

Raising Conscientious Objector Consciousness among Our Youth



Six Lesson Plans for U.S. Friends High School First Day Programs

Compiled by Curt Torell and Alice Carlton
on behalf of Chapel Hill Friends Meeting, Chapel Hill, NC

Quaker Press

OF FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE



PHILADELPHIA, PA

SECOND EDITION

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Preface to Second Edition

Changes to this second edition are few but necessary. Five areas were addressed: the inclusion of women in documenting a CO conviction, a greater emphasis on “letters of support,” an update of the “contacts and resources” section, a revision of “sample questions from draft board,” and other more minor editing improvements. They were made for the following reasons:

Women are not required by law to register for Selective Service nor does a mechanism exist for them to do so. However, should a draft law come into effect and if that legislation includes women, their prior consideration and documentation of views will be just as important for them as for their male counterparts. The prior edition did not stress this enough. In addition, if a draft is reinstated that does not include women, their sensitivity and support to the challenges that their male peers face is essential.

The second major difference involves letters of support. While mentioned in the first edition, it was not emphasized enough. These letters are a key aspect of a registrant’s claim, and starting to gather them early is a necessary precaution. A two-page handout provides useful hints both for the registrant and for the reference writing the letter. These letters are noted elsewhere in the lesson plans as well.

The previous contacts and resources section contained phone numbers, addresses, and websites that have changed or no longer exist. Many have been corrected, and many more now are available. In addition, readers are becoming increasingly adept at “googling” and are advised to augment our list with their own searches and specific interests.

Lastly, the *Sample Question a Draft Review Board Might Ask* handout is improved. The changes include some questions that are more refined and intense, and they require deeper thought.

The last changes are minor—the names of two Supreme Court cases in the first edition, to our embarrassment, were misspelled. Further scrutiny found other errors, though in these cases, they were minor. Refinement in our procedures sections reacts to increased attention by the Selective Service System itself with a new and larger budget and a more comprehensive set of strategies.

As in the first edition, we sincerely hope that a draft is not reinstated and that young people will not have to face the possibility of military conscription. At a deeper level, we pray that all wars will end and that methods to resolve international conflict will become more civilized.

With sincere appreciation to Friends General Conference for their continued encouragement and support,

Curt Torell

Introduction

Turning 18 years old is exciting! It marks a passage into adulthood—the right to vote, to make legal decisions without a parent’s consent or knowledge, to retain private information such as one’s college grades or medical records, and even to attend those NC-17 rated movies. But for the men, it also brings the federal mandate to register with the Selective Service System. Few young men consider this ahead of time, and probably fewer meetings prepare their young Friends for this big step.

These lesson plans are designed for use over several months to encourage high school aged youth to think about the Quaker peace testimony and how it applies to Selective Service registration. The lessons are intended to prepare both young men and young women to consider whether they feel a leading to be conscientious objectors (COs). No draft is in effect at present, but Selective Service registration for men is required. If a draft is reinstated women may be included, so their preparation and prior documentation is equally important. Also, the present system has no method to claim CO status at registration time. These lessons focus on stimulating reflection about becoming a CO and provide steps to substantiate such a conviction if so led.

The decision whether to participate in the military, or even to cooperate with registration, is an individual and personal choice. While the Quaker peace testimony stands against war, not all young Friends have such a leading, and they should be respected for their individual convictions. In a society that glorifies violence, some see war as a natural course of events. Others oppose war but are reluctant to take a stand out of loyalty to their friends and peers who join and fight in the military. Some feel more comfortable serving in a noncombatant position. Still others feel a sense of leading that prevents them, under any circumstances, from participating in the military in any capacity. And some see this process as walking toward peace, with a different mindset for dealing with world and personal problems. Regardless of a young Friend’s leading, it is hoped that each meeting will support and nurture the decision he or she makes.

While these lessons are intended for use directly with young Friends, the leaders may wish to encourage the wider meeting’s consideration of how (and whether) they can support all young Friends, regardless of the decisions they arrive at about registration. We need to be honest with our young Friends when some positions are not as “acceptable” to other members of the meeting community. At the same time, we need to support their right to make their own informed decisions. Similarly, parental involvement is crucial. This curriculum is for young Friends under 18, who, as minors, are still under the guidance of their parents and guardians. Including parents can take several forms: offering an

orientation session, attending a lesson, reviewing drafts of their son or daughter's statements, co-teaching, arranging individual sessions with a specific family, etc. A sample letter (see handout: *Letter to High School Aged Member/Attender of Our Meeting*, p. 26) is sent to the young Friends and copied to their parents to introduce the course and welcome comments and feedback.

Conscientious objection is a controversial topic. Some see the CO as anti-patriotic and non-supportive of troops risking lives in combat. We don't. Our lessons plans focus on a specific and individual leading and do not diminish the leadings of others. We are simply asking young Friends to explore how they are led. Also, laws change. We cannot predict future legislation or procedures. So, at the outset of this curriculum, we list some cautions and disclaimers that should be understood fully by facilitators, parents, and young Friends:

1. Being a CO comes from a deep, inner leading. It is not a way to get out of the draft or to avoid life-threatening situations. Simply put, a CO refuses to participate in war and/or to kill another human being through the act of war. At the same time, for an 18-year-old, this conviction usually is just blossoming and requires patient nurturing.
2. While we shun violence, we hold in the Light those young men and women who serve in our military and are willing to put themselves in harm's way to protect others and preserve our rights and freedoms. Similarly, some young Friends are not led to be COs and may feel more strongly about this conviction after considering these lessons. Both the meeting in general and the course facilitator specifically should respect, honor and support those individual leadings even if contrary to personal views.
3. The information in these lesson plans is based upon prior experience and case law (when the draft was in effect) as well as provisions currently in the Selective Service System code. A new law may change everything, and today's more conservative U.S. Supreme Court may interpret regulations quite differently. So these lesson plans and handouts, while based upon precedent and some collective wisdom, are merely a conjecture and guide. In any case, attaining a CO status will be neither easy nor guaranteed.

The authors appreciate the contributions of others. Acknowledgment for prior thought goes to Phil Esmonde and Chuck Fager, former and current directors of Quaker House; Arlo Tatum and current staff of Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO); J.E. McNeil, director of the Center on Conscience and War (formerly called NISBCO); and David Radcliff and others, the Church of the Brethren. In addition, deep appreciation for skillful editing, support and encouragement of Judy Purvis, David Woods, Suzanne Siverling, Bob Gwyn, Pat Mann, Ed Brown, Bettie L. Flash and Emilie Condon, as well as Friends General Conference staff, the Youth Religious Committee of Chapel Hill Meeting, and, especially, the inspiration from the our meeting's young Friends.

Alice Carlton and Curt Torell, APRIL 2003

Lesson 1

Panel Presentations: Experiences of Previous COs

NOTE: Find two or three people in your meeting or community who were COs, who opposed participation in the military or who were in the military and later turned against it. Ask if they would be willing to share their experiences with the high school class. This lesson introduces the concept of a CO and raises issues about COs in a very real and personal way.

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

- A. Begin with a brief period of worship.
- B. Welcome and introduce everyone.
- C. Overview and purpose:
 1. Begin with an overview of conscientious objection.
 2. Hear panel presenters share their experiences as COs or in the services.
 3. Allow time for questions and answers with the panel and for discussion among the class.

II. Opening Exercise: A Simulation of a Draft Lottery (5 minutes)

- A. Explain that for this class, everyone (young men and women) will consider him or herself as a man about to turn 18-years-old.
- B. Pass out a number of 3 by 5 index cards, each with a random number between 1 and 366. Have class members write their first names (nice and big so everyone can read them) on their cards.
- C. Explain that the number on the card corresponds to the number they might receive if a draft lottery were held today. Explain that probably the first third (numbers 1–120) would be sent an induction notice. Ask:
 1. What number did you draw?
 2. Was it high or low?
 3. How do you feel about the number you drew? Did it make a difference?

III. Overview of Conscientious Objection (10 minutes)

- A. Review the terms and explanations on the handout: *Overview of Selective Service and Conscientious Objection* (see p. 15).

- B. Review some Supreme Court rulings as they appear on the handout: *U.S. Supreme Court Rulings, Congressional Legislation and Law* (see p. 17).
- C. Pass out references for additional information on handout: *Contacts and Resources* (see p. 19).

IV. Panel Presentations (15 minutes total)

- A. Have two or three guests who were COs talk about their experiences. (This may also include people who were in the military and eventually realized their inner conviction against participation in war.)
- B. Possible discussion questions are:
 - 1. How did you come to your leading as a CO?
 - 2. What was your experience with others (friends, local draft board, government authorities, religious leaders, military personnel, etc.)?
 - 3. In hindsight, what would you have done differently, if anything?
 - 4. What advice do you have for our young people now?

V. Discussion, Summary and Closing (10 minutes, time permitting)

- A. Open up discussion to entire group.
- B. Ask for questions to and from the panel.
- C. Summarize:
 - 1. Emphasize the importance of keeping the handouts for the future. Suggest, or even provide, file folders for each person to keep materials and copies of future documentation.
 - 2. Encourage those interested in getting more information to contact appropriate people in meeting (for example Ministry and Worship to set up a Clearness Committee, key members of the community, etc.).
- D. Thank panel members for their time and willingness to participate.
- E. End with a period of worship.

Lesson 2

A “Mock Draft Board” Examination

NOTE: This simulation is designed to go quickly, illustrate several dynamics and be relatively fun. A more intense simulation might simply ask the candidate only the question: “Why are you claiming status as a CO?” Knowing he or she had only 20 minutes to give all the information that would determine his or her claim, a candidate would not want to be too brief or overly simple.

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

- A. Begin with a brief period of worship.
- B. Welcome and introduce everyone.
- C. Overview and purpose:
 1. Fill out a CO application.
 2. Answer questions that bear witness to a CO claim.
 3. Discuss and evaluate responses.

II. Exercise 1: Filling Out and Defending a Claim for CO Exemption (15 minutes)

- A. Pass out handout: *Worksheet Form 22: Claim for Conscientious Objector* (see p. 21).
- B. Split class into groups, depending on numbers, of 2–4 members each.
 1. As a subgroup, answer questions #1 and #2 from Part II.
 2. If time permits, consider question #3, also from Part II.
- C. Have each subgroup select a person to represent them before the “Mock Draft Board.”

III. Exercise 2: Defending Your Claim Before a Draft Board (15 minutes)

- A. Set up:
 1. Explain the intent of the exercise. It is a simulation and not intended to offend or embarrass.
 2. Put one designated spokesperson, or perspective CO applicant, on “the hot seat.”
 3. Explain that while the applicant is responding to the board’s questions, the others should take note of the dynamics that emerge, including both content and emotional reactions.

B. Simulation:

- 1 The “Mock Draft Board” asks the person sample questions to defend his/her position. The “Mock Draft Board” is the teacher/facilitator plus some additional adults, if possible. The questions may be “nasty” reflecting biases and prejudices against COs. See handout: *Sample Questions a Draft Review Board Might Ask* (p. 23).
- 2 At the end of each simulation, thank and praise the applicant for volunteering. Discuss questions listed below after each simulation.

IV. Discussion (8 minutes)

A. After each simulation, ask the applicant:

1. What did it feel like to be “put on the hot seat?”
2. What was easy? What was difficult? What did you want to say, but didn’t or didn’t know how to say?

B. After “debriefing” the applicant, ask the full group:

1. What did the applicant do well? Give specific examples.
2. What are some other ways to respond to the questions asked?

C. Review some Supreme Court rulings on why certain questions are inappropriate for the board to ask. See handout: *U.S. Supreme Court Rulings, Congressional Legislation and Law* (p. 17).

V. Summary and Closing (2 minutes)

- A. Point out the back page of the handout: *Worksheet Form 22: Claim for Conscientious Objector*, especially Part II, question #3 and Part III (p. 21).
- B. Emphasize the importance of keeping the handouts and other documentation for future review.
- C. Encourage those interested in more information to contact appropriate people in the meeting; also use the handout: *Contacts and Resources* (p. 19).
- D. Thank “applicants” again for their willingness to participate.
- E. Announce that the next lesson will revisit these questions and give everyone a chance to discuss them in more depth.
- F. End with a brief period of worship.

Lesson 3

Responding in More Depth to CO Questions and Reviewing Some Procedures for Registering Such a Claim

NOTE: Answering the questions on the *Worksheet Form 22* and responding to the “Mock Draft Board” questions can be both intimidating and soul-searching. The prior lesson introduced many issues. This lesson gives more time, especially in a group, to consider these questions in greater depth.

I. Introduction (2½ minutes)

- A. Begin with a brief period of worship.
- B. Welcome and introduce everyone.
- C. Overview and purpose:
 1. Discuss, as a group, views about war and being a CO.
 2. Respond in written form to questions on a typical CO application.
 3. Review some procedures to follow when registering with Selective Service.

II. Exercise: Filling Out a Claim for CO Exemption (20 minutes)

- A. Handout: *Letter to Some City Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends* (p. 25).
 1. Review the three main bulleted points in the letter.
 2. Point out that these are the three basic criteria for a CO claim.
- B. Pass out handout: *Worksheet Form 22: Claim for Conscientious Objector* (p. 21).
 1. Take 10 minutes to list on newsprint, from the full group, responses to questions #1 and #2 from Part I of the application.
 2. Spend more time on question #1 and brainstorm as many responses as possible.
- C. Have the young people divide themselves into three groups.
 1. From newsprint ideas and personal views, write a small group response to each question.
 2. Edit the subgroup’s response so it clearly explains the group’s views.
 3. Write responses on separate newsprint or on another worksheet.

III. Discussion (10 minutes)

- A. Have each group post its newsprint and read its responses.
- B. As a full group, try to write a collective response.
 - 1. What are the common themes?
 - 2. What stands out as important?

IV. Procedures for Claiming a CO When Registering with Selective Service (10 min.)

- A. Pass out the following handouts. Concentrate specifically on the handout: *A Procedure for 18-Year-Olds Who Want to Indicate CO Status at the Time of Registration for Selective Service* (p. 27) and spend less time on the others. The intent is let the class know what procedures and support are available.
 - 1. *Letter to High School Aged Member/Attender of Our Meeting* (p. 26).
 - 2. *A Procedure for 18-Year-Olds Who Want to Indicate CO Status at the Time of Registration for Selective Service* (p. 27).
 - 3. *Letter to Some City Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends* (p. 25).
 - 4. *Letter to Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors and Center on Conscience & War (formerly called NISBCO)* (p. 30).
 - 5. *Sample Selective Service Registration Form* (completed by George Fox) (p. 37).
 - 6. *Contacts and Resources* (p. 19).
- B. Explain that if any male wishes to file an intent as a CO at the time that he registers for Selective Service, the meeting will help him individually with the process and procedures. Females currently are not required to register, but they may wish to go through similar steps as the males excluding the submission of a Selective Service Registration form. If they are inclined to consider a CO claim, they should at least write a letter to the meeting documenting their convictions.
- C. Keep all materials and future documentation in one, safe place (i.e., their file folder).

V. Summary and Closing (2¹/₂ minutes)

- A. General discussion:
 - 1. In what ways was this helpful?
 - 2. When did it get frustrating?
 - 3. What other questions/concerns do you have?
- B. End with a brief period of worship.

Lesson 4

Visit to a Military Base or Military Museum (Optional, Dependent upon Locality and Availability)

NOTE: If possible, arrange a trip to a military base or military museum. Try to have an opportunity to talk with some military personnel, preferably different people who can speak either to the advantages or disadvantages of military service. At the end of the visit and/or interviews, consider these questions:

1. In what ways was violence glorified?
2. Did the museum/base reflect or display casualty figures, destruction to individual soldiers and their families or the devastation to civilian homes or lives?
3. What is the effect of the military culture on new recruits or veteran soldiers?
4. What effect does the base have on the town in which it is located?
5. In what ways did your own bias and past focus on COs affect your perspective of this visit?

One place to visit is Quaker House, Fayetteville, NC home of Fort Bragg and the 82nd Airborne and Special Operations Museum. Contact Chuck Fager at www.quakerhouse.org.

Lesson 5

A Reverse “Mock Draft Board”

(A Combined 1 Hour Session with Adults and High School Aged Youth)

NOTE: This lesson resembles Lesson 2 in that a “Mock Draft Board” is established and potential COs come before it. The difference in this lesson is that roles are reversed: the adults are now the COs and “Mock Draft Board” consists of the young people. This is an important lesson. It gives the young people the opportunity to hear the answers of older, seasoned Friends to these difficult questions as well as giving the adult Friends a clear picture of the pressures and emotional impact of this process on the young people. Consider doing this lesson during an Adult Forum or First Day School rather than during the High School First Day class.

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

A. Begin with a brief period of worship.

B. Welcome and introduce participants.

C. Context:

1. Explain the context of this lesson to the adult members. Say, for example, that previous lessons for the students centered around defining conscientious objection, providing panel discussions of past COs, reviewing various handouts on interpretations and procedures, and (if done) sponsoring a trip to a local military base or military museum.
2. Review the “Context and Disclaimer” in the introduction.

D. Overview and purpose:

1. Give the adult community an overview of the current Selective Service System registration process and the methods (or absence thereof) for claiming a CO status.
2. Impress upon the adult community the complexity and difficulty of expressing personal views to substantiate a CO claim.
3. Allow the young people an opportunity to ask tough questions to adults about their convictions and to hear how the adults respond.

E. Format: Start together, split into small groups, then gather again as a full group for the simulation and discussion.

II. Introductory Material (5 minutes)

- A. Pass out and review handout: *Overview of Selective Service and Conscientious Objection* (p. 15).
- B. Pass out, without reviewing, handouts: *U.S. Supreme Court Rulings, Congressional Legislation and Law* (p. 17) and *Contacts and Resources* (p. 19).

III. Exercise 1: Filling Out a Claim for CO Exemption (15 minutes)

- A. Pass out handout: *Worksheet Form 22: Claim for Conscientious Objector* (p. 21).
- B. Split adults into groups, depending on numbers, and have them:
 - 1. Take 10–15 minutes to answer questions #1 and #2 from Part II.
 - 2. Consider question #3, also from Part II, if time allows.
- C. Have each subgroup select a person who will represent them before the “Mock Draft Board.”

IV. Exercise 2: A “Mock Draft Board” Simulation (30 minutes, along with discussion)

- A. Set up:
 - 1. Choose the first CO applicant (subgroup representative).
 - 2. Place in a single, isolated seat before the “Mock Draft Board.”
 - 3. The board should sit in a single “facing bench.”
 - 4. Explain the intent of the exercise: It is a simulation and not intended to offend or embarrass anyone.
 - 5. While the applicant is responding to the board’s questions, members of the audience should take note of the dynamics that emerge, including both content and emotional reactions.
- B. The young people then “drill” applicants regarding their beliefs. They can start with the questions on Part II, and then use others from the handout: *Sample Questions a Draft Review Board Might Ask* (p. 23). The intent of the board is to be offensive; they may cut off applicant responses, ask obnoxious questions, interrupt, get emotional, etc. The simulation is meant to highlight the challenge before an applicant and for the young people to hear how members of the meeting respond.
- C. Take about 5–10 minutes for each subgroup applicant, allowing for discussion. Discussion questions below (section V) are best asked after each simulation.
- D. At the end of each simulation, thank and praise the applicant for volunteering.

V. Discussion (do after each simulation above)

A. After each simulation, ask the applicant:

1. What did it feel like to be “put on the hot seat?”
2. What was easy? What was difficult? What did you want to say, but didn't?

B. After “debriefing” the applicant, ask the full group:

1. What did the applicant do well? Give specific examples.
2. What are some other ways to respond to the questions asked?

C. As a full group, ask:

1. What common themes does this suggest to you?
2. What must the meeting do to prepare those who wish to seek CO status?
3. Is the meeting doing enough to prepare all our youth (from birth on)? If not, what else could and must be done?

VI. Summary and Closing (5 minutes)

A. In what ways was this helpful? Where does the meeting go from here?

B. End with a brief period of worship.

Lesson 6

Special Sessions for 18-Year-Olds Who Wish to Declare CO Status

(Optional, Depending upon Interest)

NOTE: By now, most of the young people are probably saturated with information on and about COs, with one exception—those young men (and those young women who so choose) who are approaching their 18th birthday. An additional, private session might be set aside to talk just with them. They may need individual guidance on how to register for Selective Service and, if they decide to declare themselves as COs, how to do this. This lesson is designed to give them that support, provide an opportunity for them to discuss their views and give them specific steps to gain the meeting's support during this process. A Clearness Committee might be set up to carry out this function. Use the handouts distributed earlier in lessons, especially from Lesson 3, Section IV, A. This lesson usually takes about 1½ hours. As an optional format, consider having it over a dinner (pizza and plenty of soda) as an optional format.

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

A. Welcome.

B. Explain purpose of this special session:

1. Hear their thoughts and concerns.
2. Help each individual with his or her decision making and guide him or her through the registration process, interaction with the meeting, and future steps.
3. Provide dinner as an optional format.

II. Opening Exercise: A Mock Lottery and Induction Notice (10 minutes)

A. Hand out 3 by 5 lottery cards.

1. Prior to the session, make up several cards each with a random number between 1 and 120. (The lottery goes through 366, but for this exercise, “safe” numbers were omitted.)
2. Point out that a draft could use a lottery assignment system where each birth date corresponded to a random number. About a third (numbers 1 through 120) would probably be called for induction.

B. Ask who received a number between 1 and 120 (everyone).

1. Give them an induction notice (handout: *Western Union Mailgram*, p. 35).

2. Have each person read one of the following paragraphs from the notice that begins with these phrases:
 - a. “This is your order to report _____”
 - b. “If you are found qualified for military service _____”
 - c. “If you believe you qualify for reclassification _____”
 - d. “Read the important information provided with this order. If you fail to obey this order _____”
 - e. Last sentence from paragraph “What to Bring,” which is “Do not bring family, friends, pets, weapons/knives, nonprescription drugs, large sums of money or expensive jewelry.”
 - f. “You may file a claim for postponement or reclassification _____” (to end of paragraph).
3. Ask for reactions, impressions and comments.
4. Explain that a person could have as few as nine days to request/file for reclassification.

III. Discussion (15 minutes)

- A. Individual thoughts, concerns, goals, expectations, apprehensions, etc.
 1. What is your position on Selective Service, the draft, and conscientious objection? (This is not the time for general comments about war or debate on politics but rather ones personal participation in war.)
 2. What reservations do you have?
- B. What do you want to get out of this session?
- C. Sample statement of the facilitators/adults position.

“We want to help you through the Selective Service registration process, to encourage you to give thought about your classification (especially as a CO) and if you have any leaning toward being a CO, to help you through that process. We do not want you to register for CO unless you have some inclination to do so. Indicating status as CO at registration time does not mean you cannot change your mind at a later date. However, by not so indicating at this time, it may make a future claim as CO more difficult.”

IV. What Is Selective Service and Conscientious Objection (45 minutes)

Give each person a manila folder to keep handouts and future documentation.

- A. If not done in prior sessions, review and discuss the following handouts:
 1. *Overview of Selective Service and Conscientious Objection* (p. 15).
 2. *U.S. Supreme Court Rulings, Congressional Legislation and Law* (p. 17).
- B. Pass out *Worksheet Form 22: Claim for Conscientious Objector* (p. 21).
 1. Take 5 to 10 minutes to answer Parts I and II.

2. Share and discuss responses; write additional comments if needed.
3. Pass out *Suggestions on How to Build Documentation* (p. 31). Look particularly at the section on how to fill out the *Worksheet Form 22*.
4. Give the handout *Sample Questions a Draft Review Board Might Ask* (p. 23) with the comment that some of the questions are neither legal nor appropriate. They are designed to raise issues a draft board might address.

V. Action Steps (10 minutes)

A. Pass out these handouts:

1. *A Procedure for 18-Year-Olds Who Want to Indicate CO Status at the Time of Registration for Selective Service* (p. 27).
2. *Letter to Some City Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends* (p. 25).
3. *Letter to Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors and Center on Conscience & War (formerly called NISBCO)* (p. 30).
4. *Contacts and Resources* (p. 19).
5. *Letters of Support* (p. 33).

B. Explain each, especially *A Procedure for 18-Year-Olds Who Want to Indicate CO Status at the Time of Registration for Selective Service* (p. 27).

VI. Wrap-up, Homework and Closing (5 minutes)

A. Ask each person:

1. What was most helpful to you during this lesson?
2. What else do you need or want?

B. Homework:

1. Have each person bring his or her *Worksheet Form 22: Claim for Conscientious Objector* (p. 21) to revise, add, or refine.
2. Send it using the “trifold” method (i.e., photocopy the form, fold it in thirds, staple shut, address the outside to his or her home address, stamp, and mail it).
3. When received back, add it unopened to his or her CO folder. This will give a federally postmarked document verifying the date and contents of the applicant’s first thoughts about answering this form’s questions. This can be done repeatedly to show a progression of thought.

C. Closing worship.

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Overview of Selective Service and Conscientious Objection

Introduction and Words of Caution:

Currently, the United States has no draft, but it does have a Selective Service System. Under this, all 18-year-old men must register within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Failure to do so is a felony, with a fine up to \$250,000 and five years in jail. Registration is also tied to college federal student aid, citizenship if not natural born, federal job training, and employment in certain federal jobs. In some states, it is also linked with auto registration and renewal, state employment, veterans' dependent benefits, state educational assistance, and enrollment in state colleges. Official procedures for filing as a CO at registration time do not exist; so other steps are necessary to lay the foundation for such a claim.

In a "state of emergency," a draft can be instituted at once. Should congress pass a draft law, however, implementation would more likely take about 180 days. Twenty-year-olds in a given calendar year would be called first. An induction notice could give someone as little as nine days to declare a CO status. So, if considering a CO reclassification, young Friends should prepare ahead of time.

Nonregistration:

Some men decide not to register. They consider registration as participation in the war process. To them, the draft is a first step toward war, because it indicates a show of strength suggesting that, "We have a fighting force ready."

What is a Conscientious Objector (CO)?

A CO opposes participation in war. Legally, it is someone who, based upon deeply held moral, ethical, or religious beliefs, is opposed to personal participation in war in any form.

The Three Requirements Under Current and Past U.S. Law:

1. Your objection must be based upon "moral, ethical, or religious belief." (Old law said "Supreme Being" then changed to "religious training and belief.")
2. You must be "opposed to participation in war in any form." Opposition is not political or selective. It is against all and any war.
3. Your claim must be "deeply held." Old law said "sincere," i.e., you have to prove or document your convictions.

Two Types of Conscientious Objectors:

Class 1-A-O claims exemption **ONLY** from training and service as a combatant member of the armed services. This person would be inducted into the military, would not be trained to use or required to carry a weapon, and would probably serve as a medic, chaplain, or in some other noncombatant function.

Class 1-O claims exemption from **ALL** training and services in the military. This person would **NOT** be inducted into the military, but would do two years of alternate service, such as working in a mental hospital, prison, etc.

Other “objectors,” not recognized by federal law, are: (1) conscientious objectors to paying for war, (2) selective objectors (no to unjust war, but OK for just war), (3) nuclear pacifists (those against developing nuclear weapons), and (4) noncooperators with the draft.

U.S. Supreme Court Rulings, Congressional Legislation and Law

Discussing one's beliefs, whether moral, ethical, or religious, is difficult. Some U.S. Supreme Court cases, as well as proposed codes, help clarify the source and strengths of one's beliefs. However, these rulings are from a previously more "liberal" Supreme Court, and interpretations and rules for conscientious objection may change under a new draft law.

Amendment I (from the Constitution of the United States):

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Sicurella v. U.S. (1955):

OK to believe violence may sometimes be justified in self-defense, or the defense of your family, or to protect a friend from attack.

You do not have to promise that your opposition will never change or that you would hold the same views in another era.

Previous Draft Laws:

In 1967, the *Supreme Being* clause was deleted from the CO application. The draft law prior to that defined religious training and belief as "a belief in a Supreme Being involving duties superior to those arising from any human relation." It had originally been inserted in 1948 to narrow the provision for a CO.

U.S. v. Seeger (1965):

Within "religious training and belief . . . would come all sincere religious beliefs which are based upon a power or being, or upon faith, to which all else is subordinate or upon which all else is ultimately dependent."

"A sincere and meaningful belief which occupies in the life of its possessor a place parallel to that filled by the God of those admittedly qualifying for the exemption comes within the statutory definition."

"Does the claimed belief occupy the same place in the life of the objector as an orthodox belief in God holds in the life of one clearly qualified for exemption?"

Welsh v. U.S. (1970):

Welsh crossed out "religious;" to him it was based on "moral and ethical" grounds.

“If an individual deeply and sincerely holds beliefs which are purely ethical or moral in source and content . . . occupy . . . a place parallel to that filled by . . . God.”

The law “exempts from military service all those whose consciences, spurred by **deeply held moral, ethical, or religious beliefs**, would give them no rest or peace if they allowed themselves to become a part of an instrument of war.”

“The belief upon which conscientious objection is based must be the primary controlling force in the man’s life.”

Gillette v. U.S. (1971):

“must amount to **conscientious opposition to participating personally in any war and all war.**”

Contacts and Resources

The following is short list of organizations with resources, articles, and assistance. These websites and phone numbers are subject to change.

Some Organizations:

CCCO—Central Committee on Conscientious Objection

1515 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-563-8787, 888-236-2226 (toll free), fax 215-567-2096
www.objector.org

AND

405 14th Street, #205, Oakland, CA 94612
510-465-1617, fax 510-465-2459

Center on Conscience and War (formerly called NISBCO, National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors)

J. E. McNeil, Executive Director
1830 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington D.C. 20009
202-483-2220, fax 202-483-1246
http://www.nisbco.org

Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft (COMD)

PO Box 15195, San Diego, CA
619-265-1369
www.comd@comdsd.org

Quaker House

Chuck Fager, Director
223 Hillside Avenue, Fayetteville, NC 28301
www.quakerhouse.org

GI Rights Hotline

1-800-394-9544
www.girights.org

Friends General Conference

1216 Arch Street, 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-561-1700, fax 215-561-0759
www.FGCQuaker.org with link on left column under Quakery Library go to
“Peace” then to “Raising Conscientious Objection” for the lesson plans

AND

Quaker Press of FGC and *QuakerBooks of FGC*
1-800-966-4556 (bookstore orders only)
www.quakerbooks.org

Selective Service System

www.sss.gov

Some Articles from the Internet:

American Friends Service Committee Home page, then go to Youth & Militarism
<http://www.afsc.org/>

Church of the Brethren-On Earth Peace Assembly
<http://www.brethren.org/oepe>

Episcopal Peace Fellowship
www.episcopalpeacefellowship.org

Mennonite Church USA Peace and Justice Support Network
<http://peace.mennolink.org>

Christian Science Monitor—Questions and answers about the draft
<http://www.csmonitor.com/explainers/Draft.html>

Every Church a Peace Church—contains resources and events
<http://ecapc.org>

Supreme Court Rulings on Conscientious Objection and the Draft
<http://straylight.law.cornell.edu/supct/index.html>

Who is a conscientious objector?
<http://www.scn.org/ip/sdmcc/co.htm>

Chronology of conscription in U.S.
<http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-5669.html>

Conscientious Objection and Alternative Service (from Selective Service System)
<http://www.sss.gov/Fsconsobj.htm>

Worksheet Form 22: Claim for Conscientious Objector

Adapted from Selective Service System Form 22

INSTRUCTIONS TO REGISTRANT: The purpose of this form is to help you provide the information needed by your local board to determine if you qualify for reclassification as a conscientious objector. Your objection may be based on religious, moral or ethical beliefs, or a combination of these beliefs.

PART I

Check the box in this part that pertains to your claim. Note the difference of the two!

- 1. I claim exemption **ONLY** from training and service as a combatant member of the armed forces (Class 1-A-O). (To qualify, you must establish to the satisfaction of the Board that you are conscientiously opposed to participation in combatant military training and service in any war, based on deeply held moral, ethical or religious beliefs.)
- 2. I claim exemption **FROM ALL** training and service as a member of the armed forces (Class 1-O). (To qualify, you must establish to the satisfaction of the board that you are conscientiously opposed to participation in combatant and noncombatant military training and service in any war, based on deeply held moral, ethical or religious beliefs.)

PART II

Prepare and attach written responses to the information requested below. If you wish, you may attach letters from persons who know you and are familiar with your beliefs. You may also attach any other pertinent information you would like the board to consider.

1. Describe your beliefs which are the reasons for you claiming conscientious objection to combatant military training and service or to all military training and service.

Sample Questions a Draft Review Board Might Ask

*Adapted from Handbook for Conscientious Objectors**

From Worksheet Form 22:

1. Describe your beliefs which are the reasons for you claiming conscientious objection to combatant military training and service or to all military training and service.
2. Describe how and when you acquired these beliefs.
3. Explain what most clearly shows that your beliefs are deeply held. You may wish to include a description of how your beliefs affect the way you live.

Some Sample Questions about Religious Belief:

1. Are you a member of a church? How long have you been a member? If not a member, why not? How often do you attend?
2. What does your church (synagogue, mosque) say about wars?
3. Why do so many church (synagogue, mosque) members support war and you don't?
4. Where in the Bible do you find anything that forbids you to help defend your country?
5. Why did Christ say, "He that hath no sword, let him buy one," "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," and "I come not to send peace, but a sword"?
6. What about your friends and peers who aren't Quaker—should they fight and not you?
7. Aren't you really just expressing a personal moral code?
8. How do you know that God, or the "Light," is in everyone? Is God in Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, or other terrorists? Was God in Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini?
9. If God told you to defend your country, what would you do? What do you say to those soldiers who believe they are answering God's call by serving in the military?
10. How about the Christian doctrine of approval for "just" wars?
11. How do you explain all of the wars in the Old or Hebrew Testament?
12. What good does it do just to pray for those who would attack us and do nothing else?
13. Why is it wrong for our military to prevent evil from happening to others?
14. Islamic fanatics like bin Laden want to rule the world. Will you let that happen?

*Tatum, Arlo, ed., *Handbook for Conscientious Objectors*, Central Committee on Conscientious Objection: Philadelphia, PA, 1971.

Other General Questions:

1. Why didn't you put in a claim for CO before, instead of now when you are drafted?
2. Why did you register under Selective Service initially if its purpose is to raise an army?
3. Do you object to others being drafted, or just yourself?
4. Would you have fought in World War II to rid the genocide of Jews and stop Hitler from world domination?
5. This local board needs to fill 100 slots in the armed forces by the end of the month. What gives you the right to claim this CO exemption knowing that if granted we will just go one slot deeper to 101 and someone else will take your place?
6. Instead of claiming I-0 status, what if we cut you a deal for a desk job or other position that keeps you out of combat—would you be willing to change your request to a I-A-0?
7. Are you against all wars, or only this war in Iraq?
8. If someone in your family had been killed on 9/11, would you feel differently?
9. If a criminal had a gun against a child's (or your mother's, father's) head ready to shoot and you also had a gun, would you shoot the criminal and protect the innocent child?
10. Do you have any duty at all to your community and nation? Why is it wrong to defend your country's interests? Why accept the benefits of a country you won't protect?
11. What do you think happens to people like you in Iraq, Russia, China, North Korea, etc.?
12. Should we let dictators like Saddam Hussein oppress his people while building weapons of mass destruction that Osama bin Laden and other terrorists will use on us?
13. Do you think Israel should defend itself? Should the Palestinians defend themselves?
14. If a nation suffers unprovoked attack, should it not defend itself?
15. How can you restrain an army except by a more powerful army?
16. If everyone held your views, our country would be destroyed by chemical, biological, and eventually nuclear weapons. What do you think about that?
17. Do you realize that by not helping our army, you are, in effect, encouraging the terrorists?
18. If you don't believe in participating in war, how do you expect us to stop terrorism? What method would you use to resist evil?
19. What will you do if your CO application is denied?

Letter to Some City Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Applicant's Name

2 Quaker Way

Some City, Some State 00001

Today's Month, Day, Year

Some City Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

c/o (*The Person's Name*), Clerk of the Meeting

1 William Penn Lane

Some City, Some State 00001

Dear Friends,

On _____ (date of your birthday), I will turn 18 years old and am required to register for the draft under the Selective Service code. On the registration form, I will indicate my status as a conscientious objector. Although the form does not ask for this information specifically, I need a record of my convictions. In this regard, I ask that two representatives of the meeting serve as witnesses to my testimony. I also request that the meeting keep a copy of this letter and my witnessed registration form as a permanent, secure record.

While my beliefs continue to crystallize, I can state the following as a basis of my current position.

- I have a deep, firm, and fixed belief against personal participation to war in any form. (*You should add a sentence or two explaining why.*)
- This conviction is based upon my moral, ethical and religious training and beliefs. (*You are **encouraged** to add two or three sentences documenting the kind of training you received, especially within the Quaker community, meeting, and/or household.*)
- I sincerely feel . . . (*Your claim must be sincere, not just a way to get out of the military. Write a few sentences to substantiate your sincerity, such as "I was not raised to harm others," "No person has the right to take another's life," "I do not act violently towards others and am known among my friends for acting in this manner." "I seek solutions that respect the rights of all others."*)

Please accept this letter and a copy of my Selective Service registration form as record of my convictions. I sincerely hope our country will pursue peaceful means to resolve conflict and that a military draft and war will not be necessary. In the meantime, I thank you for your willingness to stand with me in witness of my beliefs.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Letter to High School Aged Member/Attender of Our Meeting

Some City Monthly Meeting
1 William Penn Lane
Some City, Some State 00001
Today's date

Dear high school member/attender of our meeting:

(This letter is sent both to young men and women. Under current law, only men must register for Selective Service, but this could change. So, we hope to prepare both men and women.)

Within 30 days before or after an eighteenth birthday, men are required by the Selective Service System to register for the U.S. military. This does not mean they are joining the military or will be drafted. In fact, no one has been drafted since 1973 and cannot be unless ordered by congress and the president of the United States. However, failure to register is a felony with a possible fine of up to \$250,000 and/or up to five years in prison.

Registering establishes a historical record of your intent to participate in the Selective Service System. It is done by mailing a simple form, obtained through your local post office, or done on-line. Unfortunately, these new streamlined procedures do not show how you wish to be classified. For example, some young men oppose participation in war and, in past years, have been given the status of a conscientious objector (CO). This was a difficult procedure then and is more complicated now.

You must meet three requirements to be recognized as a CO. Your objection must be based on "moral, ethical, or religious beliefs." Secondly, you must be "opposed to participation in war in any form." And lastly, your claim must be "deeply held." These criteria have been interpreted broadly through several federal court cases, and material is available to understand these more fully.

The Quaker peace testimony dates back to the declaration of the Society of Friends to England's King Charles II in 1660:

"We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretense whatsoever; this is our testimony to the whole world. . . . The Spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil, and again to move unto it; and we certainly know, and testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ nor for the kingdom of this world. . . . Therefore, we cannot learn war any more."

This letter serves as an invitation for you to begin the process of discerning your own divine leading on the peace testimony, to consult your parents for their input, and to seek the meeting's support and guidance for this crucial step in your life. We can provide information and counsel as you identify your convictions and can help you through the registration process, whatever your convictions. If you feel led to register as a CO, your 18th birthday is an important, though not last, time to establish a record of that intent. If you decide not to register as a CO, we will help you in that procedure as well and will be available in the future for continued support.

Please feel free to call upon us to seek more information, even if you are unsure about your views. We will be happy to discuss this with you and provide you with more resources. It is important to prepare yourself *before* the draft is instituted.

Yours in the Light,
Name of Meeting or Committee Clerk

cc. Member/Attender's Parents

A Procedure for 18-Year-Olds Who Want to Indicate CO Status at the Time of Registration for Selective Service

Currently, the Selective Service registration form for 18-year-olds does not have a place to indicate a claim for CO status. It has to be done manually with documentation and support from others. Described below is a method that the CO and his meeting can follow.

Steps for the 18-Year-Old Registrant:

1. Before your 18th birthday, start a record showing your beliefs, convictions, and/or religious training. Examples include: attendance and participation in meeting, upbringing in a Quaker household, absence of violent actions in school or community, participation in non-violent activities, testimonies from others, influential readings or persons, etc.
2. Write a letter to the meeting declaring your intent to register with the Selective Service System as a CO. This letter is both a request to the meeting for their support and a legal document declaring your CO conviction. The letter should state: a) that you are conscientiously opposed to participation in war of any form, b) that it is based on moral, ethical, and/or religious beliefs, and c) that these beliefs are deeply held.
3. Pick up a Selective Service System registration form from the post office. Do NOT register on-line or by phone, since it will not allow you to add anything manually. After filling out the form in the appropriate boxes, write in a blank area in the middle of the form, "I am a conscientious objector." Sign and date your statement as well as the one in the box on the form. Do not write in the margins because they are cut off when Selective Service microfiches your form.

NOTE: Failure to register (regardless of your intent to declare status as a CO) is a felony, including a fine of up to \$250,000 and five years imprisonment. You may lose certain opportunities for federal student aid to college, citizenship if not natural born, federal job training, and certain federal jobs. In some states, registration for Selective Service is linked with auto registration and renewal, veterans' dependent benefits, state employment, and state educational assistance. Despite these penalties, some still refuse to register.

NOTE II: Advising someone not to register is also a felony. However, outlining options and their legal ramifications is permissible.

4. Before sending the form have two members from your meeting (preferably from the Ministry and Counsel or Trustees Committee) sign the form as witnesses. Write, for example, “I, William Penn, Trustee for the Pennsylvania Monthly Friends Meeting, witness George Fox’s conviction as a CO.” Sign, date, and consider notarizing. Again, don’t have these signatures in the margins of the form. (See sample form, last handout.)
5. Begin collecting *Letters of Support* from friends, neighbors, teachers, or others who know about your convictions. These will help demonstrate that your claim is “deeply held.” The most convincing letter is from someone who disagrees with you, but who can vouch that your beliefs are sincere. (See handout, *Letters of Support*, p. 33).
6. Make copies and keep them in safe locations. Store one copy at the meeting with its other secure documents. Send copies to the Central Committee for Conscientious Objection (1515 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102), the Center for Conscience and War, formerly NISBCO (1830 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20009), or, if available, a local registry of COs. Keep your own materials in a file and regularly update with new documentation.
7. Finally, send the form to the Selective Service System as required, but send it certified mail, return receipt requested. In addition, photocopy your form, fold it in thirds like a mailing, and address the outside to yourself. Then staple, stamp and mail it. When you receive it back, add it unopened to your personal CO file. This gives you a federal postmark that verifies the date of your CO claims.
8. The acknowledgment form sent back from Selective Service will include two portions: one half is your “registration acknowledgment card” (formerly called a “draft card”) and the other is a “change of information form.” Tear off the top half and on the right side of the “change of information” portion write, “This does not acknowledge my declaration, noted _____ (date of your original registration) on my Selective Service Registration, that I am a conscientious objector.” Again, send this portion of the form by certified mail, return receipt requested. Do the same photocopy, postmark, and trifold procedure as in #7. You will get a letter back from Selective Service saying that procedures for filing CO claims for registrants are not in place. Keep this letter! It is further dated documentation directly from Selective Service that you requested this classification.

Steps for the Meeting:

1. Prepare and nurture all your youth. The meeting should actively prepare and nurture its young Friends in Quaker ways, especially in the peace testimony, nonviolent conflict resolution, and the value of all human life. This is done, of course, both programmatically (as in First Day School, retreats, etc.) but also through personal interactions with children and with each other. Parents or guardians may wish to start a scrapbook that documents their child's experiences or activities with peace-making and nonviolence.
2. Document how the meeting upholds the peace testimony. What peace programs does it fund? How does it nurture nonviolence in its youth First Day School? In what ways are individual members witnesses to peace? What adult forums address this topic? Are any members of the meeting CO's from prior times and have they shared their experiences with the youth? Do you support parents and guardians as they nurture loving and peaceful environments to raise their children?
3. Set up a special committee or designate a person(s) to oversee this process. Send letters to young men and women who will soon turn 18 years old offering support and guidance (see handout, *Letters of Support*, p. 33). Provide First Day School lessons on conscientious objection and participation in war. Monitor each young man and woman as he or she moves towards Selective Service registration. Maintain contact as these young men and women leave home for college and careers.
4. Meet with the candidate during a monthly meeting for business. Listen to his or her statement of belief and support the candidate in his or her conviction. Provide, if requested, a clearness committee to help any candidate with both logistics and an opportunity to explore internal questions of conscience.
5. As witness, document the meeting's response to the CO's declaration. Write a "minute" recording the meeting's support. If possible, publish the "minute" and the applicant's letter in the meeting's newsletter. Ensure the candidate that the meeting's support is ongoing.
6. Keep copies of the registrant's Selective Service form, his or her request to the meeting for its endorsement, the minutes of the meeting, and other supporting evidence in a secure place, such as a lock box or safe.

Letter to Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors and Center on Conscience & War (formerly called NISBCO)

Applicant's Name

2 Quaker Way

Some City, Some State 00001

Today's Month, Day, Year

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors
1515 Cherry St.
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Center on Conscience and War (formerly called NISBCO)
1830 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

To Whom It May Concern:

On (*indicate your birthday for age 18*), I will turn 18 years old and am required to register for the draft under the Selective Service code. Due to my beliefs, I wish to indicate a conscientious objector status. I have already announced my decision to the *Some City Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*, where my statement is currently on record. Enclosed are copies of my letter to my meeting, which outline my beliefs, and of my Selective Service registration form, on which I have requested to be considered a conscientious objector.

I ask that you would keep on record this letter, along with the enclosed documents. Any support you can offer would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Applicant's Name

Suggestions on How to Build Documentation

1. Keep all past and present documentation in a “CO folder.”

Stay organized and vigilant. Continually update your folder with materials that are dated and signed, and include, if appropriate, names of others who can verify your information. Do not throw anything away, even if your initial views were not that strong. Showing a progression in your thought is common. Here are some ideas of what to include:

- ✓ Keep a journal, particularly with entries about your beliefs, the influences that affect you, how your values run against participation in war, etc.
- ✓ Read peace literature, such as materials by Gandhi, Dorothy Day, M. L. King, Jr., Mother Teresa, Henry David Thoreau, Elise Boulding, Thomas Merton, Leo Tolstoy, Ang Sang Su Kee.
- ✓ Participate in peace organizations, demonstrations, and rallies.
- ✓ Spread your convictions against war to others, either formally in presentations or informally in private discussions.
- ✓ Describe how you “normally” handle conflict, including specific incidents or actual situations.
- ✓ Gather *Letters of Support* from people who can speak to your convictions, though they do not necessarily have to agree with you.
- ✓ Document attendance at meeting (or other religious services) as influences on your training and beliefs.
- ✓ Document participation in retreats, educational sessions, lectures, etc.

2. Revise, edit, and expand your answers to worksheet form 22.

The Church of the Brethren and the Center on Conscience and War give suggestions on how to elaborate on the three questions on the CO application. Here are their suggestions:

Question 1: Describe your beliefs which are the reasons for you claiming conscientious objection to combatant military training and service or to all military training and service.

This question asks you to describe, in some detail and as honestly possible, the basic principles by which you guide your life. You should describe those values which are of utmost importance to you, such as God, love, truth, etc., and why these beliefs are in conflict with participation in the armed services. This question asks you to formulate your own statement to conscientious opposition to war. You should begin by saying that you are conscientiously opposed to war, and then describe the beliefs that lead you to such opposition.

The second part of the question seeks to determine whether you claim noncombatant status in the military or a full exemption from military service. You should specify what it is about noncombatant service that would violate your conscience, if this is the exemption you seek.

Question 2: *Describe how and when you acquired these beliefs. Your answer may include such information as the influence of family members or other persons; training, if applicable; your personal experiences; membership in organizations; books and readings which influenced you.*

In answering this question, you should include anything of significance that helped to form your beliefs. Mention any formal religious training you have had, if you feel such training has helped you arrive at your position. If you feel your beliefs were arrived at with no formal training, no need to mention it. Describe the way you were raised, especially if in a nonviolent household that resolved conflict in peaceful ways. The influences of parents and other family members, clergy, teachers, books, television, movies, and membership in organizations are essential to list. Be specific. You need to show that strong influences in your life have stimulated you to think clearly and seriously about participation in war.

Specific incidents can be mentioned (such as demonstrations, seminars, or assemblies you have attended; experiences and courses in school and college; trips taken; contact with refugees, veterans, or previous COs) to show that your beliefs had substantial formation beyond an “academic interest.” Obviously, if you have experienced war, be sure to reflect on it.

Avoid giving the impression that your belief is primarily a matter of political considerations, expediency, or merely an arbitrary, personal moral code unrelated to higher values. Unconventional beliefs do qualify, but they will require careful statement.

Question 3: *Explain what most clearly shows that your beliefs are deeply held. You may wish to include a description of how your beliefs affect the way you live.*

This question allows you to demonstrate the sincerity with which you hold your beliefs. It may be a difficult question for objectors, particularly young objectors, who have not had many experiences that can show deeply held beliefs. Select the best illustrations of your convictions.

Think about community service: church, mosque, or synagogue participation; clubs, sports; or relationships with friends. You can always discuss how your future plans are strongly affected by a commitment to those beliefs. Describe kinds of employment you have had or plan to have which reflect your commitment. Discuss any public expression, written or oral, you have given to your beliefs. Describe your lifestyle, mention your life’s goals as you have set them, and show how they are an outgrowth of your beliefs.

Letters of Support

Adapted from CCCO, 1981 & CCW, 2005

If a draft is resumed, *Letters of Support* substantiating a CO claim will be vital. These letters attest to your sincerity. They can be as important to a local draft board as your responses at a hearing, and they may even be a deciding factor. *Letters of Support* that are consistent with your views and beliefs and that demonstrate sincerity are difficult for a draft board to question or doubt. The person writing the reference does not have to agree with you but should be able to say that you are honest and sincere in the views you have. What is most important is to attest to your honesty—not detailed knowledge about your claim nor even agreement.

A good *Letter of Support* is basically a character reference. It should include:

- How long and in what capacity has the reference known you?
- Does the reference believe you are sincere in your claim as a conscientious objector, and why?
- Does the reference feel that your conduct since arriving at this belief is consistent with your claim, and why?
- Does the reference feel that your claim is based on deeply held moral, ethical, or religious beliefs (however broadly defined), and why? If possible, the reference should describe influences or training in your life that have led to the development of your beliefs.

Letters of Support should be specific. Personal letters detailing your convictions are usually more convincing than general, impersonal ones. Consider giving your reference a brief statement explaining your position, for example your worksheet form #22 or the letter you wrote to your meeting. You may want to include some handouts or brochures—either from this curriculum or from CCW, CCCO, or other draft counseling agencies—which answer questions and dispel misconceptions about conscientious objectors and Selective Service. Spend as much time with your reference as necessary explaining your views, and be sincere. Developing a relationship with this person, where he or she understands the depth of your convictions, may prove valuable later as he or she might serve as a witness at a possible hearing.

You can get supporting letters from friends, family, teachers, members of your meeting, clergy, or other people familiar with you. If the reference has some standing in the community, the letter is stronger. The reference should know you well, understand your position, and speak to your sincerity. Again, it is not

necessary that the person agrees with your beliefs. In fact, some of the best letters are written by persons who disagree with your CO position but who can say that you are truthful in your own stance.

Here are some other suggestions:

- Letters should be addressed to “Chairman, Local Board” but given to you, not sent to the local board!
- The letter should be as brief as possible. One page of single-space typing is good.
- Typed letters and those on letterhead are more impressive. But a neat handwritten letter is acceptable. Since your local board will consider other claims, it is important that yours be easy and quick to read.
- The Selective Service will not accept *Letters of Support* or any material from persons seeking a CO claim until after a draft is resumed and a claim is made. So, keep your letters in your CO folder and be ready to submit them, if and when they are needed.
- Your meeting and its members are invaluable resources and references. These people know you in special ways and sometimes can lend a historical perspective to the accounts that shaped your testimony for peace, nonviolence, and refusal to participate in war.
- Consider asking for a Clearness Committee. Then ask them for documentation that describes this process, attests to your views, and shows support for your convictions.
- Most good CO claims include four to ten supporting letters. Fewer than four will make your claim seem weak—as if not very many people are ready to stand up for you. More than ten letters often will not be read.
- Be proactive and collect some letters now! With so many transitions from high school, college and/or the workplace, as well as moves to different localities, you should ask people along the way. It is easiest for people to write letters and vouch for your beliefs when they know you, not several years later.
- If you receive a letter that is vague, inaccurate, or does not speak to the four bulleted points listed earlier, either ask your reference to revise it or do not include it in your final file. It might prove detrimental.

Remember: Keep your letters in your CO file, send yourself a trifolded, photocopy to get that U.S. postal date on it. Update and add new references as needed. Do not hesitate asking a significant person at any time in your life to write a *Letter of Support* for you. You will be surprised how many people are willing to help you.

HOW TO TRAVEL TO MEPS

TAKE THE ATTACHED TRAVEL WARRANT TO A BUS OR TRAIN TICKET AGENCY WHO WILL ISSUE YOU A TICKET TO THE CITY WHERE THE MEPS IS LOCATED. WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN THAT CITY ASK THE AGENT FOR DIRECTIONS TO THE MEPS. IF YOU COME BY CAR, ARRANGE TO HAVE IT RETURNED HOME. RESIDENTS OF ALASKA. . . . TRAVEL BY LAND, SEA, OR AIR. . . . YOU ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO USE THE TRAVEL WARRANT AND NOT TRAVEL BY CAR.

WHAT TO BRING

COMFORTABLE CLOTHING AND TOILET ARTICLES FOR THREE DAYS WHICH CAN BE CONTAINED IN A TRAVEL BAG NO LONGER THAN 9" X 13" X 24" AND ALL OF THE FOLLOWING THAT APPLY TO YOU: BIRTH CERTIFICATE, SOCIAL SECURITY CARD, DRIVER'S LICENSE, LAST SCHOOL RECORD, DOCTOR'S STATEMENT AND HOSPITAL RECORDS IF YOU HAVE A HISTORY OF PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISORDER, EYEGASSES OR CONTACT LENSES, PRESCRIPTION DRUGS YOU TAKE, RECORDS OF COURT DECISIONS THAT AFFECT YOUR STATUS, PROOF OF MARITAL STATUS IF OTHER THAN SINGLE, CHILDREN'S BIRTH CERTIFICATES, PRIOR MILITARY SERVICE RECORD (DD FORM 124). DO NOT BRING FAMILY, FRIENDS, PETS, WEAPONS/KNIVES, NONPRESCRIPTION DRUGS, LARGE SUMS OF MONEY OR EXPENSIVE JEWELRY.

ATTENTION ALIENS

IF YOU ARE AN ALIEN AND HAVE LIVED IN THE UNITED STATES FOR LESS THAN ONE YEAR, THIS IS YOUR ORDER TO FURNISH PROOF OF YOUR STATUS. SEND THE PROOF TO THE AREA OFFICE SHOWN ON THIS ORDER WITHIN TEN DAYS FROM THE DATE THE ORDER WAS ISSUED AND DO NOT GO TO THE MEPS. IF YOU HAVE LIVED IN THE UNITED STATES OVER ONE YEAR, DISREGARD THIS PARAGRAPH.

POSTPONEMENT AND RECLASSIFICATION INFORMATION

YOU MAY FILE A CLAIM FOR POSTPONEMENT OR RECLASSIFICATION AT ANY TIME PRIOR TO THE DATE YOU ARE SCHEDULED TO REPORT FOR INDUCTION. INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM ANY SELECTIVE SERVICE AREA OFFICE, OR THROUGH INFORMATION BOOKLETS FURNISHED FOR REGISTRANTS AT ALL U.S. POST OFFICES, CONSULATES AND EMBASSIES. DO NOT REPORT TO THE MEPS AFTER YOU HAVE FILLED A CLAIM IN WRITING WITH YOUR AREA OFFICE. YOU WILL BE ADVISED BY THE AREA OFFICE OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU NEED TO PROVIDE IN SUPPORT OF YOUR CLAIM, AND THE PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED FOR SUBMITTING DOCUMENTATION.



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