

PYM Religious Education for Children Committee Annual Report - 2011

One face-to-face committee meeting didn't happen but we've gone to conference calls surviving some technical difficulties.

We have contacted by phone, a number of meetings to find out how they organized their FDS programs. There are 54 meetings and worship groups listed. 31 have given us information so far. 10 of those have no children. Two of those identified contingency plans and/or asked for ways to get families with kids into their Meetings. The most common problems Meeting's with kids shared included: Parents are the ones who mainly teach the classes. The total number of kids are low and the age groups are very spread out, making teaching a challenge. There are often not enough kids to hold a First Day School every week.

One Meeting finds the teen program is helped by consistent adult presence. Another is developing a curriculum for younger teens on becoming a Friend

Four or five Meetings use a formal program. One Meeting allows the parents to teach whatever they want on any given Sunday.

Some Meetings hire help, especially for the youngest kids. There are some struggles with making the environment safe for the kids centering around abuse concerns.

We are planning a First Day School Retreat in Southern California - April 9th at Orange Grove Meeting with an emphasis on exploring what works in Meetings for FDS, how to build a FDS class with a story or song, and look at queries for children.

We continue to maintain a traveling "book store" of children's program resources which comes to College Park residential quarterly meetings and yearly meeting. This resource can come to a monthly meeting by request and will be part of the April 9th First Day School retreat.

Future ideas center around:

- sponsoring FDS get-togethers in various locations if meeting will invite us,
- looking at how to support family's spiritual life in the home,
- and learning through our FGC contacts about Faith & Play and other programs that can be offered by a Meeting's FDS.

Respectfully submitted,

Religious Education for Children Committee