

George Fox Centenary Project, 2024

Quaker Arts Network • Children's and Young People's Committee, Quaker Life

The fourth centenary of George Fox's birth is approaching, and we are inviting Quaker groups and Children's Meetings to make short films to celebrate this and submit them. These could take different forms from the very simple to the complex. The only requirement is that the result should be in a movie format and play from start to finish continuously and automatically. There is no constraint on length, though we expect that most of them will not be more than about five minutes.

The objectives of the Project are: To encourage creative work by Quakers and their children; to mark a historical milestone and increase the understanding of the importance and contemporary relevance of George Fox, among young Quakers and more generally; and to provide a resource for outreach.

In our discussions, two main emphases emerged. One was to bring out the relevance of George Fox's life and thought to the needs of today. We tend to think of John Woolman as the Quaker prophet from the past with most to say to us, but there is much which we can learn from Fox also. The other point was to avoid putting him in a stained glass window; he had his faults and blind spots and is open to criticism. But most of that debate is not the concern of the children and young people for whom this Project is primarily intended. We are only one small part of a much wider consideration of George Fox in 2024. And since we are inviting a wealth of small contributions, we are clearly not trying to give an overall picture of him.

There are many forms your film can take. A few suggestions:

- o A recorded song or story, with accompanying pictures.
- o A musical performance.
- o A set of jokes or riddles.
- o A photo slide show, with or without commentary or music
- o An animated or cartoon film based on a series of drawings.
- o A puppet or shadow-puppet drama.

You would need to be very cautious about a performance with child actors, or even identifiable photos of children because this raises serious safeguarding issues. Voice recordings do not usually create a problem. If you need guidance on this, please contact cypadmin@quake.org.uk

Technical: You don't need special equipment. You may well be able to do what you want using a smartphone, or a digital camera. Movie functions on these devices will record sound as well as visuals. Cartoons can be made using drawings of people, perhaps using moveable limbs and jaws, and taking a series of photos; slideshow programmes and PowerPoint can run these with very fast transitions so they animate. They will also let you fit pictures to recorded sound. Many computers have facilities for simple film editing, such as cutting out mistakes.

Here's an example from QAN member Amanda Jones of a film she made about George Fox with very simple means: <https://youtu.be/XIY3ufp0zCE>. If you have a creative idea but are uncertain how to turn it into a movie, Amanda has made a short tutorial film showing how she created her little film which you can see at <https://youtu.be/V4XQZaoRu6o>. She is willing to be consulted if you need further help; write to amandajones520@icloud.com. If you can't work out how to get around a problem, you can ask Sean Jacke seanineurope@gamil.com, who may know a source of help. Primary school teachers often use programmes to enable children to make simple movies for themselves, so they are good people to advise.

Your film must feature George Fox in some way. A few ideas to get you going:

- o *Stories (references to John Nickalls' edition of Fox's Journal):* Fox as a teenager (pp.2-7); interrupting a sermon (pp.39-40); threatened with a sword (p.49); sleeping rough (p.91); protected by a soldier (p. 129); healing a child (pp.171-2); meeting Oliver Cromwell (pp.199-200); in court (pp.243-4); caring for his horse (p.301); rough travels in America (p.661); letter to his wife (p.681); and there are many more to be found.

- o *Quotations:* Many of the quotations in Quaker Faith & Practice offer material (e.g. a quotation from Fox might be set against a modern story—he need not actually appear.)
- o *Epistles:* There are discoveries to be made in the epistles, but they are harder to access. Ep.5 is to his parents. Ep. 10 & !6, on the experience of worship. Ep. 145, avoid conflict in Meetings; Ep. 200, honesty in trade; Ep.391, to Friends being held prisoners in Algiers.

For further suggestions based on George Fox's life and teaching, you can ask John Lampen at lampen@hopeproject.co.uk

Safeguarding: Your Meeting or group safeguarding policy must be followed during any activities related to this project. Because the films may be shown on our website and at Quaker Gatherings (and can then be copied and passed on) it is important that the children involved should not be identifiable your film – either to strangers or (in rare cases) to relatives who are not allowed access to them. If you want their names to appear in the credits, it may be better to use only first names. Images create more risks than voices alone. If you want to have guidance on the way you plan to make your film, please consult your Meeting's Safeguarding Advisor. You can also ask for advice from cypadmin@quaker.org.uk.

When your film is almost ready,

- o Give the file you submit the name of your group or Meeting.
- o Give the film a distinctive title too, so it can easily be found in the gallery. (E.g. "That of God" may not be unique, whereas "Countries, places, islands, nations" from the same quotation probably will be.)
- o We would prefer your film to be in .mp4 format. If you make it in a different format, there are free computer applications which will convert movies from one format to another.
- o Viewers should only need to start your film and let it run to the end. We may have opportunities to show it in situations where viewers wouldn't be able to interact with it.
- o Make sure you haven't used any copyright material, such as images and music, without getting permission.
- o For instructions on submitting your work at this stage, please contact John Lampen lampen@hopeproject.co.uk. When the project is fully launched in September, we expect to have an uploading system in place.

How we will use your film: Quaker Arts Network will put it in an online gallery on their website where people can find and watch it. We may be able to run the series in the Market-place at Yearly Meeting 2024. We might use some films as interludes in a online New Year concert. We will look for other outreach opportunities. You will retain the ownership and full use of it yourself.