

A wide-angle photograph of a vast, flat, light-colored landscape, likely a salt flat or a dry lake bed. In the distance, a range of low, brown mountains stretches across the horizon. The sky is filled with large, white, fluffy clouds, and the overall lighting is bright and even. The text "A Quiet Day for Scotland" is centered in the upper half of the image.

A Quiet Day for Scotland

Resources

Let God be God

If we believe that there is in every human heart a thirst for God, – what some people have called ‘a God-shaped hole’ in their lives – we need to recognise this thirst for what it is. By daring to pause and make space and take time in the midst of a busy life, we allow God to be God in the deepest part of ourselves. By acknowledging the presence of God within, we are nourished, refreshed, and strengthened, in readiness to continue our journey. Such a time is not isolated ‘time off’ but a real choice to make space, whether it be an hour, half a day, or longer so as to become more aware of the presence of God within, lived out in the ordinariness of life.

Let God be different

A Quiet Day can give us the freedom to explore ways that might at first glance not be part of our familiar tradition, but treading new paths can provide us with the opportunity to discover and receive God’s presence in unexpected places.

Approaching Wholeness

This chosen time of quiet and space when taken reflectively, whether in ways that are familiar, or by exploring new paths, can create within us a deeper awareness of the mystery of God and the mystery of ourselves. Such a time gives us the opportunity to let go of all that gets in between us and God – the clutter, the useless anxieties, the ‘shoulds’ and ‘musts’ of life – and makes way for the ‘God-shaped hole’ to be respected. By slowing down and becoming aware of our body, mind and spirit, we allow the integration towards wholeness and a closer relationship with God to take place.

Themes

It can be helpful to centre the day around a theme. This can be in keeping with the seasons; certain local, national, major World-wide events, significant days of the year celebrated throughout the country or if appropriate according to the liturgical time of the year. Or simply reflecting the place, the people and the time they are gathered together.

Some suggestions:

- Awareness of all that surrounds us – the elements of the earth – air, fire, water.
- Bible stories from the Old and New Testament – the psalms, parables, encounters with Jesus.
- Local surroundings – city streets, cliff tops, country-side, rivers, seas.
- Awareness of the Senses – touch, taste, smell, hearing
- Creativity – especially the use of music, art, creative writing, dance, mime.
- Ways of praying – that would include – the Jesus Prayer, praying with imagination, Lectio Divina, meditation, prayers of praise.

This list is far from exhaustive and when choosing a theme it is essential to consider what is appropriate to those attending and whether this is their first experience of quiet. Try to find the balance of what you feel the group will be comfortable with and at the same time leaving space for God's Spirit!

It is useful to have your own 'Resource Box' that contains favourite prayers, hymns, texts both Biblical and contemporary, poetry, classical as well as appropriate popular music, children's books (really meant for adults!) newspaper cuttings, as well as things that are special to you.

Focus

Creating a focal point can be the most challenging part of any quiet day, as many people feel they are not gifted in this area and are afraid to attempt this. Yet with little or no imagination it is surprising that with just a few simple elements a visual focus can help to create an atmosphere to the place and theme. (Especially if the gathering place is a dull, unattractive space). Once the theme of the day is chosen you may wish to invite the participants to bring an object, symbol to add to the focus at some point.

- A variety of candles of all colours, preferably those in glass containers as they will not spill or burn carpets or wooden floors (please check fire regulations of venue before opting for this as some smoke detectors are ultra sensitive and candles can set off alarms).

- All sorts of boxes and tins to give shape and height
- Small tables – nests of coffee tables are ideal
- Materials, plain and with texture. 506 metre lengths are best, preferably material that doesn't crease – Sari material is excellent.
- Beads, glass pebbles as well as real ones
- Sawdust for creating paths, or sand
- Dried fruits, leaves, branches, bark
- Earthenware or clay pots and bowls
- Feathers, incense, aromatherapy oils (best to check that people are not allergic to any of these)
- Display panels – ideal if you happen to know someone in business who has them.

Keep a box of tools for: cellotape, scissors, blutack, screw driver, drawing pins, felt tips large and small, ruler etc. Keep a check list inside lid of box.

Ask participants to bring something with them to 'add' to the focus. Be sensitive to the group and create an appropriate focus, it is important that people are comfortable with what they see and able to own it'.

Suggested Books

Daily Bible Reading Notes	Produced by various groups
One day for God	Anthea Dove
The heart of prayer	Brother Raon
A journey into God	Delia Smith
How I can pray	John Wilkins
Open to God	Joyce Juggett
Invitations	Francis Dewar
Approaches to prayer	Ed. Henry Morgan
Sadhana	Anthony de Mello
The Word is very near you	Martin smith
All desires known	Janet Morley

