

Religious Education Resources For Pacific Yearly Meeting Friends of All Ages

Compiled by the Religious Education Subcommittee of the Pacific Yearly Meeting Ministry and Oversight Committee, June 5, 2018.

Whatever your needs, or your meeting's needs, they are probably not unique. Others have also experienced them, thought about them, developed and implemented initiatives and programs around them. You don't have to re-invent the wheel! The internet allows us to connect with the thinking of the wider world of Quakers, including many road-tested programs. Here are some that have come to our attention so far; tell us about your favorites, and about what's worked for you or your meeting!

Quaker Religious Education Collaborative (QREC), www.quakers4re.org; also on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/Quakers4RE/>

At the QREC website you can both explore resources others have found useful and contribute your own. The QREC "is a grassroots network of Friends holding a sense of stewardship for life-long Quaker faith formation through religious education. We include Friends from all branches of our international Quaker family. We welcome all Friends involved in religious education. Join us in forming a community of practice to share resources, skills, gifts, questions and insights, and to support each other in the ministry of Quaker faith formation."

The QREC holds an annual conference and retreat. The 2018 retreat is in Chatham, New York, August 17-19. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1514092242020120/>

Friends General Conference (FGC) www.fgcquaker.org

In addition to its well known annual gathering, FGC maintains a bookstore and many other resources. They offer a rich array of publications and curricula, plus online resources for outreach and welcoming/nurturing/informing newcomers, resources for building racial justice, and much more.

Spiritual Deepening Project: Of possible special interest to Pacific Yearly Meeting Friends is the FGC Spiritual Deepening Project, an all-age initiative with a library of activities on a variety of topics. A meeting can offer a series of any length using the library resources with the aid of a trained leader; or groups or individuals can enroll in one the e-retreats offered online.

The Spiritual Deepening Program offers a collection of experiential activities and resources for small groups of Quakers and newcomers to explore together, with the goal of building connections with Quaker roots, growing as a spiritual community, and listening deeply to the Light Within. The program grew as a response to a **deep hunger** among Friends for spiritual relationships, improved

sense of faith community, and a better understanding of the roots of our Quaker faith and spiritual practices.

The Spiritual Deepening Program seeks to **deepen the life, worship, and witness of Quaker meetings, individual Friends, and newcomers**. The program serves those who are new to the Quaker way by presenting resources important to the personal and communal spiritual journey. It serves Friends who are no longer new by providing additional depth and encouragement to continue their travel on the Quaker journey.

Spiritual Deepening Program participants **explore** Quaker thought, **share** and listen to each other's spiritual stories, and **practice** new ways of connecting to Spirit.

The program materials are designed for participants of **all ages and stages** in their spiritual journey. Participants engage in activities, discussions, role-plays, spiritual practices, art and music exercises, and worship sharing. The content has been compiled and developed by Friends throughout the U.S. and Canada and includes materials drawn from high quality existing curricula and resources, as well as newly developed activities.

There are two ways to get involved:

Friends and newcomers who are interested in connecting with Quaker thought, connecting with each other, and building deeper connections with Spirit have two opportunities for participating in the Spiritual Deepening Program.

Form a **Spiritual Deepening small group** that meets in-person to experience Grounding, Sharing, and Practicing activities and exercises together. Groups can form at any time and can meet for as few as 3 sessions or for as long as a year.

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Join a **Spiritual Deepening eRetreat**, together or as individuals, to build spiritual community and explore Quaker practices and faith over a 4, 6, or 8-week online session led by a seasoned facilitator. eRetreats are offered quarterly on the topics of *Silence & Light*, *Beloved Community*, *Becoming Patterns & Examples*, and *Understanding and Healing White Supremacy*.

QuakerSpeak, www.quakerspeak.com

QuakerSpeak, a project of *Friends Journal* produces short videos on different aspects of Quaker belief and practice, available free for online viewing. A DVD collection of

short videos appropriate to newcomers can be purchased for \$4.00 each.
(www.quakerspeak.org/dvd)

What Do Other Yearly Meetings Do?

Some yearly meetings, mostly larger and better-endowed ones, devote considerable resource to outreach and education. Other, smaller yearly meetings, don't address religious education on their websites (Intermountain YM), or have more limited offerings (See North Pacific Yearly Meeting.) Here is a sampling of some yearly meetings' postings:

Philadelphia YM website, www.pym.org

Resources for religious ed for children and teens: <http://www.pym.org/religious-education/>

- PYM curricula addressing a wide variety of topics and designed for various ages Most curricula available for free download:
<http://www.pym.org/religious-education/curricula/>
- Link to Faith and Play (Quaker version of Godly Play on FGC site):
<https://www.fgcquaker.org/faith-and-play>
- Friends with a depth of knowledge, experience and skill volunteer their time to talk with meetings who have questions or struggles with their First Day School Programs.

Pamphlets and handouts developed by the yearly meeting, including one on Nurturing Children in Small Meetings: <http://www.pym.org/religious-education/other-pym-resources/pamphlets/>; queries on testimonies for children, articles on children and worship, and more.

Resources on addressing racism: <http://www.pym.org/addressing-racism/resources/>

Resource Friends Program (a \$40,000 effort addressing numerous topic areas): In early 2019, Philadelphia YM will launch Practice Areas in Youth Work & Religious Education and Young Adult Support. Resource Friends will be available to monthly and quarterly meetings and other local Quaker communities to help them achieve their goals, strengthen community, and go farther along the path of living out their corporate ministry. Meetings will be invited to pay Resource Friends modest honoraria for their services. Resource Friends "help our community be healthy and thrive, by providing expert support in areas of need in our monthly meetings and on the yearly meeting level. They are the Friends who have a diverse variety of gifts and tremendous knowledge base from which the community may benefit."
<http://www.pym.org/introducing-resource-friends/>

New York Yearly Meeting website: www.nyym.org

Workshops and retreats under the care of Spiritual Nurture Working Group are available to monthly meetings: <https://www.nyym.org/content/tending-garden>

New England Yearly Meeting website: www.neym.org

Resource page for adult religious education:

<https://www.nyym.org/content/quaker-resources-adult-religious-education>

Resource page for children's religious education:

<https://www.nyym.org/content/quaker-resources-religious-education#lit>

“Does your meeting First Day School program need some new ideas, or advice on approaching a particular subject with young Quakers? The Quaker Youth Education Committee has curated an extensive catalog of high quality, Quaker-specific religious education curricula. We are in the process of moving this library online, searchable by topic and/or age group.

“Many meetings find that the First Day School model is no longer meeting Quaker youth and families' needs. Learning from meetings in New England and beyond, the QYE committee lifts up alternative approaches for offering youth a way to explore the Quaker Way together.

“The search for new models for First Day School is happening in a time of great spiritual upheaval and transformation.

“Surveys tell us that, in our broader society, there is

- a deep yearning for experiential faith,
- a longing to live in community and
- a desire to have a voice in matters of faith.

All of that amidst the troubling trends of declining attendance that you may be seeing!”

Resources, lesson plans, articles, book reviews <https://neym.org/qye/fds/new-shapes>

Resources for meeting support, including outreach: <https://neym.org/neym-does/meeting-support>

North Pacific Yearly Meeting: www.nypm.org

NPYM maintains an Outreach and Visitation Committee. “The Outreach & Visitation Committee seeks ways to provide and stimulate personal visitation and other forms of communication throughout the yearly meeting, with a particular concern for preparative meetings, worship groups, and Friends isolated from any organized

group. The work of the committee is meant to coordinate with and support monthly meetings, quarterly meetings, and the Ministry & Oversight Committee in their respective responsibilities in this area.”

NPYM also offers consultations on topics of concern to the monthly meetings. “Consultations are one-hour conference calls offered around topics of concern to one or more of our community meetings. Participation is by invitation to clerks of M & O Committees or their designated representatives. A consultation is clerked in either a worship sharing or worship discussion format around queries generated by the committee concerning the topic. The queries could be used as a focus for discussion in a Monthly Meeting or Worship Group.” You can find notes on some past consultations [here](#):