

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS

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Quaker-Affiliated Camps: Time to Sign Up for Next Summer!

- Friends Camp, So.China ME: 207-923-3975
(director Susan Morris) www.friendscamp.org
Registration information came in the latest *New England Friend*
- Farm and Wilderness Camps, Plymouth VT:
802-422-3761 email: fandw@fandw.org
- Friends Music Camp, Barnesville OH:
937-767-1311
- Quaker Arts Camp, Winchester VA, sponsored by
Baltimore Yearly Meeting, 301-774-7663 or
bymcamps@igc.org, or www.bym-rsf.org/quaker

Many Monthly Meetings help children go to Quaker camps by providing scholarship money – does yours?



It has been said that
STUDENTS REMEMBER:
10% of what they hear
15% of what they see
20% of what they hear and see
40% of what they discuss
80% of what they do
90% of what they teach to others

Foolproof* Secrets for Creating FDS Lesson Plans

*from the NEYM Sessions workshop of the same name,
August 1999 by MaryBeth Toomey and Nicholas Horton*

1. Always remember that preparing and teaching FDS is part of your spiritual growth. Enjoy. Stay centered.
2. Be prepared. Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance. Arrive early to get off to a good start.
3. Try to teach using all the senses. Different children have different learning styles. Different teachers have different teaching modalities. Use this to your advantage. Try to organize your class in a way that reinforces the main idea of a lesson through congruent activities (listening, drawing, acting, singing, touching, writing).
4. Be aware of the importance of structure. Expected patterns and organization help set the stage for a positive learning experience.
5. Realize that frustrations are inherent in FDS. Consistency of attendance is rare. There are different sets of assumptions in FDS than in other learning settings. Keep your expectations realistic.
6. Be flexible. If a lesson plan isn't working, consider modifying it. If a situation arises that warrants addressing an issue separate from the lesson plan, consider abandoning the original plan to concentrate on that teachable moment.
7. Utilize existing resources to help with planning (these include books and curriculum materials, records from other teachers, and people within your monthly meeting and yearly meeting). Don't reinvent the wheel just for the sake of it.
8. Don't forget to have fun!

*Actually, nothing is really foolproof, since fools are so ingenious. But we offer these ideas as a helpful guide.

Look for Christian Education Committee-sponsored workshops at Sessions next August.

FDS is an abbreviation used in this newsletter for First Day School.

WHAT'S COMING UP?

Working in the ministries of education, First Day School teaching, and parenting can be draining – conferences and workshops are a way to renew energy and inspiration. Please consider whether this is nurture you need. Call Chris Jorgenson about ideas for helping fund your participation.

Saturday April 8, 2000

Discovering the Voices of Children in Our Meetings

led by Lynda Johnson, part of the Quaker Studies Program of Salem Quarter.

9 am to noon, Cambridge Friends School

Tuition \$15. Childcare available.

"Before I could talk, I was ordered to listen." - Cat Stevens
This will be an opportunity for Friends to think about the children who attend their Meeting and how to nurture them on their spiritual journeys. Through discussion of shared experiences, Friends will explore methods for discovering the innate spirituality in children. We will also look at how to include children in the community.

These queries will guide the discussion:

- Is there a children's community at your Meeting?
- Do you know the names of the children in your Meeting?
- What do you know about each child?
- What do you do to make children feel part of the community?
- What do you do to support their spiritual journeys?
- Does your meeting sponsor and welcome intergenerational events?

To register, contact Beckey Phipps, PO Box 386, Wenham MA 01984 or phone 978-468-7045 or e-mail baphipps@aol.com

Conferences and Such:

June 22-25, 2000

Spirituality in Action: Quakers in Education in the New Millennium

at Earlham College, Richmond IN, sponsored by Friends Association in Higher Education and Friends Council on Education. Quakers who teach in non-Quaker schools are especially encouraged to attend. Friends are encouraged to submit papers and presentations that highlight how we engage spirituality in action. Featured speaker: Parker Palmer. For info about the conference, contact Conference Registrar, Earlham College, Richmond IN 47374-4095.

August 5-10, 2000

New England Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions

which has programs for all ages, workshops, worship, speakers, and business.

Junior Yearly Meeting coordinator needed for the elementary age program.

\$400 stipend plus room and board provided. A strong returning staff and stable program give this ministry a solid foundation. Please call Sara Burke, Youth Programs Clerk, for more information: 617-825-0444.

August 17-20, 2000

Awakening Minds and Hearts;

A conference for Quaker educators and parents, with children's program, sponsored by Friends General Conference, at Massanetta Springs Conference Center, near Harrisonburg, Virginia. Workshops, speakers, worship sharing, books and curriculum. See flyers at your meeting. Plan now to attend with others from your meeting.

October 6-9, 2000

What is Quaker Faith and Practice?,

sponsored by Friends General Conference for high school age Friends in McNabb Illinois, to explore the Biblical and Universalist roots of our Quaker heritage, a conference similar to the successful Young Quakes conference that was held in October of 1999 in Maryland. Good preparation for YouthQuake.

December 27, 2000 – January 1, 2001

YouthQuake,

a national conference for Quaker youth ages 14-20 held in Auburn, Washington. A Christ-centered conference that draws from all branches of Quakerism. See further information on the page 10 about the YouthQuake Mentoring Project.

Youth Director Sought

Powell House, the retreat and conference center for New York Yearly Meeting, is looking for youth director(s) for the retreat program for youth grades 4-12, beginning September 1, 2000. For more information contact Ann Davidson, Powell House director: 518-794-8811 or powellhouse@aol.com

Remember: Jesus said "Feed my sheep", not count them.

Connecticut Friends School, incorporated in 1998, is located on the grounds of Wilton Quaker Meeting (New York Yearly Meeting). Last summer they constructed new classrooms to enlarge their facilities, which currently serve 15 students. "The school features small classes, an experiential and thematic approach to education, and multiple age groupings for students in kindergarten through fifth grade." They plan expanding up one grade level each year until they reach K-8. For more information, contact Kim Tsocanos, c/o Wilton Meeting, 317 New Canaan Road, Wilton CT 06897, or call 203-762-9860. On the web, they're www.ctfriendsschool.org

Can We Raise Quaker Children?

by Minga Claggett-Borne, Cambridge Monthly Meeting
from the Beacon Hill Monthly Meeting Newsletter,
October 1999

Our children are on the frontline of the battlefield in living out Christian values. As parents we have to honor how tough it is for our children to walk cheerfully answering to that of God in the year 2000.

Can we imagine our children acting on qualities such as: giving to those who have less (like the friend without a winter coat), forgiveness (to the girl who tattle-taled to the teacher), equality (immigrant children have fewer computers in their homes), and nonviolence (even with the swaggering ball hog on the soccer field). What a tall order! Our young people have to be saints practicing Ethics 301 before they are out of first grade.

Couple that with the fact that I ask my children to live out Quaker testimonies in ways I don't. I ask Asa if he shared his soccer ball with an underprivileged classmate, yet I don't share my camera with someone poor. I encourage my son to invite Mombasi over to play, yet I don't invite immigrants I meet from other countries to have tea at my home.

How do we parents raise a Quaker child? This is a bonus essay question and with the correct answer you will win free childbirth classes! (ha, ha) Actually, it's a trick question. We can uphold ourselves as a Quaker family, but we can't name any child's denomination. Children eventually have to decide about God and know the Holy One for themselves. As much as we parents are control freaks, we can't legislate love. But we can show our love of Spirit. Do you love God and the creation? Do you communicate that to children? Here are ideas that may influence family dynamics:

Do you pray? Do your children know that prayer is important? I'm able to set aside time before the day begins (sometimes before the sun begins) even if it's just for ten minutes of peace and thankfulness of what's going right.

Do you talk with your children about religious and Quaker heroes and why you admire them? After supper (we manage to have a family supper a few times a week), we read the *DK Illustrated Family Bible* together. Elias (7) learns to pronounce big words. Asa often is the first to pull us over to the sofa for a story (so he won't be stuck with scrubbing pans).

Do you engage in activities that attract the kids away from the constant lure of consumerism, Nintendo, and the power of weapons? I'd love your ideas here. Perhaps you know of service to the homeless you can do with kids. Does music delight your family, or wilderness camping, or caring for hurt animals? I wonder if such activities can inspire a sense of awe and holiness that the world cannot give. I know a family that has declared itself a peace zone

home and holds family meetings to discuss how to embody active peacekeeping within the house walls.

Let's keep talking about these ideas. We're all on the Quaker path and we're all here to raise kids to be the best they can be. This is as the Spirit intended it, whether our kids call themselves Quaker or not.

ONLINE.COM

Youth Secretary-General's Warning:
Using these web sites could put you on the computer longer than is good for your health.

Okay, that said, here's some sites you might want to check out:

www.ultranet.com/~neym/

New England Yearly Meeting. Containing back issues of this newsletter and the YouthQuake Mentoring packet, among many other things, including links to other Quaker sites.

www.afsc.org.qic.htm

Quaker Information Center. Loads of information about the Quaker world, as well a very extensive service opportunities listing.

www.quaker.org/fgc (Friends General Conference)

www.fum.org (Friends United Meeting)

These are the two umbrella organizations to which New England Yearly Meeting belongs.

www.quakerbooks.org

Friends General Conference Bookstore. The catalog is here, including a table of contents that will help you zero in on what you want.

<http://hometown.aol.com/agkeener/fds>

Alessa Keener of Baltimore Yearly Meeting has her own First Day School site, including classroom tips, curriculum review, and children's book reviews.

www.SimpleLiving.org

Alternatives for Simple Living: "Equipping people of faith to challenge consumerism, live justly and celebrate responsibly" for over 25 years. (You may also call 1-800-821-6153 for a free catalog which includes a free sample of the Lenten calendar, and for a copy of "10 Tips for a Simpler, More Meaningful Easter".)

www.americanbible.org

The American Bible Society.

An annotated bibliography of the NEYM Christian Education Committee's library, *First Day School and Parenting Resources*, is available for \$6.00, shipping included from the NEYM Office at 901 Pleasant Street, Worcester MA 01602

Teaching Hebrew Scriptures; Facing Ambivalence

by Frank Gatti, Mt. Toby Monthly Meeting

During the fall of 1999, the children at Mt. Toby Meeting were being taught stories from the Hebrew Testament. By October, a number of teachers and parents were feeling uncomfortable with this. Questions arose from the content of the stories. Why is there so much killing off of the enemy? Why does God choose sides? Where is God's love of all people? How does the violence in these stories affect our children? What do we want our children to learn from these stories? Which stories should be taught and how should they be framed for different age children? Are there any particular Quaker insights in these readings? How do we as adults understand these stories?

An evening meeting was held, attended by twelve Friends. Judy Mullens, an ordained UCC minister and former attender at Mt. Toby and Frank Gatti, a current seminarian, were asked to contribute as recent students of the Hebrew Testament. The discussion showed that there was not unity on this topic. Some Friends felt that the stories of the Hebrew Testament were remarkable, unique stories with powerful moral teachings, and poetic and universal insights into human life. Others found the stories dated, part of an early tribal-warrior time, unsuited or anachronistic to our current realities. Some found that many of these stories contradicted Quaker values, especially the Peace Testimony. Some found the complexity of the heroic figures of David, Jacob, and Moses to be intriguing and valued that they were not simple one-dimensional heroes, but complex men with flaws and virtues.

In a prior conversation, Doris Berg, the religious education coordinator at Congregation Beth Israel in Hartford, Connecticut, had shared her congregation's approach to the teaching of the Hebrew Testament. Their curriculum was carefully considered in regard to the developmental needs and maturity of their children. The youngest children were taught about the Creation, about God's love, God's promise, about how one talks to God. Poetry was used and examples from Jewish family life and worship illustrated the teaching. The earliest Bible stories were introduced for first grade. By second grade, stories about the Creation, Shabbat, Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, Noah, and the Tower of Babel were read and discussed. These stories were not diluted, i.e. Joseph's brothers did try to kill him, God did bring the flood; but the moral understanding and lesson were emphasized. What seemed especially well thought out was the integration of the stories with Jewish traditions and current life.

The group at Mt. Toby looked through the materials used at Congregation Beth Israel and found that it did enlighten us about the teaching of our children. A major problem in the teaching of the Bible stories to the children at Mt. Toby is that there are too few children, which led to the grouping

of kindergarten to third grade in the same class. The age range, six to nine, is too wide. In addition, children at Mt. Toby do not attend every week. The teacher finds a different group of children in the class each week, making it difficult to build the current lesson story onto previous learned lessons, or to have a process of increasing moral understanding and dialogue. The smooth integration of Bible stories with Jewish traditions and obligations in everyday life stands in contrast to the isolation of these stories in our lives, and in our children's lives.

There was agreement that parents at Mt. Toby are ambivalent about what to teach our children in FDS, and that this ambivalence leads to erratic attendance of the children. The belief that God speaks directly to all of us may contribute to an undervaluing of planned teachings, of formal classes and curriculum. Several Friends indicated that the absence of formal doctrines had led them to becoming Quakers. There was much greater agreement on the importance of teaching Quaker history and values than on teaching from the Bible, either Hebrew or Christian Testaments. There was agreement that Bible literacy is desired, but not necessarily as a vehicle for moral learning. Several felt that the Bible had a greater place as literature than as religious enlightenment. There did seem to be unity that the concerns about what to teach our children needed more discussion.

Jubilee 2000

Beacon Hill Friends Meeting has made *Jubilee 2000* - the campaign for debt relief for the poorest of debtor nations - a chance for young people and adults to learn. Our upper elementary group spent 3 weeks exploring the biblical grounding of *Jubilee*, the history of Friends work for forgiveness and against oppressive institutions like slavery, and learning how Friends currently work for justice in the world in the context of debt relief. We have made *Jubilee* the subject of a workshop at our meeting retreat, where we saw the video "Cancel the Debt, Now". A publicity project, to create and sell note cards with a Jubilee message on the backs (and preprinted postcards to send to your Senator in each packet), grew out of this workshop. Jubilee has provided us with the opportunity to reach out the other churches. We co-sponsored a skit about it with a local Baptist Church. Local Episcopalians shared concerns about how to present *Jubilee* in the context of our faith, and strategies for reaching our own groups and the local community with the *Jubilee* message.

Resources for Bible study, pamphlets, the video mentioned above, and ideas for action are available on the web at www.j2000usa.org or write to: Jubilee 2000USA, 222 East Capitol St. NE, Washington, D.C 20003 tel. (202)783-3566. You may also want to look at: www.jubilee2000uk.org, the British *Jubilee 2000* web site. To learn about the stand the World Council of Churches has taken on *Jubilee*, read Eden Grace's article in the June issue of *Quaker Life* (online at: www.fum.org).

Resources

Christians at Work; Not Business as Usual

a book by Jan Wood
Herald Press, 1999
ISBN 0-8361-9101-3

"The starting place for understanding ourselves as God's people in the workplace is to cultivate the active sense that God doesn't stay at home while we go out to earn the bacon. God wants to be known as a partner in our labor. God wants to extend redemption into the economic realities of our lives. God wants to be present in our work."

If you've ever had a discussion with others in your meeting about being faithful in the workplace, this book could provide a starting place for a book-and-discussion series, one of the most popular of adult education forms happening around the yearly meeting.

Jan Wood is a recorded Friends minister who has been a pastor, an academic at Wilmington College, and now director of Good News Associates, an organization dedicated to encouraging and supporting non-traditional ministry. Her conversational style animates her message, using anecdotes to illustrate how faith struggles against personal, psychological, and cultural values that would undermine our intentions to be our best, most centered-in-the-Spirit selves at work. Jan trusts in a bountiful, generous God "who wants to be a partner in our labor." The "God talk" could challenge some who don't usually express themselves that way, yet that challenge might be one of the gifts of the book.

135 pages with queries and discussion questions throughout, it has a compactness and clarity which might make it accessible for those too-busy-to-read-I-have-a-job folks for whom it's intended!

Available at Quaker Hill Bookstore for \$10.99 plus shipping.

An Adult Class on John Greenleaf Whittier, Quaker Poet

There are five hymns attributed to Whittier in the New Friends Hymnal *Worship in Song*. Richard Eastman of Yellow Springs Friends Meeting investigated the poems from which the hymns were taken and put together a small packet with the poems and a biographical sketch of Whittier. He learned more about the breadth of Whittier's activities and influence in politics, the anti-slavery movement, as editor and contributor to newspapers and magazines and as a long time resident of Amesbury,

Massachusetts. Whittier's life overlapped Elias Hicks on one end and Rufus Jones on the other.

The Yellow Springs adult First Day School class read the poems aloud and shared their thoughts. "Friends liked the subject and this way of presenting it, involving everyone and leaving way open for further exploration of Whittier's life and works." If someone in your meeting has an interest in Whittier and would like to try this approach to opening his work to a small group, contact me and I can send you the packet. Chris Jorgenson, 617-625-4494

Facing the Myths: Bias and Discrimination

Myth #1: Young children do not notice differences or begin to discriminate based on them.

Research has shown that they do, and it's very important that we adults become aware and active about our own attitudes and what we wish for ourselves and our children.

There are resources for you as a First Day School teacher and parent to either make bias and discrimination education a focus for some part of your curriculum, or to alert you to ways to include bias awareness as an integral part of other teaching and play opportunities.

Different and The Same. "Designed to help children learn productive ways to effectively handle bias and discrimination as it may arise in their own lives. A series of ten videos (each of which stands on its own) features

childlike puppets modeled on second and third graders who encounter, identify and struggle with dimensions of prejudice and diversity.

For information about this or other educational videos, call AFSC at 617-497-5273. You may also request a catalogue of all their peace and justice materials.

Start Seeing Diversity by Ellen Wolpert. A book and a video made using real life examples from a preschool setting to show how bias can be countered by parents, teachers, and caretakers in sensitive ways, but ways that could easily be overlooked if one were not aware. This is a very good resource for all teachers, to become aware of what they could do in their classrooms. To order, call 1-800-423-8309.

The ABC/s of Classroom Discipline

by Alice Kirkman Kunka

From Teaching Tips for Terrified Teachers, Abingdon Press, 1998

Here are some fundamental strategies – some ABCs of classroom discipline – that will help the children learn appropriate and acceptable behavior patterns.

Apply logical and natural consequences. A logical consequence is one that is related to the behavior and of which children are aware in advance. For example, if a child refuses to share markers, the child knows that the markers will be taken away. A natural consequence is one in which something is allowed to occur that would naturally curtail the behavior. For example, when you leave the cap off a marker, it dries out and you are no longer able to use it.

Be in the classroom early, before the first child arrives. If you've ever walked into a classroom of whooping children who are already out of control, this tip probably makes a lot of sense. Have some type of "sponge" activity (an activity to soak up extra time) before you officially begin the class.

Create a cool-down corner. As a last resort it may be necessary to remove a child from a group situation temporarily. For a younger child, this may be a cool-down corner in the room. For an older child it may be asking the coordinator to come and take the child out of the room for a time. It is important not to make this a fun-filled time of privilege for the child. Provide a storybook for an older child or a stuffed animal for a younger child. Ask children to let you know when they're ready to try to be with the group again.

Distract and divert attention when needed. This works best with younger children, whose attention is more easily swayed. Order children should be encouraged to find alternatives when a situation gets out of hand.

Enlist the help of the coordinator or a parent. Sometimes a situation may require more knowledge about the child than is available to you. The coordinator or parent may provide insights into working with a particular child and may offer support for improving a child's self-discipline outside the classroom.

Follow through on logical consequences of inappropriate behavior. Children need to know that you will consistently employ logical consequences. "Getting away with it" only reinforces the inappropriate behavior.

Gain a child's attention using his or her name and making eye contact. Nothing will attract a child's attention more than the sound of her or his own name. Use a tone of voice that is calm but firm, and look the child directly in the eyes.

Help children understand that their behavior affects the rest of the class. If a child is disrupting class activities, he or she is spoiling the fun for the rest of the children. Point out the unfairness of this situation.

Incorporate every child in whole-group activities. If one child is allowed to be outside the circle, she or he will prove to be a disruption for the rest of the class. If a child refuses to participate, have the child go to the cool-down corner.

Join children in their small group activities. Don't expect to give children a learning task and have them run on auto pilot, especially if the activity is new for them. By joining the children initially and by clarifying their questions, you may avoid disruptive behavior from children who just don't understand what is expected.

Know each child. Find out why a child behaves in a discourteous or disruptive way. Perhaps the child is having problems at home. The child may have been diagnosed as hyperactive, and her or his parents may have decided not to place the child on medication while at church. Knowing these situations will make it easier for you to encourage and affirm each child.

Love each child. A loving, kind attitude that builds children up will go a long way toward earning their love and respect. In a climate of acceptance in which all children are really listened to and never criticized, children will be encouraged to share their feelings, thoughts, hopes, and dreams.

continued

Make music a means of managing the class. Having trouble gaining a noisy group's attention? Sing your directions to a simple tune such as "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean" or "London Bridge is Falling Down." Music can calm the noisy classroom. Play soft music during rest time for younger children and create put-away time songs to sing as everyone picks up toys before the next activity. Older children enjoy listening to music as they participate in crafts and games.

Notice the activities the children in your class enjoy. For four-year-olds, for example, playing outside may be a favorite activity; five-year-olds may enjoy more imaginative play. Be sure that the activities are developmentally appropriate for the children in your class so that children are not frustrated.

Offer a choice. Ease a sticky situation by giving a child two or more appropriate choices. Ask: "Would you rather wait in line for the next art easel or join the group that's playing the game?"

Pray for each child in your class. It would be a mistake to think that we can handle all discipline problems by relying on ourselves or on the information in good books or articles on the subject. Ask God for insights in dealing with the children in your class. Thank God for the opportunity to help children develop appropriate behavior.

Quiz children periodically on the classroom rules. For example, when a child runs in the hallway, ask: "What are our rules about running? What can happen when someone runs in the hall?"

Recognize a child's feelings. Sometimes it helps to let a child know that you understand his or her feelings. "I know you want to be first, but everyone can't be first. We have to take turns."

Schedule monthly classroom meetings to help children learn to discipline themselves. Before each meeting, you and the children should make a list of problem situations that have occurred in the last month. Gather the class into a circle and help children tell how these situations make them feel, using "I" statements. Children can role-play the problems and then brainstorm solutions.

Talk to a disruptive child one-on-one. Making general statements to the class about an individual child's disruptive behavior probably will not cause that child to change. Walk over to the child and bend down so that you can use a calm voice to talk one-on-one.

Use every opportunity to build up the children. Find positive words to encourage individual children and the group as a whole. By creating a climate in which children know that they are loved, valued, and respected, you will be modeling the behavior you want the children to imitate.

Vary the pace. Boredom breeds disruptive behavior. After a quiet activity, have children go into a more rousing activity for a few minutes. Realize that after a period of high activity, it will take children several minutes to return to a quiet mode.

Wait to get their attention. Look around the room and make sure that all eyes are on you before you speak. Use a positive approach such as "I see Emily's eyes."

"X-ray" the children. Not literally of course, but find out what is happening inside them. Have they had a bad day before they came to class? Are they not feeling well? All could contribute to behavior problems.

Yield your notions about a perfectly controlled, quiet classroom all the time. This is only a dream. Recognize that there will be times when the noise level will be above what you'd like it to be but that learning can and does take place at those times too.

Zero in on the reason for the problem. Is Christina picking on Jason because she is frustrated by the reading level required in the activity? Such insights can help you determine whether the child is misbehaving to attract attention, to get revenge, or to deal with the frustration of tasks that are too easy or too difficult for him or her.

Keep in mind that no one strategy will work with each child or in every situation. But by beginning with the ABC's, you can then build your repertoire to include additional approaches that work and that will meet the needs of your particular situation. Classroom discipline based on positive internal discipline will enable you to create a nurturing environment that children will look forward to returning to each week.

from Teaching Tips for Terrified Teachers, Abingdon Press, 1998

August 1999

Winthrop Meeting

From the report about the Quarterly meeting:
"Love Grows One by One, Two by Two and Four by Four".

So starts one of the hymns in our new hymnbook. During Quarterly Meeting on May 1st, we sang this song as part of an intergenerational activity. The leader had us actually get up and act it out. The "Ones" would take someone else by the hand and then these pairs joined up, making groups of four all over the room. Each of those groups then thought about the attitudes which make divisions or build walls between people.

Each group was given a large cardboard brick. On one side we wrote a quality which tends to separate people such as prejudice, fear, hate, teasing. On the other side, we put a quality which tends to bring people together, such as respect, love, acceptance, fun, and so on. Then the children built a wall with them with all the negative sides facing out and the leader read them off to us. The wall was dismantled and a pathway made of the same bricks with all the positive attitudes facing up. After hearing what they were, everyone was invited to walk this pathway. (The following week we did a similar exercise at our own Meeting.)

September 99

Northampton Meeting

Celebration of Children

Come join us in celebrating the Meeting's children and young people at an event offered by the Youth Concerns and the Fun & Learning Committees. We will meet at the Smith College Field House on Saturday morning, Sept 25 at 11 am to recognize each young person, share a potluck picnic meal, and play games for fun and learning. Please phone in a reservation including the names of all the children you intend to bring . . .

Hanover Meeting

The monthly meeting newsletter has a regular feature called "Youth Corner" which is written by the teens of the meeting, explaining "what we are doing" (their topics during youth group) and "who we are" (interviews with group members describing what they look like, interests, aspirations, and views on Quakerism).

October 1999

Putney Meeting

Mike Mrowicki has been leading the young group; they are doing a project on Home. Ellen Forsythe reports the older group plans to visit the Episcopal Church in Brattleboro on the first weekend in November. There is a plan to visit the

Greek Orthodox Church in Keene. There is a hope to visit the world's largest population of Quakers in Uganda. The Adult Study Group is currently reading *The God we Never Knew* by Marcus Borg. Early Days of Quakerism will be next.

Belfast Meeting

For the October 9 book discussion of *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, consider these queries:

What has been your picture of Jesus, starting in childhood?
How has the contrast between believing and experiencing played out in your life?

How do you prepare for "radical amazement"?

Would you recognize a "spirit person" if you met one?

Mt Toby Meeting

Parenting with Spirit

There is room for more families to join the monthly Parenting with Spirit meetings on Saturdays at the meetinghouse. Our focus is how we bring Spirit to our daily parenting practices. We are particularly interested in drawing from the wisdom of yogic and Buddhist philosophy and practices, as well as Quaker faith and practice. Our current group includes three, and possibly five, families. We would be happy to have another dad or two to balance out gender participation.

There is child care in the nursery while parents meet. We begin the meetings with a query and or inspirational reading, followed by silence and discussion. After the meeting the children and parents gather for a potluck meal. Each family contributes money to cover childcare costs and brings a potluck item. The group has a planning committee which chooses readings and activities. We are considering using Depak Chopra's text *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Parenting*. Every third meeting will be purely a social/family fun gathering. We ask the interested families be willing to make a strong commitment to attend the meetings in order to insure group continuity and building of trust. (Jane or Jerry Costello 253-5827)

November 1999

Allen's Neck Meeting

Our Sunday School receives a good report card this term! The Middle class (grades 4-5) are studying Lucretia Mott. They have made a felt banner entitled "Little Acts of Kindness". We are invited to add felt leaves to the poster when we do little acts of kindness. The leaves and pins are on the piano.

The junior high class is very busy. Besides a lesson, they write in their journal on Sunday morning and talk about what has happened with them spiritually that week. They are also reading an historical novel, *The Take Girl*, about a

teenage girl, let out by her family to be a maid, who met Whittier.

The senior high class has been studying *NEYM Faith and Practice*, and members of that class have actually been viewed reading it by their parents.

Every week the nursery class has a story or book and an activity before they play. They are not too little to learn. The primary class (grades K-3) are studying *Friends Through Time*. Not long ago, they built a bridge. On one side they had their talents; on the other side their goals. Underneath the bridge were their obstacles; over the bridge were listed the people who supported them. The adults are also studying *NEYM Faith and Practice*.

Wellesley Meeting

All are invited to participate in Bible Study on the first Sunday and the third Wednesday of each month from 7:30 to 9:00. Participants are encouraged to attend regularly, but drop-ins are welcome. We will study Luke 2:1-7 on Nov. 7 and Luke 2: 8-14 on Nov. 19. The group follows the procedure recommended by Joanne and Larry Spears in their pamphlet, *Friendly Bible Study*. After reading, each person responds to these questions:

1. What is the main point of this passage?
2. What new light do I find in this particular reading of the passage?
3. Is this passage true to my experience?
4. What are the implications of this passage for my life?
5. What problems do I have with this passage?

Contact Nancy Haines or Dody Waring with questions.

Vassalboro Meeting

FDS continues the meet the 4th First Day of the month during Meeting for Worship. This fall the youth class has been studying the teachings of "George Fox; The Man Who Wouldn't". The group has examined the modern implications of being truthful and treating all people with equal respect. As a service project, Mora Camenga, Steven Ross, and his two visiting friends, decided to raise money to send a trio of rabbits and a hive of bees to a family in need through the Heifer Project. They started with a Trick or Treat for Heifer fundraising. Young Friends will be putting on a short performance during the Christmas program on December 19.

The Preschool Class has been focused on appreciating the natural world and its gifts this fall. In September we talked about finding God in the world around us – in Grandma's hugs or in the beauty of a butterfly. In October, we read about Johnny Appleseed and talked about the gift of apples. We cut apple slices and hung them to dry, like the pioneers. In November we made thank you sticks, with pretty ribbons to wave in the breeze. They remind us to be thankful. Starting in the New Year, we will find ways to express our gratitude. We'll make some joyful noise, find ways to be helpful, and practice listening. We hope to find ways to share what we learn with the entire Meeting.

December 1999

South Starksboro Meeting

Holiday Meeting for Worship:

For the last three years, we have tried to bring the children more directly into meeting for worship as the holiday season nears. This year it was suggested that children and Friends of all ages choose a special quote to share before meeting for worship. Those who wish are encouraged to take on the personality of the person quoted and come in costume. The children have also been practicing several songs that they will share with us. This meeting will begin with singing 9:00 to 9:30, 9:30 to 9:45 for quotes, with full meeting for worship to follow.

January 2000

Plainfield Meeting

On the third Sunday of December, the FDS presented a puppet show based upon the story of "Good King Wenceslas". Many thanks to Betsy Brigham and Holly Blumenthal for staging and photographing it all. Afterwards, Alan Walker led all in singing many carols. (the article had the verses of the song and photos of children with puppets and playing music for the show)

Midcoast Meeting

Ernie Foust reported for Religious Education Committee, asking that volunteers take turns waiting outside the Meeting Room during the first part of Meeting for Worship, so that FDS could be offered to any youngsters who might arrive.

The Book Study Group will be reading Chapter 8 in Karen Armstrong's *A History of God*.

Framingham Meeting

The FDS students staged their second annual Alternative Christmas Market on December 12th and through the generous contributions of members, attenders, and guests of Framingham Friends Meeting raised \$1600 which will be disbursed to the ten charitable organizations represented. A jolly time was had by all.

Portland Meeting

Young Friends Activities. We look forward to the young people of Temple Beth El visiting Meeting in the near future, returning the visit that was paid to them by our class. In January, Young Friends will meet with Tom Antonik and Colleen Crowley to learn and practice interview techniques for their project of interviewing people in Meeting. Advent Garden.

We had a wonderful, very moving gathering of children, families, and friends at the Advent Garden on December 5, with 29 children walking the spiral. Thanks to all who made this possible. [A spiral of evergreens is laid out, participants light a candle from the central candle and then place their Light in the spiral. This began at 4:00 pm, followed by a finger food potluck.]

