will make it known that we will have a program for young people. When there is need, we will search for a stable meeting location. (3/8/87) (Boise Valley Preparative Meeting)



Queries for Worship Groups

Before deciding to seek recognition as a preparative or monthly meeting, worship groups are well advised to undertake their own seeking process similar to that undertaken in Boise. Many have found it very helpful to formally consider; as a group, a series of queries before making any decisions. Some such sets have been developed elsewhere, but any group may prepare their own after reading the sections in *Faith and Practice* on monthly meetings and on the process for becoming a monthly meeting. The kinds of questions that each group may want to ask of itself are as follows:

- Why does the group wish to become a meeting?
- What is the quality of the Meeting for Worship?
- How do we understand Meeting for Business?
- What is our knowledge of Quaker history and testimonies?
- Do we interact with the wider community of Friends?
- Are we familiar with *Faith and Practice*?
- Are we aware of the various branches of the Society of Friends?
- How long have we been meeting?
- Do we have the size and stability to endure?
- Are attenders and members willing to take on committee responsibilities?
- Are we familiar with the “clearness” process?
- Are we willing to take on financial and reporting responsibilities?
- How will the needs of Ministry and Oversight be met?
- Is the group familiar with Friends marriage and memorial services?
- Can we meet our responsibilities to Quarterly and Yearly meetings?

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Process

Friends in North Pacific Yearly Meeting are developing much experience in creating and recognizing new meetings. Three new Monthly Meetings—Billings, Missoula, and Pullman-Moscow—have been established since 1980, and Rogue Valley Preparative Meeting is going through the process as of this writing. Several worship groups have also gone through the process of becoming preparative meetings as well in the past ten to fifteen years.

These steps cannot be taken lightly or naively. It cannot be forgotten that several worship groups and at least one preparative meeting have been laid down during this time period.

The process for recognition as a preparative meeting or a monthly meeting is spelled out in *Faith and Practice*. Most simply, when a worship group feels ready to take on greater organization and responsibility, the normal process is to first seek recognition as a preparative meeting. This is done through an Oversight Committee from the monthly meeting when the worship group is under the care of a meeting. Otherwise recognition is through the Quarterly Meeting.

Some feel ready to take this step soon after they are formed; others keep their worship group status for an extended period of time. Corvallis Friends, for example, met for 27 years before deciding to become a monthly meeting. To be able to formally accept members or to marry couples, a meeting must be recognized as a monthly meeting. Recognition must be by the Quarterly Meeting. Action is initiated by the preparative meeting, with the support of the monthly meeting Oversight Committee which has it under its care. The Quarterly Meeting then appoints a Visiting Committee to meet with the prospective monthly meeting. They will explore together (1) why the meeting feels ready to become a monthly meeting, (2) the spiritual condition of the meeting, (3) the history and experience of the meeting, and (4) evidence that the meeting is familiar with and practices the “good order” of Friends as expressed in Faith and Practice.



A New Monthly Meeting

With the formation of new monthly meetings, the question has arisen-how to accept new members or transfer membership from other Meetings to the newly formed Monthly Meeting when there were no “members” to constitute a clearness committee~ There is no guidance in *Faith and Practice*. Friends in Montana did the following.

Not long after having decided to become a monthly meeting, Missoula Friends developed a process of together finding clearness about one another’s membership. A day of retreat was set aside that included some worship, singing, a potluck lunch, and plenty of time for each person to share. Gifts out of the silence included why we felt at home as Friends, as well as how we had come to our existing spiritual beliefs. After the long struggle to decide to become a monthly meeting, it was an opportunity to get to know each other better and welcome those new to the Society, as well as those transferring membership from existing meetings. The day remains a memory of intimacy and celebration amidst large quiet snowflakes; and a sense that we truly had reached clearness about one another’s membership in the newly-formed meeting. (Missoula Monthly Meeting)

Finding a Place in the Wider Quaker Community

A common problem among members of worship groups and small meetings, particularly those which are geographically remote, is a sense of isolation. Quarterly and Yearly Meetings exist, in part, to help combat such isolation by providing periodic opportunities for shared fellowship in large gatherings.

There are many other ways, however, to establish and maintain satisfying connections with the wider Quaker community. Those which involve active initiation by the small group, and not just response to an invitation from outside, are naturally more likely to suit the schedules, interests, and other needs of the small group's membership. In addition, such active connections can generate a sense of empowerment that helps the group to deal with all the other problems addressed in this handbook.

The kinds of connections discussed in this chapter include:

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|----|---|----|-----------------------------------|
| .. | Regional Gatherings | .. | Financial Assistance |
| .. | Being Under the Care of a Monthly Meeting | .. | Connecting with Worldwide Friends |
| .. | Quarterly and Yearly Meetings | .. | Travelling Friends |

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Regional Gatherings

Connections with the nearby meeting(s) ideally would go far beyond the formal visits by the Oversight Committee of a monthly meeting as discussed below. In fact, the following was contributed by a group that has no formal affiliation with a monthly meeting:

One thing we have done locally to sustain a sense of connectedness is to host potluck gatherings of Friends from the entire central/south Puget Sound region. This has happened twice—first, on the occasion of a meeting with the 1984 Brinton Visitors and, second, for a presentation by Carol and Jack Urner of FWCC in 1986. On each occasion we invited Friends from Tacoma, University, Eastside, and Olympia meetings and from Indianola-Bainbridge Worship Group to join us. We coordinated carpools and ferry dock pick-ups to help minimize our guests' travel expenses. Although numerically modest (20 to 30 people including ourselves), the attenders of each gathering represented a wide geographic area and, more important, reinforced our sense of active connectedness with Friends throughout the region. (Vashon Worship Group)

Small groups can also support each other, especially so when the nearest large meeting is far away:

We have enjoyed meeting the Yakima Worship Group for family potlucks and study of Quaker thought and history. These gatherings have widened our circle of friends and rejuvenated the spirits of members in both groups. (Ellensburg Worship Group)

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One meeting packs their picnic baskets and visits other meetings. Mullica Hill Meeting plans caravan visits to other meetings, arriving for worship and First-Day school and staying to eat lunch with the host meeting. Mullica Hill, and other meetings which have done this, report that their hosts are always happy to have them and that meetings shouldn't be shy about

inviting themselves. "We have warm memories of these meetings, new Friends and the hospitality they offered. We welcome other meetings to come visit us." (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Outreach Ideabook)



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We have continued to have some joint activities with Tacoma Meeting (after gaining monthly meeting status). We frequently share visiting Friends, holding a meeting for both groups in either Tacoma or Olympia. It takes only 30 to 45 minutes to get from Olympia Meeting homes to Tacoma Meeting. In addition, we have joined with Tacoma and south sound worship groups on several occasions. (Olympia Monthly Meeting)

Perhaps the best example of mutual support among small groups in avoiding isolation is provided by Montana Gathering of Friends (MGOF) in our own Yearly Meeting. This semi-annual event has been held regularly for years, since long before the recognition of Billings as the first monthly meeting in Montana. MGOF itself has recently been recognized by North Pacific Yearly Meeting as a new Quarter. An important point is that MGOF was begun by Montana Friends in order to meet their own needs for fellowship and not to fit a preconceived pattern of "how Friends do things."

Another type of connection between small groups and nearby large meetings is utilitarian but nonetheless important:

We always send a postcard listing locations of our upcoming meetings in homes to University Monthly Meeting. That permits inquiries made there about our Meeting to be more easily answered. (Indianola-Bainbridge Worship Group)

Being Under the Care of a Monthly Meeting

For most worship groups and all preparative meetings, the most intense Quaker connection will be with the Oversight Committee of the monthly meeting which has taken the group under its care. The nature of this relationship will depend, certainly, on the energy of the Committee's members and the geographic distances involved. The worship group or preparative meeting can, however, enhance the quality of the interaction to the extent that it takes an active part in guiding it.

"Oversight Committee" is perhaps a misleading name, implying supervision of the small group on behalf of the monthly meeting. In fact, the Oversight Committee exists primarily for the benefit of the worship group/preparative meeting, to provide guidance, encouragement, and other forms of assistance *when requested by the small group*. Further, if the worship group/preparative meeting seeks and makes productive use of regular visits and/or phone contacts with Oversight Committee members, they will retain their interest in the smaller group much more than if the smaller group is passive.

At one point, when Multnomah Meeting planned a visitation to a worship group for whom it had oversight, the Multnomah group included, whenever possible, a person who would care for the children. This freed everyone in the small worship group to participate. That was caring!

A number of worship groups are reluctant to come "under the care" of a monthly meeting. The following was prepared in anticipation of renewed discussion of this question.

We have, however, considered the question of asking to be under the care of a monthly meeting. The matter was first raised in 1983 and reopened once or twice since, although not

recently. This is the only issue of serious dissension that our group has ever had. The worship group split into two roughly equal camps over the question of formal affiliation. One contained all our Members of the Society and favored affiliation although it wasn't clear what monthly meeting we would affiliate with (one of the four members belongs to Eastside Meeting, two are members of University Meeting, and one of Tacoma Meeting) This group also included all of us who (at that time) attended Quarterly and Yearly Meeting regularly, and who had been active organizationally with Friends beyond our own community. The pro-affiliation group maintained that:

- .. Affiliation with a monthly meeting would simplify the process of seeking membership for those who wished to do so.
- .. When under the care of a monthly meeting we would be visited regularly and have the benefit of some outside perspective.
- .. We could call upon experienced Friends for support and guidance if needed.
- .. Since members of our group are actively involved in Quarterly Meeting and Yearly Meeting, it would be fitting if our status as a worship group were "regularized" in the manner set forth in *Faith and Practice*.

The Friends on the other side of this issue were more varied. One couple had long been attenders of Friends meetings, although never members. Others had no experience with Friends prior to joining Vashon Worship Group. Their position was that:

- .. Things are fine as they are now: those who want can become members, participate in Quarterly and Yearly Meeting, etc., without non-affiliation becoming an obstacle.
- .. If we affiliate with a monthly meeting there will be unwelcome pressure on non-members to become members, and they will no longer be able to choose which monthly meeting to seek membership in.
- .. Affiliation will impose a burden of oversight on the monthly meeting; since we have no intention of becoming a preparative meeting we have no good cause to become burdensome in that way.
- .. We already can and do invite visitors and have within our own group considerable and sufficient experience with Friends' practices.

Running beneath the various arguments set forth above is a tension between some of us wanting to do things "as real Quakers do" and others wanting to do things "as seems right for us now." Since unity was not reached, we remain unaffiliated. This seems less of a concern now than it did 5 years ago, perhaps partly because, having survived for 9 years quite nicely, we don't feel so "irregular." Furthermore, the example of Montana Gathering of Friends shows us that "the Quaker way of doing things" is constantly being created and extended as circumstances warrant. (Vashon Worship Group)

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Quarterly and Yearly Meetings

Quarterly and Yearly Meeting sessions provide many opportunities for connections to be formed and reinforced. Again, this is all the more true when attenders take an active part, such as by leading an interest group or worship-sharing group.

One way that small groups, as a whole, can participate in Quarterly and Yearly Meeting is by preparing an annual State of the Society Report. These reports, which in NPYM are read aloud at Spring Quarterly sessions and also made available at Annual Session of Yearly Meeting, are expected of all Monthly and Preparative Meetings but are optional for worship groups. Most worship groups that have prepared them have found the experience a valuable chance to reflect on the previous year and to assess the group's current

strength and problems. When presented at Quarterly Meeting, the report just may evoke an empathetic response from an attender from elsewhere that leads to a new connection or even to the solution of a problem.

Another means of making connections at the Quarterly and Yearly Meeting levels is to serve on a committee or help to organize a session. Members of worship groups and preparative meetings in NPYM are well represented in these positions, perhaps because these individuals generally don't have opportunities to work with of the Friends on local committees. Experience in the Good Order of Friends gained in these Quarterly and Yearly Meeting positions can be most helpful when difficult problems must later be faced and solved by the small group.

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Financial Assistance

One widely-used way to encourage attendance at regional gatherings (and not just by newcomers) is to underwrite part of the expense from a common fund.

In order to share the costs of attending the annual sessions of NPYM, we each submit a registration Eorm to the Monthly Meeting treasurer along with a check for what we feel able to afford, be it more or less than the prescribed amount. The treasurer sends the forms to the NPYM registrar along with a check for the full amount. It has never happened, but if the treasurer felt it needful to support the Monthly Meeting's funds, application could be made for financial aid from NPYM. (Corvallis Monthly Meeting)

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Plymouth Meeting offers a grant to all members and attenders who attend a Friends General Conference gathering. It is usually one-third of the cost of the conference. Some apply for more, and some return the grant because they don't need it. This enables some to go who wouldn't have gone because they didn't have enough money, but wouldn't apply for aid because they thought their incomes were too high. "Families don't have to plead poverty to get help. It is thoroughly appreciated by families of all income levels." (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting *Outreach Ideabook*)

Small meetings often don't have the resources to provide these funds so Yearly Meeting has created a scholarship fund for the Annual Session primarily for isolated Friends and members of worship groups.

Some financial assistance is also available from the Yearly Meeting to help Friends travel on behalf of Outreach Committee, which has been charged with keeping connections alive between meetings of all sizes. Outreach has defined purposes and goals for this visitation. In addition, the individuals who travel better understand the sense of isolation among scattered meetings and find interconnectedness comes to have new meaning.

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Connecting with the World Community of Friends

Quarterly Meeting, Yearly Meeting, and other such connections serve another purpose as well—that of orientation to the wider Friends world.

Exposing newcomers to the wider Quaker community can expand their understanding of Quakers and Quakerism—whether it's a workshop at Pendle Hill, a Yearly or Quarterly Meeting session, an event called especially for newcomers, or a simple visit to a neighboring meeting. A Friends World Committee gathering, for example, can be positively exhilarating to someone who has never seen more than 20 or 30 Quakers in one place before. Such exposure lets the newcomer experience the diversity of Quakerism. But it has other, more direct advantages:

- “ People who can’t meet anyone else “like them” at the meeting they attend—for example, other teenagers, other single adults, other blacks, other model railroad enthusiasts—will have more success at a larger gathering.
- “ Formally or informally, the newcomer will hear a lot about Quakerism: how it fits into Christianity, the Bible, modern society, history, the arts, the sciences, the peace movement, the conservation movement, education, business to name just a few.

One of the great hurdles the meeting should help a newcomer to overcome in this area, however, is the idea that one must be a “weighty” Friend—or at least, a Friend—if one is to visit other meetings or attend the larger gatherings. They may feel that only the executives get to go to the conventions, that Yearly Meeting sessions are some sort of College of Cardinals in which novices have no place. This is true enough in many organizations, but not in the Society of Friends—which is all the more reason to assure newcomers that they are welcome, and encourage them to go. (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting *Outreach Ideabook*)

There are also opportunities for Junior Friends to meet other Quakers from around the world. Each year Americans travel with Friends from Europe and elsewhere on the Quaker Youth Pilgrimages. International work camps are sponsored by our international organizations, especially Friends World Committee for Consultation. Yearly Meetings, such as Philadelphia, often sponsor inner city summer work camps in this country.



Traveling Friends

National and international Friends organizations provide yet another sort of opportunity for connections, which are just as available to small groups as to large monthly meetings. In particular, the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), and American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) all have regional staff members whose jobs include travel to talk with large and small meetings. No group, regardless of size, should hesitate to ask for a spot on the next regional tour by such an organizational representative. In fact, the visit can be an excellent occasion for a joint meeting and potluck with another small group of Friends.

A meeting with an FWCC, FCNL, or AFSC representative provides insight into the world of “professional Friends.” It can also help a small group find activities at the local level which are appropriate for the group’s size and energy and which maintain an ongoing connection to the organization’s program at a regional, national, or international level.