

## How to lead Worship Sharing with Quaker and biblical quotes

Fortunately, worship sharing is fairly easy to lead. The first step is to talk with one or two interested people to determine an announcement of date, time, and place.

Second, choose a passage. Choosing a quote requires discernment of which passage might best engage your group. If you start with biblical quotes around worship on page 1, you are inviting contemplation of quotes that have been fundamental to Quakerism.

If group participants have expressed hesitation with the Bible, you may choose to start with Diversity, page 4. To learn more about Quakerism, go to Foundational Teachings of George Fox and other Friends, page 13 and the roots of our testimonies starting on page 18.

Make a copy of the selected passage for each participant. The easiest way to make copies of biblical passages is to feed the chosen book, chapter, and verses into Bible Gateway. Bible Gateway will give you several translations of the same text. In addition to English, I sometimes print out the selected phrase in another language or translation. Great fun! (For French and Spanish versions of this booklet see my web site: <http://discoveringourfaith.com/default.html>)

Third, work out a worship sharing pattern from the Appendices of this booklet. The pattern varies with the comfort level of the audience and the leader. Notice that articulating guidelines for participation is always a part of worship sharing. Such guidelines help prevent troubles later on.

I adjust the worship sharing instructions each time I lead. I also use the book *Lectio Divina—the sacred art* by Christine Valters Paintner. This book has led me from worship sharing into heart listening and prayer.

When I have a non-Quaker group or if there are children in the present, I usually start with just one half hour, working up to 45 minutes as the group becomes more comfortable with working in silence.

Finally, I try to remember that accepting where each person is in spiritual growth is crucial to the spiritual growth of the group. I often try to choose passages for the next time based on listening to problems as they arise.

May you journey through worship sharing into *lectio* with joy and thanksgiving.

Mary Snyder

## Appendix II

### Welcome to Worship Sharing

The purpose of worship sharing is to provide occasions for spiritual deepening through shared, prayerful listening and speaking from one's heart in response to a given question or passage. Here are some guidelines for participants.

#### \*Sharing Out of the silence.

Time and space between sharings is helpful to really take in what has been said and let it settle into us.

#### \*Speaking from experience

While we have many ideas about our faith, this is really a time to speak from our experience. For some it is helpful to think of beginning a thought with "I..."

#### \*Listening with acceptance

We are listening for "that of God" in another, cherishing that unique and particular expression of God through another person. While it can be tempting to offer advice, rebuttal, or commentary, this is truly a time for listening and receiving another even when it is difficult to do so.

#### \*Keeping the experiences confidential

It is important to keep what is said "in the room" so that Friends may feel free to speak what is in their hearts..

#### \*Passing

Sometimes there is hesitation to speak. Passing is always an option. Leaders return to those who have passed before closing the worship sharing experience. To see if something has ripened into speech.

#### \*Holding in the Light

It is helpful to the group as a whole and to the individual speaking to be held by others in the Light. This helps to open the group to a deeper experience of the Spirit at work.

From Baltimore Yearly Meeting

## Appendix III

### Sample Announcement

*Lectio Divina* (Divine Reading)

Some people call it Quaker worship sharing; others call it lectio divina. Come join us in open hearted study of quotes from early Friends and the Bible.

**Noon to 12:30**

**Wednesdays, April 2, 9, and 30**

**Apartment 109 Kenwood Isles**

**Light lunch to follow**

For further information, phone Steve or Mary Snyder (605) 270-3627.

### **Short Guidelines for Worship Sharing**

Do not criticize, interrupt, or ask probing questions.

When you are listener, listen deeply.

Leave a space of silence after each oral offering

Speak from your experience.

Maintain confidentiality.

Speak once until everyone has had the opportunity.

## Appendix IV

### Worship Sharing at the Madison Public Library, Madison, SD

1. Place your feet flat on the floor.
2. Put the quote for today on your lap, .
2. Rest your open hands, palms up on your thighs.
3. Close your eyes.
4. Become aware of bodily tension. Relax. Let go of any tension.
5. Follow your breath knowing that God's Spirit dwells within you, that your life-breath is God's presence. (The Hebrew word for breath, ruach, is the same word that was used for God's spirit and also for the wind. In a very real sense, there was an understanding that our breath is God's breath, which is active in nature as well. The Jews also understood
6. If there is any part of your body that is not relaxed, try sending your breath to that part. (Or, imagine your breath going to that part of your body.) Relax some more.
7. Imagine your heart opening.
8. As leader, read passage for the day out of the silence.
9. Ask for volunteers to re-read the passage out loud. This is very important if children are present or anyone who cannot see to read.
10. Continue instructions after a bit of silence between readings: Perhaps a word or phrase especially attracted your attention. If so, try letting that word or phrase ride into your open, receiving heart on your breath (I sometimes vary this to: "Sometimes the word or phrase keeps gnawing at you or jumps off the page because it is disturbing." Then, I just invite focus on what the word or phrase is asking of or telling me.)
11. Sometimes I ask for each person to speak his/her selected word or phrase out of the silence.
12. The last step is always: If you would like to say something about this experience, speak out of the silence. When you speak, try to be brief, speak only once, try to listen deeply when another person is speaking, speak only once until everyone has had a turn and leave a space of silence between each oral offering. (Sometimes I ask the group to hold the person who is speaking.) Do not speak twice until everyone has had a chance.

Sometimes I have clay or drawing materials present for those who prefer to work out what meaning this passage has for them through art.

Mary Snyder