



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWSLETTER



Issue #28, February 2004 NEYM, 901 Pleasant St., Worcester MA 01602

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This newsletter works best when it's a vehicle for sharing among our readers. Please consider sending in something. Email works fine: send to youthsec@neym.org or use the address in the title block.

Who should get this Newsletter?

The aim of this newsletter is to help those who are in a teaching role as parents or first day school teachers. We also try to include some adult education resources in every issue. Each meeting gets a copy of every issue, sent to either the clerk or the designated religious education contact. Many other people also receive this directly because they have signed up.

Please help us keep our mailing list current by sending (address above) names and addresses of people active in your meeting's religious education program.

Join the CE Committee

Are you interested in what's happening in other First Day School and adult education programs?

Do you have ideas for projects or resources for the Yearly Meetings First Day Schools?

Would you like to review books for our newsletter, seek out new curriculum or suggest workshops for Yearly Meeting?

Come join us on the Christian Education Committee!
Call the clerk, Gail Thomas, at 617-492-5035 or thomasgail@comcast.net

MAY 1 Is The Date!

For a curriculum workshop for New England Yearly Meeting folk working in religious education in their meeting. See inside for more information.

Quaker materials and curriculum

are available for purchase from:

- ☎ Friends General Conf. Bookstore – 1/800-966-4556
or www.quakerbooks.org
- ☎ 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 or email at Library@pym.org

- ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
- ✓ *Order This Engaging New Curriculum* ✓
God Has No Edges;
Teaching Quaker Children about God
An eight-week curriculum for K-2 by
Jean McCandless and the Burlington VT MM
Children's Religious Education Committee

From the Introduction:

“Many children who come to Quaker First Day School have already learned something about God from their families. Our teaching task is to build on those ideas and beliefs to create a shared understanding of God. This understanding is comprised of three basic ideas: God exists; God is huge and wonderful; God loves them always because they are so special and have some of God inside them.

In teaching these basic principles, it is important to use an active, multi-sensory approach that fits with the learning styles of 5-7 year olds. Visual, tactile, auditory and kinesthetic activities encourage full participation and attention.”

This curriculum delighted the young people of Burlington Monthly Meeting. Each lesson has thorough preparation notes, teaching points and a lesson plan. You will need some outside books and materials.

To order a copy, send a check for \$12.50 (\$10 plus \$2.50 s&h), made out to N.E.Y.M. and notated “CE Publications,” to: N.E.Y.M., attn: Chris Jorgenson, 901 Pleasant Street, Worcester MA 01602.

*Education and Support around parenting and teaching
 Put these on your calendar now!*

Remember that Meeting sponsorship of continuing education of FDS teachers is one way for non-teachers to show support for the FDS program.

☑ February 27-29

The Art and Spirit of Parenting

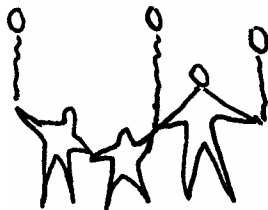
A weekend with Bill Harley and Debbie Block at Woolman Hill, Deerfield MA

“This will be a forum for parents to share our hopes, fears, successes, and failures in a supporting community with others on the parenting road. There will be times of guided activities and discussion, as well as free time to talk and rest. Participants will leave with some new ideas for doing a better job at the toughest of jobs, and a reminder that you’re not the only one out there doing this most rewarding and challenging work. Monthly meetings are strongly encouraged to provide childcare for participants. This program is cosponsored by New England Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel.”

The program cost is \$130. Please ask about scholarships.

For more information
 Call 413-774-3431

Or try
www.woolmanhill.org



☑ April 3

Religious Education Q and A

with the NEYM Christian Education Committee

1:30-2:30 pm at Committee Day at the Hartford CT Meetinghouse

Come meet the Christian Education Committee and share your questions and concerns. The Committee has set aside time at the beginning of the afternoon to meet with anyone in the area (or beyond) who is working in religious education in their meeting. A good time to get acquainted and get advice and encouragement.

☑ May 1

First Day School Curriculum Workshop

Saturday, 8:45am to 4:30pm

Wellesley Meeting House

Sponsored by the NEYM Christian Education Committee

This is the day you have been waiting for! A whole day of sharing and presentations on how to teach Quakerism to our children.

Workshops include:

- ▶ identifying the goals and content of a Quaker Religious Education Program
- ▶ the spiritual and cognitive development of children
- ▶ preparing an annual curriculum plan
- ▶ creating a racial justice curriculum
- ▶ buying and adapting pre-existing lesson plans
- ▶ a curriculum writing lab

There will be plenty of time to share your experiences and challenges and gather support, insight, and inspiration from other Friends.

Chris Jorgenson will bring a wonderful collection of resources and books.

Save the date!

The \$25.00 fee covers lunch and a terrific collection of take home materials.

We hope your Meeting will sponsor your participation.

Watch for the invitation in the mail.

Children Praying; Why and How to Pray With Your Children by Joan Bel Geddes.

Forming spiritual practices that last a lifetime and creating bonds with your children through shared spiritual experience. Have a look at this book!

☑ May 7-9

Speaking up: Enlivening Religious Education Curricula through the Vocal Arts

A weekend with Bobbi Kelly and Marty Smith at Pendle Hill, Wallingford PA

“Are you eager to learn new skills to captivate children’s interest during First Day School or other venues? Here is an opportunity to refine your talents and learn new ones such as storytelling, role playing, and impromptu drama. There will be opportunities throughout the weekend to strengthen the spiritual base of our teaching. Join us for a fun weekend of growing together and sharing ideas, as we gain confidence and enthusiasm for teaching religious curricula to elementary age children.”

The cost is \$240 for double, and \$290 for single accommodation.

You can apply for a matching grant: ie if your Meeting grants you \$100, Pendle Hill will grant you \$100 also.

For more information, call 800-742-3150 or try www.pendlehill.org

And for your children –

Friends Camp, China Maine

“Friends Camp is a small residential Quaker summer camp located on China Lake in South China, Maine, a small town about 75 miles north of Portland.

Under the care of New England Yearly Meeting, the camp gives young people a community experience based on Friends principles of simplicity and respect for the individual. Campers and staff combine their diverse geographic, scholastic, racial and family backgrounds as they play, learn, and worship together.”

Many New England Quaker kids find a lasting tradition in attending Friends Camp.

See the registration form in the latest New England Friend or go to their web site at www.friendscamp.org or call 207-445-2361.

Friends Music Camp, Yellow Springs, Ohio

“A four-week summer program for youth aged 10-18. Friends Music Camp emphasizes musical growth through private lessons and group activities; Quaker values, worship, and group decision by consensus; and caring community.”

Contact them atmusicfmc@yahoo.com or the website at <http://www.quaker.org/friends-music-camp/> or call 937-767-1311. They advise applying before March 15.

☑ July 3-10

FGC Gathering at UMass Amherst
“Simple Lives, Radiant Faith”

This national gathering of Friends General Conference Quakers is on New England turf this time. (Friends General Conference is one of the umbrella organizations to which New England Yearly Meeting belongs.)

All ages of children have programs, there’s a big bookstore of resources, and the program provides lots of opportunities for interaction and stimulation. More information will be coming to your meetings.

☑ August 7-12

New England Yearly Meeting Sessions
at Bryant College, Smithfield RI

Plan now for family time at Yearly Meeting!

All children have programs suited to their age, and adults have business, workshop, small group, and worship opportunities.

Registration information comes in the June New England Friend.

☑ August 19-22

FGC Religious Educators Institute
“Illuminating our Divine Connections”

A weekend at Camp Asbury in Silver Lake, NY, near Rochester NY

Workshops, plenaries, and small groups will give you insights and encouragement for your work in your meeting. More information will be coming to your meetings.

For more information call 215-561-1700 or try www.fgcquaker.org



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. Maybe you will find someone who has already developed a unit that you can use in your meeting, or who has found a way to connect with kids in a way you hadn’t thought of.

Call the clerk, Gail Thomas, at 617-492-5035 or thomasgail@comcast.net



Child safety



By Chris Jorgenson, NEYM Youth and Education Secretary

Several factors have brought the issue of child safety to our Quaker meetings. Scandals in other churches have been in the news. Insurance companies are becoming more involved in setting standards in order to cover liability. We may have never given it much thought and now it seems to be important.

Of course, we Quakers could be priding ourselves on “it could never happen here”. It isn’t something we like to imagine as possible. It is a hard issue to consider, for any person, for any meeting. We quite naturally resist it. After all, with our small and close-knit community, our emphasis on honesty and compassion, the peace testimony . . . don’t these give us a strong foundation for a healthy environment for our children? Yes. But it is not a guarantee. It can happen here. As well, we need to be aware of the issue because of the other environments our children find themselves in. Studies show disturbing statistics – that ten percent of boys and twenty percent of girls have experienced sexual abuse before the age of 18 – and some studies show a higher percent. Compassion for children requires that we take seriously our responsibility to minimize the risk of child abuse in our meetings and in our communities.

What should your meeting be doing?
Since this is a new idea for many of us, educating yourself and your meeting is a place to start.

I am on a small task force that is investigating what other denominations and groups are doing, by way of trainings, guidelines, and procedures, with the goal of developing appropriate guidelines and procedures for our yearly meeting’s youth programs. We are considering how best to disseminate what we are learning and how it can be most helpful for the yearly meeting.

Meanwhile, I have found two publications that seemed helpful, which might get you started:

Nonprofitrisk.org is the web site of the Nonprofit Risk Management Center, which is a nonprofit organization that does not sell insurance or endorse providers. Their web site deals with lots of risk issues that nonprofits face and might be worth browsing. Their publication titled “A Season of Hope: A Risk Management Guide for Youth-Serving Nonprofits” has lots of useful information and it’s presented clearly. You can order it in electronic or print form from their web site.

“Safe Sanctuaries; Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church” by Joy Thornburg Melton is a

resource/ workbook developed by the Methodist Church (available from Amazon.com). Its information is pragmatic and gives step-by-step process suggestions. This book has already been helpful as Cambridge Meeting has begun a process to look for ways to be more pro-active in protecting the youth of the meeting.

Both of these publications suggest that child safety awareness should be a priority for more than just the child care workers in a congregation. In the Quaker tradition of discernment, engaging the hearts and minds of the whole community around a serious issue would deepen the process, allow for more light and grace. In any process, our goal is not to lay blame, but to keep the focus on the children and our adult role as their protectors. Part of the process in Cambridge is also “to educate and empower children and youth to advocate for themselves and to speak up when they see or experience something that feels wrong.”

In Massachusetts, there are laws requiring Criminal Offense Record Information (CORI) checks for volunteers in organizations whose work is primarily to provide programs for children under 18 years old. Many churches have determined that they should do these background checks; Amesbury Meeting was advised that they should do this, and all members and attenders who work or might work with the children agreed that their records could be requested from the state. www.mass.gov/chsb is the web site to check for forms and information.

This may also be an opportunity for working with other faith communities in your area. Find out what other churches are doing, how they are training. You may be able to draw on their experience and find “fellow travelers”. You may call me with questions. I would like to hear what your meeting is doing and what you have found to be helpful.

Last weekend I did a four-hour volunteers training in a Catholic parish. I think they are rising from their crises with a very effective program. At the same time, it was deep-in-the-gut disturbing to hear testimonies from perpetrators and survivors. As a whole, the message was hopeful that awareness can prevent these tragedies. I asked myself if it creates an atmosphere of apprehension and suspicion – and in the end, I think it does not. Soberness about our responsibility is more my sense of it. And it does not drown out the joy. The next day in worship, I found myself cherishing our children all the more – each little wiggle, giggle, and whisper. We have the privilege of being in community with such engaging, lively spirits. We need to protect this great gift from God.



Learning by Doing for Young Children



These activities are taken from

“Learning by Doing; 150 Activities to Enrich Religion Classes for Young Children” by Carole MacClennan, (Twenty-third Publications 1-800-321-0411)

There are 10 themes that are laid out with sections for Discussion, Discovery Centers, Crafts, Movement, Prayer, Music, Books, and a Parent Page. Themes include Feelings, Forgiveness, Sharing, Thanking, etc.

Here’s a couple of ideas from the “Helping” theme which illustrate how to turn discussion into game:

Helpers Do

Materials: Box containing the names (and/or pictures) of helpers, i.e., doctor, bus driver, baker, mom, big brother, etc.

Procedure:

Sit in a circle. Pass cigar box around as you sing the song (tune: “Here we Go Round the Mulberry Bush”):

Helpers, they help me every day, every day, every day;
Helpers, they help me every day;
And here is how a (name helper) helps.

The child who gets the box at the beginning of the last line opens it and removes a name. Read the name into the song and ask, “Who knows how a (blank) helps?” The child who opened the box chooses someone to tell or pantomime the answer. Begin the song again. If the box stops at someone who has already had a turn, pass it on until it reaches someone who has not.

Easter Basket Promises*

Help kids learn the value of giving (meaningful, loving gifts) at a time of getting (those candy eggs).

At Easter, provide each child with a small basket, 4-5 plastic eggs, and an equal number of paper strips, and a pen or marker.

Help the kids to think of good deeds or chores they could do to help someone in their family, then write that on strips of paper. Have them put each strip in an egg and into their basket. When class is over, kids can deliver their Easter basket to a parent or someone else in their family. (It might give them an empty basket for use in the meeting Easter egg hunt?)

* Ideas from Children’s Ministry Magazine, PO Box 481, Loveland CO 80539-0481, page 106, March/April 2003 edition.

Help! Help! Helper!

Materials: “I Need Help” situation cards, i.e., “I lost my lunch money,” “My grocery bag ripped,” “I spilled my milk,” “My books fell in the mud” etc.; Cassette recording of “I’m a very good helper” (see procedure); tape recorder.

Procedure:

(Teacher preparation: Tape record the children singing this song: [tune: This Little Light of Mine] “I’m a very good helper/ I help whenever I can./ I’m a very good helper/ I help whenever I can./ I’m a very good helper/ I help whenever I can./ I can help/ I can help/ I can help.”)

Stand and form a large circle. One child is “it.” “It” walks around the outside of the circle, tapping each person on the shoulder while the music plays. When the music stops, “it” takes the last person she/he touched into the center of the circle to be the “Helper.” Everyone else sits down. “It” draws a situation card. The “Helper” must tell or pantomime how to help. After the “Helper” has offered a suggestion, everyone stands up. “It” joins the circle, and the “Helper” becomes “it.” Continue the game until all have had a turn.

Prayer

To close (adapted):

Materials: A large round piece of paper and a marker.

Procedure:

Teacher: We are very thankful that God has given us so many helpers in our lives. You can tell me names of people who are very special helpers to you, and I will write them down.

After all the children have had a chance to name someone, the teacher places the sheet in the middle of the circle.

Teacher: Now we can close our eyes for a moment and think about these people and thank God for them.

Now we can hold hands in our circle and thank God because we can be such good helpers for each other! Yay!



Adolescent Interests



⇒ Coming of Age ⇐

This past October, when Louisa turned 12, she and her parents wrote to the Meeting asking for a called meeting for worship to celebrate her coming of age. This was something the family had done for their older daughter, Hannah, a few years before. The Meeting was enthusiastic and we were asked to be the committee to work with Louisa to create this special worship.

We began meeting with Louisa in early December to talk with her about this time of transition from childhood into young adulthood and how she would like to mark that time with her community. Louisa had decided that this year marked the transition into young adulthood for her not so much because she is 12, but because of several other significant changes, including, among other things, moving from Junior Yearly Meeting to Jr. High, and taking the entrance exam for a Jr. High/High school in Boston. She wanted a chance to remember the childhood she was leaving, to thank and acknowledge the communities that had nurtured and supported her, to gather with her peers, and to look towards her future. Louisa's clarity of understanding about who she is and those who have helped become who she is, is inspiring.

The night before the called meeting for worship, we spent the evening together preparing. As we ate dinner we talked about school, the worship the next day, our experiences of being young women, the different people who would be coming, and took time to recognize this point of transition. We also committed ourselves to be Louisa's Fairy Godmothers (the name we had informally taken for ourselves on place of "committee") for as long as she wanted. The evening was part formal dinner, part slumber party, part vigil, and part initiation.

The next day, while the meeting gathered, the three of us sat apart for some prayer before joining the worship. After

a brief introduction, there was silence. Louisa broke this silence with a welcome and explanation of what this meant to her. There was then open worship for people to share memories of her childhood. To mark the transition from childhood to young adulthood, Louisa asked one person from each the communities that had been with her through her childhood, and would continue to be with her through her adolescence, to light a candle. We lit one for our monthly meeting, a friend from school and one from the JYM/Jr. High programs each lit one, and her father, on behalf of her family, lit one. Louisa then lit her own candle - marking both her independence and connection to these communities. After this, Louisa and her friends gathered in the center of the room to have a flower drawn in henna on their hands. There was then a period of open worship for prayers and dreams for Louisa's future. It was very moving to hear people's frank and loving wishes for Louisa's young womanhood, especially when her peers spoke heartfelt and caring words out of the silence. Following worship, there was a chocolate pot luck and a time for people to write to Louisa in a scrap book she had made.

It was such a gift and blessing to get to be a part of the process of creating this opportunity to celebrate Louisa. We both wish we had had this time of attention and recognition when we were adolescents. Getting to be Fairy Godmothers has been a chance to be for someone what we had needed and to revel in the life and gifts of an incredible young woman. We hope other young people, their families, and Meetings will hear this experience and think about ways to nurture our youth in this time of transition and welcome them as more adult members of our community.

- *The Fairy Godmothers, Valerie Bassett and Lisa Graustein, Beacon Hill Meeting*

⇒ Conscientious Objection ⇐

Last year, FGC published a curriculum, "Raising Conscientious Objector Consciousness among Our Youth," by co-authors Curt Torell and Alice Carlton. It is a valuable resource for teachers and young Friends alike, particularly in FDS settings, and it can be adapted to other settings and other religious groups. The curriculum contains six lesson plans as well as handouts with issues and questions for the young men (and interested adults) who are about to register for selective service.

The curriculum can be purchased from Quaker Press of Friends General Conference for \$15 or it can be

downloaded for free at the FGC Religious Education website. To find the curriculum on the website go to www.fgcquaker.org, then click on Religious Education in the left column, then link to "Teaching Resources." You will find the curriculum there, in Adobe Acrobat PDF format.

We appreciate your comments!

In service,
Michael Gibson
FGC Religious Education Coordinator
MichaelG@fgcquaker.org



Stand Your Ground

Curriculum based on the life of Paul Robeson
By Princeton Meeting First Day School Teachers
Review by Beth Collea, Wellesley Meeting

Three lessons on the life and accomplishment of Paul Robeson, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of his birth. Contains ideas for how to recognize and use our talents and how to gather the courage to stand up for what we, as Quakers, believe. K-8th grade. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 1999 30 PP. Looseleaf \$9.50 from FGC Book Service

I think the Princeton Meeting did a wonderful job. The Stand Your Ground curriculum presents Paul Robeson's life and ideas about antiracism in a straightforward way, being sure to have terms defined for children. Part of the genius of the curriculum arises from the personal look at the impact of racial bias on one life. This takes the issues of racism out of the conceptual realm and into the practical. The children will be inspired to feel the unfairness of segregation and not keep these ideas at a comfortable cerebral distance.

I liked the activities a lot. They seemed just right for the ages selected. I especially liked the discussion of Robeson's gifts and talents. I think it is crucial for the adult community to help children identify and embrace their own talents. Robeson's early years become the jumping off point for a discussion of the children's gifts and talents. I would also add "Quaker talents" like peacemaker, negotiator, visionary/imaginer, or welcomer/includer to the traditional list of athlete scholar, artist, singer, etc. 3rd to 5th graders will enjoy acting out different endings to the story about Robeson joining the Rutgers football team over the violent objections of his teammates.

The 7th and 8th grade material, like his valedictory address, is sophisticated for that age, but I think sometimes we let them off the hook too easily. One needs to gauge carefully in using this with the youngest children; Paul Robeson was set in a political and social context that can be hard for them to understand.

I think a little more historical context would help the children connect Paul Robeson's life and that of his ancestors with the American history they already know. So, for example, on the timeline, I would recommend putting the Civil War, WWI, etc.

One approach would be to use the film: Here I Stand: the Life of Paul Robeson. It's almost 2 hours long and probably too much for children, but it's great for the teachers. Then, cue up a section here and there. For instance, whenever he encountered people speaking out or resisting something they thought was wrong, he tended to join in. This

happened in Wales with a miners' strike. They had nothing left to lose and walked to London to protest. He heard them singing as they marched and he went out of his hotel room and joined them! He also went to Spain and sang for and encouraged the forces against fascism. Without getting mired down in politics, the kids could grasp "here is a guy who gets involved and speaks his truth even if it is unpopular."

My goal for this year is to break the ice and present at least one activity with an antiracism theme. The Robeson curriculum is one good option.

Don't Laugh at Me

A project of Operation Respect, conceived and produced by Peter Yarrow Productions and Educators for Social Responsibility
Review by Beth Collea, Wellesley Meeting

This program should be in every First Day School resource collection. It is resonant with the Quaker testimonies. It is well-conceived and packed with resources and it is absolutely free!

Don't Laugh at Me sensitively and effectively takes on the pervasive issues of bias, name calling, and meanness in our culture. It promotes nonviolent conflict resolution, cross-cultural understanding, and the creation of an anti-bias classroom, all the while affirming the inherent inner spirit of each individual. They guide the children to reflect on their inner feelings through respectful sharing and journal writing.

It is almost uncanny how Quaker in inspiration it all is – until you consult the resource list and find Bill Kreidler's name. The exercises and activities are often adapted from his work, *Early Childhood Adventures in Peacemaking, School-Age Adventures in Peacemaking, and Conflict Resolution in the Middle School*.

Don't Laugh at Me is designed for use by schools and covers grades 2-8. The roleplaying exercises, craft projects, and guided discussions of our hidden assumptions and points of view can easily be adapted for use in a First Day School. The program includes two teachers' guides, one for grades 2-5 and one for grades 6-8, a 16-minute video featuring Peter Yarrow singing the Don't Laugh at Me song and introducing the program, and a CD with this and other Peter, Paul, and Mary songs. The only drawback is the wait; delivery takes 8-10 weeks after ordering by phone or internet.

Don't Laugh at Me, 2 Penn Plaza, 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10121
212-904-5243 www.dontlaugh.org

