

Getting Newcomers Connected

The connection process begins the moment a newcomer arrives at meeting. There are ways to help a person connect with your meeting. What follows are some ideas you might find helpful in your meeting. Some of these might seem more appropriate for large meetings, but most of the guidelines will work for smaller, new groups, as well. Use the ones that fit with your abilities to do well and your meeting's culture.

The important thing is to be intentionally welcoming. Small, new groups may assume that a newcomer will become absorbed without special attention. But, a newcomer can feel as isolated (and maybe more so, if the group feels like a tight family) in a small group as in a large one.

- Invite them to a coffee time or some other gathering that will connect them with regulars and other newcomers. Remember that food and connection go hand in hand.
- Connect newcomers with other recent newcomers. Newcomers often feel more comfortable with other people who are new.
- Make sure that newcomers are able to find out what your meeting and Quakers are like. FGC's newcomer cards are a perfect fit.
- Communicate with newcomers in ways that lets them know they've been noticed. Make sure they hear from you within a few days of when they came via a phone call, letter, email, or text message. This is not about conducting an endless pursuit of a potential member. Rather it is about being welcoming and acknowledging that a person took the time to visit. One such contact is enough.
- Ask someone to care for and mentor each newcomer. Many of us remember what attending our first Quaker meeting was like – the silence, meeting for worship, Friendly jargon, and more. It can be confusing or overwhelming. A Friendly companion can help the newcomer make connections and encourage them to go to the upcoming events. There's nothing like personalized welcoming and connection.
- If you have small groups, adult education, or the like, invite newcomers to attend.. Such opportunities are where deep connections with other Friends are most likely to happen.
- Teach welcoming and connection practices to the entire meeting. Nothing convinces a newcomer to return more than a genuine welcome from someone who reflects the meeting's welcoming stance. A good resource for learning welcoming is the QuakerQuest booklet [You Are Welcome Here](#).

Keep track of newcomers

As you think about welcoming, consider how you know if a newcomer is visiting for the first time or the fifth. Your welcome needs to be different – if someone is returning for a second or third visit, you want to acknowledge that they’ve been there before. Such a welcome lets them know their presence has been noticed and appreciated.

Connect

Connect with FGC:

- FGC has resources to support new and existing groups
- FGC can help a group connect with other local Quaker groups
- FGC can help you get listed on QuakerFinder.org to help others find you

FGC staff and volunteers are happy to talk with you about this, or any other issue, your meeting or worship group is facing. Please contact us by emailing us or phoning 215-561-1700.

This document was downloaded from the website of Friends General Conference. Explore the many resources and opportunities we offer for Quakers, Quaker meetings, and all interested individuals. Go to www.fgcquaker.org.

