



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWSLETTER



Issue 25 May 2002 NEYM, 901 Pleasant St., Worcester MA 01602

Inside This Issue:

- ✓ *Put on Your Own Oxygen Mask First*
- ✓ *Review: Escaping the Family Time Trap*
- ✓ *Review: God In Between*
- ✓ *Young Friends in Monthly Meeting Newsletters*
- ✓ *Quaker Visitors*
- ✓ *Review: George Fox and the Quakers Video*
- ✓ *Review: Nonviolent Soldier of Islam*
- ✓ *Spiritual Possibilities in Teaching*
- ✓ *News from Monthly Meetings*
- ✓ *Parent Groups*
- ✓ *Beyond Schooling*
- ✓ *Stepping Stones*

New England Yearly Meeting Sessions

are coming up August 3-8 at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts. The business meetings of each age (adults to children) are supported by worship and complimented with workshops, talks, singing, dancing, recreation, and fellowship. It is an all-ages experience of living in a Quaker community, which is particularly significant if you attend a small meeting or feel geographically isolated. Children are a focus of staffing and support at Sessions and learn valuable lessons in Quaker process.

Registration forms come with the June edition of the *New England Friend*, including information about financial aid (called "equalization").

Vital Workshops at Sessions

These workshops are meant for YOU! Sign up when you register for Sessions:

Rediscovering the Power of Scripture: The Bible in Quaker Religious Education with Michael Gibson, the Friends General Conference Religious Education Coordinator. Explore strategies for making the Bible come alive for children and adults. First session: the Bible and children. Second session: The Bible and adults and youth.

Instruments of Peace: Teaching the Quaker Peace Testimony to Children with Jean McCandless. This workshop will present the Peace Testimony section of a new 9-month curriculum on Quaker Testimonies for elementary age children.

Quaker materials and curriculum

are available for purchase from:

- ☎ Friends General Conf. Bookstore – 1/800-966-4556
or www.quakerbooks.org. They will special order for you along with what they carry in stock.
- ☎ Quaker Hill Bookstore – 1/800-537-8838
or www.fum.org
- ☎ Pendle Hill Bookstore – 1/800-742-3150
or www.pendlehill.org

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting operates a *lending library*, an excellent source for background books for your curriculum or out-of-print materials. Call them at 215-241-7219. Their catalog is available online at pym.org.

A bibliography of the NEYM browsing library is available by mail for \$7.50 from the Yearly Meeting (address above) or check it out on line at the Yearly Meeting web site, www.NEYM.org.

First Day School and Parenting Resources describes each book in our collection, with a subject index keyed to age groups and an author index. Check for one in your meeting library since they were distributed to each meeting in August, 1999. The collection is displayed at yearly meeting sessions, and at quarterly or monthly meetings that request a visit from the Christian Education Committee and/or Chris Jorgenson, the Youth and Education Secretary, at 617-625-4494.

Take opportunities to talk with others who are working with religious education in their meetings.

The Christian Education Committee of New England Yearly Meeting focuses its work on providing materials and support for First Day School and other religious education programs within monthly meetings.

They can help you organize a sharing session in your quarterly meeting, for instance – a chance to look at new curriculum materials, talk about joys and problems, gather ideas, refresh your interest and enthusiasm.

By the way, we really mean this, yet we didn't have any inquiries this year. Why not contact Chris (617-625-4494) or the committee (Gail @ 617-492-5035) and get something started in your quarter?

For the next Newsletter, please contribute anti-racism and/or peace studies ideas, curriculum, or other resources. Contact Chris or Gail, phone numbers above.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ **Put On Your Own Oxygen Mask First** ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

by Jennifer Roy, Monadnock Meeting, NEYM C.E. Committee member

At Yearly Meeting Sessions last August, nine workshop participants and myself looked at what it means to take care of our own needs, and why that is vital to our work as parents. As I look ahead to another Yearly Meeting, this concept is still part of the heart and soul of my work as a parent educator.

As parents, many of us tend to be like pitchers of water with many cups into which we pour our energies, cups with names like “children”, “partner”, “work”, “Meeting”, “volunteer positions”, and on and on and on. What we often forget to do, however, is to refill that pitcher so that there is enough water to go around. Let’s be honest, is there ever much left to pour into the cup marked “me”? Some of us haven’t seen that cup in so long we forget it exists!

We all have our excuses for why we don’t refill that pitcher by doing something for ourselves. Some excuses seem obvious: I’m too busy . . . Who will do this work if I don’t? . . . I don’t need to do anything for myself . . . add your own here! Some are a little less obvious, but may ring true: I’m comfortable with the way things are . . . I’m afraid of what might happen if I try to take care of my needs . . . I want/need to be the martyr . . . I don’t want to appear selfish.

While we have our favorite reasons, most of us would actually like to change the fact that our lives are whipping along like butterflies in a hurricane. So why don’t we? How many of us have started a new exercise plan, or made a promise to go out for tea with a friend once a month, yet the idea ends up getting pushed aside before the season changes? The problem is the tapes in our heads from when we were growing up that are influencing how we act today.

Even when we want to do things differently than our parents did, we are fighting very powerful forces that are telling us to do them exactly as our parents did. It is one of the reasons that issues like child abuse and alcoholism flow like water through generations of a family. Look at your parents and see what messages they were giving you while you were young as to how (or how not) to take care of your needs. Was your mother the martyr who never complained (much) no matter what was asked of her? Did your father work six days a week and make sure that you knew he was doing it for you?

Because of our parents, among other influences, we have these thoughts in our crazy little heads, like “I don’t have time to exercise.” These thoughts are based on standards that we hold for ourselves as parents, which are often unrealistic, such as “I need to finish all of these things on my to-do list.” Sound familiar? These standards are based on beliefs we have about ourselves, such as “I’ll be judged by what I get done, so if I don’t get it all done people will think I’m lazy.”

Ironically, by believing those sometimes negative things, I can also hold onto other ideas: that if I get a lot done, I must be an important person and I must be in control of my life. I can hear you laughing at that one, and when I say it out loud I see it for what it really is—a poor way of measuring my worth.

By looking at the reasons behind the things we do, we can start out on the journey of making positive, lasting changes in our lives. These changes will affect the lives of everyone around us, especially our children, as they grow up with a healthier role model for how to meet their own needs.

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A Practical Guide for Over-Busy Families

by Barbara DeGrote-Sorensen and David Allen Sorensen

Book Review by Jennifer Hogue, Cambridge Meeting, NEYM C.E. Committee member

The authors of this book are parents of three who seem very spiritually grounded and have written other books on living simply. In about one hundred easy-to-read pages, they ask parents to examine their priorities and decide what they really want for their families. They identify three “time burglars” that rob us of family time: household chores, habitual TV watching, and over-scheduling. They help us to examine and challenge some of the reasons that we are so busy, most notably, why we spend so much of our time at work. If we choose to reorganize our lives to

include greater family connectedness, they give us some ideas about how to begin. They have developed a process for creating a “family covenant” and remind us how to reclaim rituals and make memories to strengthen family connections.

This book certainly spoke to my condition. Some of the ideas were quick and easy to implement. Though it is a bigger project, I hope to create a family covenant soon. It seems like something that could grow with our family and help us articulate what is really important to us.



God In Between

by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso.

Illustrated by Sally Sweetland.

Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998. \$16.95

Book Review by Donn Weinholtz, Hartford Meeting,

NEYM C.E. Committee member

"If you wanted to find God, where would you look?"

So reads the inside jacket cover of this finely illustrated parable of a village people cut off from the outside world by the absence of roads and from each other by the lack of windows in their homes. Frustrated at their isolation and not knowing what to do about it, the people decide that God might solve their problems; but they are unsure if God exists and where God might be found. In desperation, they turn to the only two people from the village who have windows in their houses, thinking these two have the best opportunity of finding God for them.

The two seekers set off in different directions and search far and wide among the world's natural wonders, only to come up short in their quests. However, when they ultimately come upon each other, they stumble upon the realization that God is to be found in their relationship. As they later tell the people of the village, God is: "In the between. In between us." (A secret that yields not only satisfying companionship, but also a road between the two seekers' houses along with lots of new windows for each home!)

I was given this book to review by an adult colleague who found it curiously unsatisfying in comparison to Sandy Eisenberg Sasso's other award winning works, which include *God's Paintbrush*. Although I very much like the idea of God existing in relationships, I too found the book less compelling than I had hoped; but I wasn't confident as to why. Was it the lukewarm introduction when I received it? Was it that I couldn't swallow the idea of houses without windows? Was I disappointed with the message that nature's grandeur did not also reveal God? Given these uncertainties, I chose to get the reactions of my First Day School class made up of 1st through 3rd graders.

Well, one 1st grader was most enthralled by the fact the book illustrator named "Sally Sweetland." Another seemed to greatly enjoy telling us about the time that she got seasick, in response to the page describing a stormy sea. A 3rd grader, who remembered having seen the book before and recalled the two people leaving to try to find God, declared that the meaning of book is that "God is everywhere!" This reaction prompted a discussion about the fact that God is indeed everywhere, but that we might not enjoy God's presence if we could never share it with anyone; whereupon the mother of one of the 1st graders wished out loud that we could share the book with her high school age daughter who reluctantly came to Meeting that day.

Finally, I asked, "What is the best book about God that you have ever encountered?" The children all pointed to *God In Between*. God only knows if they were correct.



Young Friends in Your Monthly Meeting Newsletter

Don't forget to keep your monthly meeting informed about what's happening with the children. Most meetings include reports from the coordinator or religious education committee.

Some meetings publish the notes from the Junior Meeting for Business.

Some have biographies or interviews with people in meeting, including children.

Children write for their newsletter, especially reports back from camp or yearly meeting activity.

Portland Meeting has a Youth Religious Education page for posting First Day School Activities. It includes a letter to young Friends written by Beth Bussiere-Nichols. Her writing might be a children's sermon in another context, as she looks for spiritual meaning in experiences common to her and the children. She has gotten comments from adults that they enjoy reading it, as well. Here is her column from April of 2001:

Dear Young Friends,

Every year as the world changes color I remember a conversation between two friends of mine. A small group from Portland Friends Meeting were gathered to share when we felt closest to God. Tracy Booth shared about vivid images that had come to her in prayer. Ruth Bowman said that she never had experiences like that. So where, we asked, do you meet the Divine? Ruth reflected, "I suppose as an artist I often connect to God through color." Tracy was amazed and exclaimed, "I've never seen a color and recognized it as a message from God! That is so fantastic, but that has never happened to me!" Ruth was quiet for a moment, looking puzzled. I wondered what she would say. Finally, she gazed sadly at Tracy, and asked, "Not even yellow?"

It is so important to share how we each meet God. That gives us glimpses of the many faces of the Divine, like the many facets of a crystal. It also helps us pay attention. This time of year, I am grateful to my friend Ruth for helping me listen when God speaks to me in yellow. What color is God using to speak to you?

Yours in De-Light, Beth



Quaker Visitors

by Frank Gatti, Mt. Toby Meeting

This fall Mt. Toby meeting engaged in a search for direction in our First Day school. One of our conclusions was that continuity of teachers was important. How could our teachers commit themselves each week for six to twelve months and still be able to worship and nurture their own spiritual life? A partial solution was to establish a monthly children's meeting that was organized by a different group of adults, allowing our teachers at least once a month attendance at meeting for worship.

What we created was a monthly programmed meeting. It occurs on the first first day of the month at the same time as regular meeting for worship. This alternative meeting involves children from three to twelve, and adults who have chosen to worship with them. At one month's meeting, our third, there were 22 children, 23 adult attenders, and four adults involved in the program service.

The centerpiece of these meetings has been a visitation of Quakers from history. We are loosely following the curriculum by Janet Schroeder, "As it Happened, Quaker Visitors", obtained through the FGC bookstore. To date we have had visitations, in costumes, of George Fox, Margaret Fell, and William Penn. John Woolman, Elizabeth Fry, and Lucretia Mott are scheduled to complete this year's visits. These visits initiate the curriculum for the month. The topic for this year has been Quakers and their messages. In classrooms the rest of the month are discussions and lessons suggested by the Quaker visitor.

Singing has also become much more a part of children's worship. Each first day there is an intergenerational fifteen minute singing from the Quaker hymnal, before the beginning of meeting for worship and the start of First Day School. In the programmed children's meeting there is additional singing. Through repetition children are becoming familiar with favorites: "This Little Light of Mine", "The Trees of the Field", and the closing song, "As We Leave This Friendly Place". We introduced "When I Needed a Neighbor" (as representative of Margaret Fell's life and ministry), "The George Fox Song", and "Wear it as Long as You Can" (in honor of William Penn) around the visits of these historical Quakers. The singing and the interspersed comments about Quaker ways of worshiping have given the children Quaker words and ideas. We continue to labor as to how to effectively structure the other parts of the full hour of programmed children's worship.

To date, the visits from historical Quakers has been exciting. The children have entered into the fantasy. There is a sense of awe in the presence of these ancestors. There have been interesting questions asked of our historical visitors. Drama seems a particularly good way of engaging children in religious learning. We would like to include some form of drama in the children's experience next year when we begin a curriculum on the life and teachings of Jesus.

Overheard, between two pre-school girls, "Did you know Margaret Fell visited us last week?" "Yes, and she looked just like Emily's mother."



George Fox and the Quakers

A 45 video by Gateways Films, Vision Video
available at www.visionvideo.com

*Video Review by Gail Thomas, Cambridge Meeting,
NEYM C.E. Committee clerk*

In the manner of Ken Burns, this documentary video uses reenactments, historical photos, interviews with contemporary scholars and Quakers, and beautiful vistas of West Country; meetings can use it to spark lively conversation.

The fierce character of the man representing George Fox takes getting used to, but I imagine the actual Fox was disturbing also. All his words are actual quotes from the Journals, and the film covers a lot of ground. We meet the young George, struggling with others of his time to find true Spirit in a moribund church, see the trials of prison in his day, and follow his travels in England and America. There are also interesting insights into the politics of the time and the added challenges for women.

The weakest segments for me were the brief glimpses of Quakers today. AFSC is toned down to care packages. Quaker family life seems reduced to a negative struggle with violent videos. An intergenerational group sings the George Fox song off-key (sorry to be petty, but it annoyed me). Tolerance seems to be our strongest theological characteristic. There is a mention of the peace barricade in Philadelphia harbor during the Vietnam War, but I only understood what the young man was speaking about on my second viewing.

Still, the video keeps your interest and presents its information in a lively way. There will be time left over to discuss questions and disagreements. And all will end up with a sense of George Fox' theological development rooted in historical context.

Friends Camp at China Maine has four sessions each summer dedicated to giving campers a community experience based on Friends' principles of simplicity and respect for the individual.

Registration forms come out in the Winter issue of the *New England Friend*. As of May 16, only the first session (June 23-July 6, ages 7-12) still had openings. Call Susan Morris at 207-923-3975.



Nonviolent Soldier of Islam:

Badshah Khan, A Man to Match His Mountains

by Eknath Easwaran, 1984, 1999: Nilgiri Press

Book Review by Caroline Besse Webster, South Berkshire Meeting, NEYM C.E. Committee member

Few are aware of the nonviolent tradition of Islam, or its greatest modern exemplar, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a pacifist Muslim who raised an army of one hundred thousand nonviolent soldiers out of one of the world's most violent peoples, Afghanistan mountain tribes called Pathans. He led the Pathans of India and Pakistan in a nonviolent resistance to British rule.

His people called him "Badshah" Khan, "Badshah" meaning King. Khan was born in 1890 in a village twenty miles north of Peshawar, on the frontier border between Afghanistan and the British ruled India and Pakistan. His greatest battle was with his own Pathans. Traveling the land, this six foot three giant of a man recruited them from farms and villages. They were trained and uniformed but carried only a stick for walking. Invoking the name of Allah, they vowed to rescue the honor of their nation. They called themselves the Servants of God.

Badshah Khan became a disciple of Gandhi. His mentor instructed him: "Pathans know how to fight nonviolently. Now you must teach them how to live nonviolently." Said Khan, "There is nothing surprising in a Muslim or a Pathan like me subscribing to a creed of nonviolence. It is not a new creed. It was followed fourteen hundred years ago by the Prophet all the time he was in Mecca."

The character of Khan, his love and sacrifice for his people moves the heart and soul. During the first three decades of Pakistan's existence, he spent fifteen years in prison and seven years in exile. Despite a total of thirty years in jail, he lived to be ninety eight years of age. He never carried a weapon.

Indians won their independence from the greatest empire in world history, without weapons. The credit went to "the two Gandhis." Although it brought independence, nonviolence did not bring peace.

The book is full of vivid personal descriptions of Khan and his beloved Pathans, (Pushtuns as they call themselves.) A large number of photographs bring Khan's people and his family closer to the reader and quotations from the teachings of this holy man provide enlightenment on the nonviolent nature of Islam. Khan's contribution to the legacy of nonviolence has special significance today, when so many countries of the Islamic world are torn by violence.



Spiritual Possibilities in Teaching

*by Jill Horton-Lyons, Mt. Toby Meeting,
from the Mt. Toby newsletter of June 2001*

I began teaching in First Day School a little bit several years ago. I did it from a sense of obligation – someone on the committee was having trouble covering classes, and I wanted to do my share. It also seemed that parents of FDS were somehow being left with all of the FDS responsibilities, which didn't seem fair.

After my first couple of sessions teaching, I didn't want to do it again. I somehow didn't click with the kids, I wasn't able to share with any sort of depth – it was very frustrating. This was particularly so because I was having wonderful, spiritually rich conversations with kids the same age as Meeting kids over animals at the farm. I read Robert Coles' *Spiritual Lives of Children* – the kids he spoke with were certainly centered and shared from very deep places. What was so hard about Mt. Toby?

I think I kept teaching some because I was bothered and intrigued – my FDS experiences got a little better, and the continuing shallowness didn't make much sense.

Then this year a window seemed to open. I had a chance to teach for six weeks in a row – a whole unit by myself. Then somehow the kids and I became people to each other, and we were having real conversations about God, about death, about prayer. I realized that being in First Day School had become for me a kind of worship.

I've been thinking how deepening it might be if a very small group of Friends (one or two adults for each of the three classes) spent a whole year with the kids. Learning about faith, worship, Friends, testimonies, justice and peace. Worshipping with the kids, week after week (just like the grownups do with each other). I think we need the security and continuity built by ongoing relationships, if we're going to be able to share with the Meeting's kids much about our faith.

For the Friends who might be led to do this work, I think many gifts are possible. I can see these teachers in a mid-week meeting for worship (joined by other Friends who are called to participate). I can see teachers together, holding in the Light kids who are struggling. I can see the eldering energy from the FDS Committee which could hold and support the teachers.

This could be another way for our Meeting to grow and deepen.

YF Summer Seminar at William Penn House

June 14-17, 2002 for High School age Young Friends

Topic: What does it mean to be a Quaker?

Only \$50, includes lodging and meals.

More info at www.quaker.org/penn-house/ys.htm

October 2000 – Acadia Meeting Newsletter

The Religious Education Committee explained the simple format of First Day School:

- Form a circle around a candle to be lit by a participant (or a pretend candle, if need be).
- Read a query.
- Share a story or conversation.
- Extinguish the candle.
- Hands-on activity.

Other notes: The children really enjoy acting out parts of stories. A talking stick or rock passed around helps focus attention on the child who is speaking during discussion. Art materials and books are available along with the curriculum. Leaders are asked to record what was done in the notebook.

September 2001 Fresh Pond Meeting Newsletter

. . . The expectation for members and regular attenders, with or without children, is that all adults will teach approximately two months of First Day School per year. Older children are encouraged to teach as well, usually with an adult co-teacher. We recognize that this is not possible for all members and attenders, and that some choose to teach more than this. The FDS Committee emphatically recognizes that all of us contribute to the life of the meeting in many ways, and that for various reasons some members/attenders are not called to serve in this way.

The topics for this year, which change monthly, include: Prayer and Meditation; Quakerism; Honesty/Speaking Truth to Power; Thankfulness and Simplicity; Acts of Faith; That of God in Everyone; Respecting Creation; Rebirth; Conflict Resolution.

October 2001 Acadia Meeting

A report from Spiritual Education was given, explaining the expansion of the FDS program from one Sunday per month to more, with two classes. Ellen Finn and Russell Snyder have offered to lead the children in the cultures of song and dance on the 3rd Sundays. A packet will be set up for use by any Meeting member who can offer to lead children on the 4th and 5th Sunday.

The meeting advised that the children be encouraged to gather in the middle of the circle at the end of meeting and be given the opportunity to share their experiences soon after they rejoin the Meeting, even if this means an interruption in the circle of introductions and afterthoughts.

October 2001 Cobscook Meeting Newsletter

As we attempt to focus on the positive aspects of our own small world, plans have evolved for this year's First Day School. We will meet monthly in the intergenerational format of last year with activities beginning at 9:30 am on

the 4th Sunday of each month. A discussion of how to communicate Quaker history developed into a plan to discuss various Quaker leaders and their time and place in history. We will begin with our own Ralph Cook who served as an inspiration and leader in his own time. The group will discuss how Ralph acted upon his beliefs as well as the period of history in which he lived. All are welcome to join the discussion and sharing which will begin at 9:30 am, followed by Meeting for Worship from 10:30 to 11:00, and then potluck.

October 2001 Beacon Hill Meeting Newsletter

Along with notes about classes, there is a note about the behavior guidelines developed by two of the children's classes at their meeting for business. It includes:

Things NOT to do during Fellowship:

1. Climbing on the trees, railings, or fences in the courtyard are not safe.
2. The alley off the courtyard is off limits.
3. The Meetinghouse is not the place for running or climbing.
4. Don't exclude others or prevent people from entering any room.
5. It is not safe to stand on the back of the couch.
6. Pillows stay on the couch or on the floor.
7. Don't pile up the pillows on other people – it is not safe.
8. Listen to "no" or "stop" when someone asks you to. Feel free to discuss a request when you are spoken to.

Things to DO during Fellowship:

1. Making forts with the pillows is okay when the fort doesn't block others from getting through. Anyone is allowed in.
2. People can run around in the courtyard.
3. Board games, cards, and books are good activities during Fellowship. Some games can be played calmly in the Meeting Room after rise of Meeting.
4. Dancing in the couch room is a good way to be active during Fellowship. Keep the music low and have an adult present.
5. Visit with a grown-up you haven't seen in a while.

November 2001 Westport Meeting Newsletter

Recently our Junior and Senior High School classes visited the Cambodian young people and gave them the money earned from the spaghetti supper our young people held in the spring. The Cambodian community in Fall River has acquired a house which they are renovating for their temple. The donation will be used toward this effort. The visit was a great chance for both groups to become acquainted.

Nov/December 2001 So Starksboro Meeting Newsletter

Christmas Cookie Baskets. The FDS community will prepare Christmas cards and Christmas cookie baskets for meals-on-wheels folks in Starksboro on Sunday December 9 and Sunday December 16. This is the same group of 10 people for whom we had so much fun preparing Easter Baskets and cards last spring. Ellen will bring names and a short description of each person to the Dec 9 FDS meeting to make cards. Volunteers are needed to make cookies, deliver cards and baskets, donate Christmas ribbons and baskets.

Growing in the Light. Alison and Lisa will offer a three-month course on "paths into the silence" for the FDS community. Various forms of meditation will be studied. First class is Sunday, January 6.

November 2001 Providence Meeting Newsletter

The First Day School is off to an enthusiastic start this year, with strong attendance in each of the three classes. The youngest group includes grades pre-k through 2nd grade with five to ten children. Their curriculum this year focuses on the theme "being a Friend". The activities integrate music, stories, crafts and simple Bible verses to help the children develop an awareness of self, as well as their relationship with family, friends, community, and world in which they live.

Grades 3-5, with six to ten children in attendance, focuses on time-honored virtues, through short stories, fables, legends, etc. The readings are followed by activities that inspire discussion.

The oldest group, 6th to 8th grade, with six to twelve students, are revisiting the theme of Quaker faith and practice, with particular emphasis on consensus and ways of expressing feelings.

In addition, the groups come together for several activities throughout the year. The First Day School picnic in September was fun, and they joined together again in October to plant bulbs at the North Burial Grounds. In November, the classes will begin preparation for the Meeting Christmas program.

November 2001 Mt. Toby Meeting Newsletter

The preschool class continues to practice centering and listening. They have been learning about honesty and integrity, and also learning basic Quaker vocabulary through the Obadiah stories. They have learned the first lines of "Teach Me to Stop and Listen".

The middle two classes have been talking about, and practicing, centering in their classes, as well as talking about service work and about peace. Their service project this year is assembling backpacks for local kids with emergency foster-care placements. We've had good discussions about the large number of needs in the world – and how difficult it can be to make choices about where to help. While we talk, we've worked to make things to sell at the craft fair to raise money for the service project, and we have bloc-printed nightshirts for the backpacks.

October/November 2001 Wellesley Meeting Newsletter

The introductory potluck held on September 16 for families involved in the First Day School was well attended. Families appreciated the opportunity to connect with each other, especially after the events of September 11.

The Religious Education Committee is in the process of formalizing the approach to religious education. They are planning to meet with Ministry and Counsel to discuss a mandate for the program. In discussions with parents they have discovered very diverse views. Parents need a guiding light.

The Kindergarten group has been talking about family. They have made a big family tree for our meeting community. They will be presenting it to the meeting on Sunday, October 14, and asking everyone to sign a leaf.

The Middle School group will have a cooking party at the meetinghouse on Saturday evening November 3 from 5 to 7 pm. On Sunday, after meeting, the group will sell their baked goods and hot dogs. The money raised will go to the AFSC No More Victims campaign, for Afghan refugees.

First Day School classes will join together to create Thanksgiving baskets for those in need. The baskets will be assembled on November 18.

We will celebrate Thanksgiving with a Family Meeting for Worship on Sunday, November 25. We encourage families to bring pictures and items representing things and people for whom they are grateful. Place items on the blanket in the center of the worship area at the beginning of Meeting.

October 2001, Hanover Meeting Newsletter

As a service to our Meeting, Young Friends will come to your house to help with fall chores. Sundays after meeting for worship through November, you are invited to schedule a young friend or a small group of young friends to help do fall chores, such as raking or stacking wood. Call Nick Corindia (YF presiding clerk) to arrange a date.

December 2001 Smith Neck Meeting Newsletter

Young Friends Schedule:

December 2, 6:30-8:00pm, Middle School Youth only – meet at SNFM for an evening of fun and challenges. Please bring your friends – the more the merrier!

December 9, 6:30-9:30 am, Youth Pancake Breakfast. Note the special times for youth servers. This is a fundraiser for the youth that allows you to serve the adults of the meeting and members of the community. We need your help – it's early, but drag yourself out of bed for a fun morning of service.

December 9, 6:30-8:00 pm – White Elephant Christmas party for middle school and high school students. Each person is to bring a "white elephant" gift. It's a joke gift – put some thought into it, very little money if any, keep it a secret, and rated PG. We'll play some great games. Come laugh and snack.

December 2001 Providence Meeting Newsletter

“Enough is a feast/ Enough is a feast/ Take what you need/ Save some for the least”

These are the words of the song that was the Christmas gift the beggar man had to offer for the king and queen of the Kingdom of Gimmie Gimmie. The simple tune kept returning to the mind of the king, as well as all who attended the Christmas play presented by the First Day School December 15 at Providence Meeting. Also worth a mention was the beggar woman’s gift of the magic golden walnut. Before the audience could blink an eye, many magic golden walnuts actualized and were being passed to everyone. Directing this production was singer-songwriter-storyteller Bill Harley, who wrote the play in collaboration with the children. (The article details some of this collaboration, along with the names of the participants).

November 2001 New Haven Meeting Newsletter

Meeting for business: Representatives from Junior Business Meeting presented their plans for projects during the holiday period. The young groups of children will be making greeting cards. The older group will be baking cookies. On Dec. 3, the children will sing carols at a local soup kitchen. There will be a mitten tree in the lobby to collect donations of mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves for distribution to local homeless shelters. Making leather moccasins will be another project.

November 2001 Concord Meeting Newsletter

Middle Group Thanks Bible Verse Contributors

Thanks to those people who have shared their favorite Bible verses with the 4th-6th grade group. We are talking about these verses and memorizing some. All children are trying to memorize the 23rd Psalm.

Contributors: 1 Cor 12:12-20 – Kathie Urie; 1Cor 13 – Lois Booth; Micah 6:8 – Graham Chynoweth; Luke 10:25 – Ben Yager; Isaiah 55:12 – Ruth Heath; Exodus 20:1-17 – Richard Kleinschmidt.

The children are making bookmarks with these verses. We will be continuing this theme of Favorite Verses throughout the year. So, if you have one that is not yet listed, please submit it.

Overnight Youth Retreat

Teens in the junior-senior high group at Meeting are invited to Julia Freeman-Woolpert’s house on Dec 15 for a youth retreat. The focus is on having fun together. The fun starts at 3pm and, among other things, everyone will be cooking dinner together – please bring something for the meal. If you’re interested in coming, call Julia.

Oct/November 2001 Vassalboro Meeting Newsletter

Our Meeting currently has a group of relatively young children who are attending quite regularly. FDS has been officially offered the 4th Sunday of each month, and Erica Shedd has recently volunteered to coordinate a program the second Sunday, through the end of the year. The

Committee (Holly Weidner, Ron Desrosiers, and Susan Davies) would very much like to offer a program every week and would ask all members and attenders to thoughtfully consider whether they feel called to help support the added commitment that this would represent.

FDS will continue with the theme of “Thankfulness and Prayer” through the end of the year. This theme is being explored through stories, simple plays, artwork, and song. Erica Shedd has offered to share her interest in drama and performing arts with the youngers by helping engage them in expressing the theme in creative ways. A well-chosen, over-arching theme may have the power to provide continuity and deepening meaning for children through a period of weeks or months in FDS. With the New Year, we will ask the children to explore their experience of conflict and listen to their ideas about how to make peace happen. We would also like to develop a theme around expressing our joy in the extravagant love of God – in what ways can the children help us to more fully express our praise and thanksgiving and awe?

We will be asking the children to help each week with passing out name tags. To assist the pre-readers, we will be capturing you on film so the kids can paste your photo on the back of your name tag! Be ready with a smile!

December 2001 Hanover Meeting Newsletter

The First Day School schedule revolves around a storyteller for each month. The First Day School Committee finds storytellers as well as teachers. The November committee meeting related finding story tellers for the creation story, Esther, Rachel, Noah, and Cain and Abel. The adult class covers the Bible stories a month ahead of the children’s story, which means all ages in the Meeting share attention to these stories.

The minutes of the Young Friends Business Meeting (teens) are put into the bulletin every month. They choose their topics for study, (ie conscientious objection in January), and discern about their schedule, service projects, money to be distributed, and other activities.

December 2001 Portland Meeting Newsletter

From Youth Religious Education Comm’s Annual Report: All three YRE classes have chosen as a common theme the life of Jesus. They meet every second and fourth Sunday. . . The early elementary class are talking about daily life during Jesus’ time using a sand tray full of flat roof homes and desert landscape. . . The elementary class began its own study of New Testament stories of Jesus this fall, becoming familiar with the Bible with a new set of youth Bibles. . . The teen class are studying the life and times of Jesus using a more detailed Bible version. . .

YREC continued working with Ministry and Council on a series of intergenerational worship sharing sessions. In March the topic was “How do I center down for meeting for worship?” and in April participants considered “How do people in Meeting bring me closer to God?”

Beth Bussiere-Nichols has served as the YRE Coordinator this year with assistance from Brad. In this position, she writes monthly articles for the Meeting newsletter, keeps in contact with families about different programs and events in Meeting, and makes sure classes run smoothly. The coordinators have researched and purchased curriculum materials for classes and kept supplies stocked for the nursery and first day activities. They have also coordinated annual events, such as the end of the year celebration in June, the Advent Garden in December, and monthly work at the Wayside Soup Kitchen.

The YREC hopes to support several service projects each year. Last year youth of the meeting raised funds for the Heifer Project by preparing the food for and collecting donations at an Easter breakfast, as well as selling crafts. Meeting youth collected money for UNICEF at Halloween, and will help assemble kits to donate to children in need in other areas of the world through the AFSC.

December 2001 Fresh Pond Newsletter

At the service project during FDS on December 2, the meeting's children put together and personalized 16 kits for refugee children fleeing from war in Angola. Each of these included a small stuffed toy, a small ball, a box of crayons, a pen and a small pad of paper, a bar of bath soap and a washcloth, along with a personal note. In addition to the kits, the meeting contributed \$103 towards funds to help families in war areas. The kits and money will be sent to the American Friends Service Committee.

Acadia Meeting Peace Award

In the spring of 2001, Acadia Meeting distributed money to each of its committees, to be used for a special project that that committee deemed appropriate. The Spiritual Education Committee decided to start an annual Peace Award. They invited the senior class of a local high school to submit nominations of a graduating senior who by words and actions has created an accepting and community-affirming atmosphere. From the nominated students, a committee of meeting and school representatives chose the person to get this unrestricted award of \$200.00, given out at an awards ceremony at the school. The Meeting hopes that this affirmation of peacemaking behavior will encourage others. They are enthused about making it an annual practice. For more information about this project, call Mary Booher at 207-288-4941.

Cambridge Comprehensive Curriculum

Cambridge Friends Meeting is in the second year of a three year process of developing a detailed curriculum for children's classes in First Day School, including Quakerism, Bible, and Testimonies. They have been working with a professional curriculum writer, who works with teachers and incorporates feedback as they go along. It is hoped to publish this curriculum as a help to other meetings.

Parents Groups

are a way to provide support for the difficult job of Quaker parenting.

Parents of preschoolers at Friends Meeting at Cambridge are getting organized. Communicating through an e-mail list, Quaker_moms@yahoo.com, they have organized monthly family potlucks, adult conversations over tea, and are tentatively planning a getaway at a retreat center. Quaker moms (and dads) hope to make spiritual as well as social connections as the group develops.

If your meeting has started something, please let us know how it's going and advice you might have – Chris @ 617-625-4494



Beyond Schooling

As I look over the religious education notices in various meeting's bulletins, I noticed that service projects play an important part in the First Day School experience. This points to the need to look at curriculum in a wide view, one that takes into account how children and adults learn in ways that aren't schooling.

In *Fashion Me a People; Curriculum in the Church*, Maria Harris points out the five traditional functions of the Church, which are also modes for the church to educate:

- to koinonia (community and communion) by engaging in the forms of community and life in common;
- to leiturgia (worship and prayer) by engaging in the forms of prayer and worship and spirituality;
- to kerygma (proclaiming the word of God) by attention to and practicing and incarnating the kerygma, "Jesus is risen," in the speech of our own lives, especially the speech of advocacy and truth-telling;
- to dakonia (service and outreach) by attention to our own service and reaching out to others, personally and communally, locally and globally;
- to didache (teaching and learning) by attention to the most appropriate forms of teaching and leaning (including schooling) in our own communities.

It might be interesting to think about what your meeting does together in these various modes.

What is the substance of your meeting's action in teaching? in worship? in community-building? in advocacy? in word/ prophetic speech? in outreach?

What resources (time/money/attention) are devoted to each? Who participates in each?

How effective are these actions in drawing children and adults into the community and into deepening faith?

Where is there new life beginning in the curriculum as a whole? If you were to choose one activity to enliven or enrich your curriculum, what would it be?

