

Lesson 2 - What are Quakers doing about economic unfairness in the world?

Quakers in different times and places have sought to respond to economic unfairness in the world, from early Friends to Right Sharing of World Resources in the present. Another group in the present is Friendly Water for the World.

If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?

James 2:15-16 (NRSVUE)

Preparation

Get the book (or use the online version) [Beatrice's Goat by Page McBrier](#) ([read aloud](#)).

Read guidance for [Wondering with Children](#).

Explore the Other Resources (below) for additional opportunities.

Gathering (Building the community/circle)

Choose a question related to the topic like below, or a song, or do a check-in (pluses and minutes, roses and thorns) to help welcome everyone into the space.

- Share a time when you helped someone.
- Share a time when you needed help.

Introduction

When someone falls down onto the ground and needs help getting back up, it is natural to offer a hand to help pull them back up. Sometimes we are the ones who fall down and need a hand too. Friends in the state of Washington noticed the need for clean water ([among other needs](#)) for those most impacted by the climate crisis, and least likely to have contributed to this crisis. They started [Friendly Water for the World](#), which works with local communities to better meet their needs. These Friends noticed they could extend a helping hand to others.

Friendly Water recognizes that “[every community has at least as many assets \[assets means strengths and advantages\] as they have challenges](#).” Even when we need help,

we also have many ways to help ourselves. When a hand is given to pull someone up, the hand of the one on the ground is often equally pulling, perhaps moreso, in order to get back up.

Ask the group what other Quaker individuals or groups they know about like this.

Try this out! Have half of the group lay on the floor, and half of the group stand up. Pair people up and have the standing people reach down and try to help the people on the ground to stand up, and instruct the people on the ground to not put any energy into standing up. How difficult is this? Then have the standing people use no effort, and leave it up to those on the floor to try to get up. How about now? Then have both groups exert effort. What about now?

Read the book - [Beatrice's Goat by Page McBrier](#) (read aloud)

Wondering Questions for during and after the reading

I wonder what part of the story you like best?

I wonder what part is the most important for you today?

I wonder where you are in the story or what part of the story is about you?

I wonder if there is any part of the story that we can leave out and still have all the story we need?

I wonder...

Reflection

Choose a question to respond to that's connected to the theme:

What's one thing you've learned about helping others?

Who is someone you could help?

Other Resources / Extending the Lesson

Bible Story - Peter Heals a Lame Beggar (Acts 3:1-10)

Peter and John meet a person who has experienced a life of hardship, struggling with a disability since birth. Instead of turning away as others too often did, they looked straight at him and sought to help.

Why do you suppose the man had to beg at the Temple every day?

How do you suppose he felt when Peter told him they had no money?

Why do you think Peter asked the man to look at him? How do you think he felt when Peter looked at him?

How did he feel when he was healed and he could walk again?

How do you know when to help by giving material support, such as money, food, or medical care, rather than (or in addition to) giving emotional support?

How do you think his life would have been different after that?

George Fox wrote, “Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone; whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.”

Are there people you see in life who you find difficult to approach because of the suffering they seem to be experiencing?

How would we treat each other if we tried to see that of God in everyone, even the poor, the sick, and people who seem very different from us, as George Fox asked us to do?

Games and Activities

[Quakers and the Price Tag](#) - You can show the video or explain it in a few words:

For much of history, and still in many places, people haggle if they want to buy things. Some Friends in the 19th century felt that it was unfair that some people would pay a lower price and some would pay a higher price for the same thing, so they said each item only has one price.

What is more fair about this way of buying and selling?

What may not be fair about this?

[Ten Chairs of Inequality](#)

The Food Sharing Game - Find instructions and the game board [on this page](#)

Songs

[We Share with Love](#)



[Love in Action](#)
[Serving Others](#)
[Kind Like Christ](#)

Explore other lessons from this curriculum here: rswr.org/economic-fairness. If you use this curriculum, we'd love to hear how the experience went and welcome any feedback you'd like to share. Please contact us at rswr@rswr.org.