

What is Quaker Quest?

Quaker Quest is a dynamic and transformative inreach and outreach program that is based on the experience that the Quaker way is a spiritual path for our time that is simple, radical, and contemporary.

Quaker Quest was founded in 2002 by twelve Quakers from Hampstead Meeting in London, who were called to do outreach. They honed the process over more than five years. They asked FGC in 2007 to shepherd Quaker Quest in the United States and Canada.

Quaker Quest is both a process and an experience. It is:

- A workshop for the whole meeting, co-led by Quaker Quest Travel Team members.
- An invitation to the meeting to discern for itself what changes it wants to make in order to integrate newcomers into the life of the meeting and nurture those who are already there.
- A deliberate process for the meeting to discern if it is led to undertake the public sessions.
- An opportunity to look at the meeting from a newcomer's perspective.
- A chance to consider how to be more welcoming.
- A set format for public sessions, where the topics and content are determined by each meeting.
- Much more than the public sessions: An experience that the whole meeting shares over many months.
- A lot of work and a lot of fun!

The Hallmarks of Quaker Quest express the Quaker Quest approach to sharing who we are. Quakers are asked to use positive language, avoid jargon, use very little history, and refrain from speaking negatively about other religions or other branches of Quakerism. And, Quakers are invited to use stories to share their experiences and faith journey.

Public Quaker Quest sessions consist of a set format for each session. This format consists of three to four topics that are offered in a series, such as Quakers and God or Quakers and Peace; the series is repeated once.

- Topics for the public sessions are chosen with seekers' needs in mind.
- The meeting discerns which topics to use.
- The three or four topics are immediately repeated, making a series of six to eight weeks.

The meeting publicizes the public sessions, using flyers and pamphlets, radio ads, their website, and other methods.

- Publicity is key to intentionally inviting people to attend and to reaching seekers who are looking for the Quaker way.
- Communications are written to reflect the Hallmarks of Quaker Quest and other learnings.
- Some people may come to worship who will not have come to a Quaker Quest public session.
- This is an investment in the meeting, and will cost money.

Friends General Conference provides:

- Quaker Quest Travel Team members who co-lead a meeting's Full-Day Workshop.
- A Quaker Quest Travel Team member, who leads a meeting's Half-Day Preparation Session, which is held six weeks before the first public session.
- Templates for flyers and posters.
- Email and phone support to the meeting throughout the process, through the clerk of the core group, and follow-up after the public sessions are over.

Costs for a meeting to undertake the full process are:

- For the Full-Day Workshop, budget \$1,000 for transportation and materials.
- For the Half-Day Preparation Session, budget \$500.
 - We ask that meetings reimburse for transportation costs of a Quaker Quest Travel Team member, and for materials, postage, and handling. If this is a hardship, the meeting should contact FGC Quaker Quest Staff, who will try to ensure that finances are not an obstacle for your meeting.
- For publicity, budget around \$2,000.
 - FGC has a matching grant for publicity of up to \$1,500 for eligible meetings, while the funds last.

Benefits of the entire Quaker Quest process can include:

- Energizing the meeting.
- Deepening the sense of community.
- Becoming more confident in sharing one's faith with others in the meeting as well as with seekers.
- Considering what it is like to be a newcomer in the meeting.
- Inviting seekers to share the Quaker spiritual path.

Success is defined by the positive energy that the Quaker Quest experience brings to the meeting, by the way current participants feel included into the life of the community, by the experiences of transformation that occur throughout the process, by the increased exposure that the meeting or church has in the local community, by having seekers come to the public sessions, and by having newcomers attend worship.

Since its beginnings in the United States and Canada with one meeting in 2007, through the summer of 2011, over one hundred meetings, churches, and other Quaker bodies across the United States and Canada have participated in the Quaker Quest process! These include small and large congregations. Contact quakerquest@fgcquaker.org or go to www.fgcquaker.org/quakerquest to find out more!

From Friends General Conference's Quaker Quest Basic Information Packet for Meetings. This, and other Quaker Quest documents and information about QQ in the US and Canada, can be found by going to www.fgcquaker.org/quakerquest or emailing quakerquest@fgcquaker.org.

Portions of this document are based on the Quaker Quest Network's *Quaker Quest: How to Do It* manual and are used with permission. To find out about Quaker Quest in Britain, go to www.quakerquest.org.

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