

JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING 2018

Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

What to Expect: for parents/guardians and sponsors of teens - Q&A

Please see the JYM webpage for more information and updates:
www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/youth/jym/

REQUIRED FORMS: Please be sure to send in the Parental Release and Medical forms, and the Respectful Relationships consent form, *in a timely manner so that we can effectively plan our program*. These forms are available online from within the registration webpage as well as from the JYM webpages.

Minors may not participate in the program and registration is not considered complete until these forms are received.

If you have any questions about JYM, please contact the JYM Adult Committee Clerk:
Muriel Strand (Sacramento) auntym@earthlink.net

There will be a *meeting for Parents/Guardians and Sponsors* with JYM on the first afternoon (4:00pm in Buckeye, the JYM room). You can ask for the location at the registration table and receive a map of Walker Creek Ranch. See you there!

For all attendees under age 18 - *an adult sponsor or a parent/guardian must be on site at all times for each person under age 18, including day attendees. A signed medical history form and parental release form, with sponsor signature if parent/guardian will not be attending, must be submitted with registration for the teen to participate in the program.* Note: Minors may attend without their parent/guardian if they have a Sponsor. A Sponsor is an adult (age 18+) who has been chosen and given permission by the parent or legal guardian to act as temporary guardian for the event. When minors are not in JYM or Children's Program (such as at meal times), they must be under the supervision of their parent/guardian/sponsor.

Why Come to JYM?

Teenagers are invited to participate in Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM). When we gather at Yearly Meeting's Annual Session, teens work together to develop community, learning to use Quaker process to live together for a week. The JYM community is based on the Quaker values of love, respect, integrity, honesty and mutual responsibility. In keeping with Friends' practices, JYM members select officers and committees as needed, hold business meetings and meetings for worship and worship sharing, and come together through fun activities and games. Many Monthly Meetings do not have enough teens to create a sense of community, so teens might not attend their local meeting regularly or at all. At JYM a much larger group of teens gathers to develop friendships, try out leadership roles, and witness the power of the Spirit. This is an opportunity for teens to practice Quaker process and claim it for themselves. By learning with their peers and struggling to reach unity, they grow as Quakers and as individuals.

Is my tween/teen ready for JYM?

The program is directed toward and run by teens, typically ages 13-18, between [Children's Program](#) and [Young Adult Friends](#) and/or adulthood.

Some Friends are ready earlier than others for the opportunity to participate in a spiritual community led by their peers using Quaker process and values. For others, the rigor of sitting in business meetings is too much, and they would prefer the structure and activities of the Middle School Program. If you would like to discuss your youth's readiness for JYM, please feel free to contact JYM adult committee co-clerks.

Note that there are activities at annual session that JYM and middle schoolers in CP do together to prepare for a future transition to JYM.

At Annual Session, 13-year olds have the choice of joining [Children's Program](#) or JYM. Young adults ages 18 and 19 are welcome in JYM if they are still in high school or just recently exited high school. Any requests for exceptions to this age guideline must be received by the requested program's committee clerks **at least 6 weeks prior** to the event; the ultimate decision whether to accept a younger child into JYM will be made through a discernment process by a JYM subcommittee drawn from the JYM adult and teen clerks. If you have questions, please read the transitions policy document (see below for link) and contact the clerks of these committees to determine the best program fit for a particular Friend.

[Policy on Transitions Process between Children's Program and Junior Yearly Meeting \(Teen Program\)](#): available on JYM page or directly at www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Policy_Transitions_CP_JYM_2016_03_ApprovedByJYMandCP.pdf

How are teens supervised?

JYM is essentially a self-governing community, guided by Friends' Testimony of Community and agreements created using Friends business practice during the week. Adults provide support, guidance, and safety as needed. In addition to adult committee members, we have day- and night-shift teams of Friendly Responsible Adult Presences (FRAPs) who will support our youth in their program. Each teen will be assigned to a small Support Group facilitated by an adult, which will meet daily. Support Groups foster adults and teens getting to know each other better and promote a feeling of belonging in the community for all. Your teen's Support Group adult will be your main contact person should you have questions or concerns about how your teen is doing.

The teen and adult leadership team has a meeting each morning at breakfast to check in about how things are going. This also facilitates transition from night-duty FRAPs to daytime-duty FRAPs.

What are the Community Agreements?

“Friends’ testimonies on integrity, unity, equality, simplicity and peace come together in our testimony on community which calls us to sustain caring relationships for all... We come to know one another as we seek our collective, Spirit-led Truth – our shared sense of the common good within which we discover who we are and where we each fit in the larger scheme of things.” PYM Faith and Practice 2001, pp. 44-45

Both PYM as a whole and JYM as a program set expectations for how we treat one another, in addition to those of the host site. JYM will begin the first evening (after the Opening Plenary) reflecting on Friends’ Testimony on Community and the values that are the foundation of our time together. As the week progresses we may change those specific agreements based on the discernment of the community. Changes will be posted. The PYM-wide expectation that we all remain free from drugs and alcohol is self-enforced in JYM. In addition, the teens agree to abstain from sexual relations. Violations of these expectations will lead to a discernment process with wider PYM Ministry and Oversight Committee and/or JYM Ministry and Oversight, and a teen may be asked to leave JYM and/or PYM, in which case their parent/guardian/sponsor becomes entirely responsible for the teen’s care.

Gatherings like JYM/PYM offer opportunities for personal growth and reflection, developing meaningful friendships, and experiencing the strength of community life. In order to make this possible, we must work together to create a safe and healthy space for all.

Part of the JYM experience early on (and throughout) will be for the participants to work together to create, agree upon, and uphold group guidelines. In addition, there are some pre-set expectations, listed below, that are a starting point for the Community Expectations:

We agree to/that:

- Participate in the JYM activities, including the service project, meals, and clean-up
- Turn off or put away electronics during activities that do not necessitate their use
- Communicate about and respect personal boundaries
- Care for the physical welfare of the buildings and grounds and any sites we may visit and comply with all host site regulations and quiet times
- Make sure that a FRAP or adult committee member knows of any situation which threatens safety or the integrity of our community's expectations
- Fires will be made only with the consent and supervision of staff and comply with any host site rules
- One adult and one minor may not be out of sight together except in case of emergency (unless the adult is the parent/guardian/sponsor of that minor). A Sponsor is an adult who has been chosen and given permission by the Parent or Legal Guardian to act as temporary guardian for the event. *Staff and volunteers are oriented in abuse prevention and response.*

We agree to NO:

- Sexual activity
- Illegal or recreational drugs
- Alcohol
- Firearms
- Fireworks
- Violence or abusive behavior

A Note about Intimacy: JYM is an opportunity for extended contact with friends of all genders, physical and emotional closeness, and a wonderful opportunity to explore and develop close relationships. However, JYM is most appropriately a *community activity*. Pairing off and intimate sexual activity (anything more intimate than a friendly hug or kiss *with the other person's consent*) are not acceptable at JYM due to the negative impact they have on the JYM community and the potential for violation of personal boundaries and/or parental or legal expectations. Each individual may define reasonable additional limits and expect others to respect those limits.

Any JYMer, staff, or volunteer who is unable to function within these guidelines will be asked to leave at their own or their parent/guardian's expense. We ask all participants to agree to live up to the community's expectations and to expect and support the same behavior in others.

What about sleeping accommodations?

JYM participants may register to sleep in the mixed-gender JYM dorms or to share a room or camp with their parent/guardian/sponsor. It is common and normal for some teens not to stay in the JYM dorms for a variety of reasons; younger teens attending JYM for the first time sometimes prefer this. This is also a good alternative for teens of any age who prefer a quieter sleep environment or who would like to go to sleep earlier. The teens will agree to lights out time as part of community agreements, which we anticipate will be around midnight. The parent/guardian/sponsor is responsible for supervising any teen camping or sleeping in any area other than the JYM area during the night.

Please note the accompanying “what to bring” list in the JYM Welcome Letter on the website.

For more background on the mixed-gender sleeping arrangements, please see the JYM Report to PYM Representative Committee, March 2017:

<http://www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/JYM-report-to-RepCom-2017.pdf>

“JYM has come to unity to have gender-neutral sleeping arrangements at Annual Session this year [2017]. We made this decision so that we would be more inclusive of trans-identified JYMers and to build the community up free from gender segregation. Teens will sleep in separate beds: no cuddle-puddle sleeping. There will be a private changing area.

“We understand that some teens or parents might not feel comfortable with this, so in that case teens are welcome to sleep in the same room or tent as their parents or sponsors, and we encourage them to do so with no stigma. (It is normal in JYM for some teens to sleep with parents/sponsors and some to sleep in the JYM dorm, for any reasons they may have.) We ask the registrars to indicate on the registration form that JYM will be in a gender-neutral sleeping space so parents and teens can choose which sleeping option to register for.”

New in 2017, this arrangement worked well – it's a revamped return to past practice after an

experiment with binary-gender sleeping separation that did not fully work for us.

What is the schedule like?

The Parents/Guardians and Sponsors' Orientation meeting will be held on the first afternoon. During the opening plenary (after dinner), JYM will make an announcement when it's time for us to leave together to begin the program. JYM officially begins after the beginning of the opening plenary session; there will be no supervision by the JYM program until after dinner and the start of the opening plenary at the point when JYM is invited to leave the opening plenary to go to the JYM room. During the registration period that precedes the first dinner, we ask teens to consider volunteering at registration with carrying luggage for other attendees.

JYM has daily teen-run business meetings regarding the day's program and plans, along with any other business of JYM. Other activities often include interest groups, worship sharing, games, and a service project. We will join the wider PYM community for various intergenerational activities, including meals, games, certain plenaries and activities, and the Meeting for Memorials. The JYM schedule will be posted, however changes may occur as the JYM community makes decisions in business meeting. We will make every effort to announce and post changes as they occur.

What is "Respectful Relationships"?

With the support of PYM Ministry & Oversight, PYM Youth Programs Coordinating Committee, and Young Adult Friends, we will host activities with JYM focused on respectful relationships and sexuality education, exploring how Quaker testimonies and Quaker ideals can be lived in romantic relationships. Topics include boundary setting, self-respect, dealing with expectations from a partner, how to feel safe in a relationship, acceptance of one's own sexual orientation and gender identity, and how to communicate with parents/guardians. It will also include a presentation on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and birth control methods. While optional, Respectful Relationships has gotten some of the highest ratings from teens on their evaluations, and we hope parents/guardians will support their teen's participation. We include some materials from the *Our Whole Lives, Sexuality and Our Faith (OWL)* curriculum that was created by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ. The Respectful Relationships planning committee believes that OWL's assumptions and values of "self worth, sexual health, responsibility, and justice and inclusivity" align well with PYM Friends' beliefs.

JYM, like Our Whole Lives (OWL), affirms that parents/guardians are the primary sexuality educators of their children. Therefore, your signature is requested on a consent form in the registration materials to opt in or out of this session, and you are welcome to contact the JYM adult clerk with any questions.

How can parents/guardians and sponsors support the teens and JYM?

1. Expect your teen to check in with you daily during Annual Session. Meals are often a good time for check-ins (and remember, minors are under the care of parents/guardians/sponsors during meals).
2. Set appropriate limits to meet the needs of your teen. Younger teens often sleep in their parent/guardian/sponsor's care the first year in JYM.
3. Give your teen space to learn and grow.
4. Be available to help if needed.
5. Speak with your teen's Support Group adult or JYM adult committee members if you have a concern.
6. Ask your teen about their experience afterward.
7. Provide feedback to the JYM committee.
8. Help your teen get together with other teens in your area during the rest of the year.

We are excited by the great program developed by JYM for this year and look forward to seeing you and your teen at PYM Annual Session!

In the Light,

The JYM Adult Committee

Muriel Strand, Clerk (Sacramento)
Dan Strickland (Orange Grove)
Suzanne Doss (Orange Grove)
Don McCormick (Grass Valley)
Keith Runyan (Santa Cruz)
Sarah Armstrong-Jones (Santa Monica)

JYM Teen Leadership

Ari Standish, Co-Clerk (Berkeley)
Charlie Shaw, Co-Clerk (Santa Monica)
Elinor Steffy, Co-Clerk (Sacramento)
Gabi Alvarado, Clerk of M&O (Sacramento)
Gracie Martinez, M&O (Visalia)
Rose Nadis, M&O (Santa Barbara)
Callum Standish, M&O (Berkeley)
Elias Myers, M&O (San Francisco)