

Boulder Meeting of Friends

Parent Guide to First Day School

2009-2010



"Care of the children of the meeting should be the responsibility of every Friend. Let us share with our children a sense of adventure, of wonder, and of trust and let them know that, in facing the mysteries of life, they are surrounded by love. Both parents and meetings need to guard against letting other commitments deprive children of the time and attention they need. Friends are advised to seek for children the full development of God's gifts, which is true education."

— Revised Faith and Practice, New England Yearly Meeting, 1985

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of First Day School of Boulder Meeting is to create an exciting learning environment for kindergarten through high school Young Friends and to supplement parents' efforts in religious education at home. First Day School will nurture an understanding of Friends' history, practice and testimonies, primarily "that of God in every person", and will help Young Friends to develop skills for deepening their spiritual lives.

GOOD STUFF TO KNOW

Meeting Times:

- First Day School (FDS) classes
 - 10:00- Young Friends join adults in Meeting for Worship
 - 10:15- Young Friends go to class; activities and snack.
 - ~11:15- pre-K children are brought to parents in meeting for worship; parents pick up older students in classrooms

We realize it is sometimes a challenge to bring an entire family anywhere and arrive on time. Although it is a strong value among Quakers to be on time, we gladly welcome you late to the meeting, if necessary, rather than suggest that you avoid coming at all for fear of disturbing First Day school activities or worship. Friends who arrive after Meeting begins are invited to participate in quiet contemplation in the lobby and are admitted as a group at approximately 10:15 am. Over time, as a sense of community grows within you and your children, it may become easier to come on time.

- Teachers use the time from 10-10:15 to attend Meeting for Worship or for class preparations. Please supervise your children during this time if they are not in Meeting for Worship.
- For everyone's safety, parents must supervise their children on the playground after class. Parents usually help one another with this task. Please help children to pick up toys and bikes before you leave and make sure back doors are locked if you're the last one out.

- Senior Young Friends meet 2nd and 4th Sundays. They may work in childcare, volunteer in FDS or attend Meeting for Worship on other Sundays.
- Although most children attend FDS, families may also choose to stay together in worship for the entire hour, or for as long as they can do so comfortably.
- Group singing is usually featured on 5th Sundays during program hour, 30 minutes after rise of meeting. Families are welcome!

Registration: Please register your child. The information we ask for helps us to serve your child more appropriately and safely. It also helps the Meeting budget appropriately for programs and facilities.

Snacks: A light snack provided by volunteers is served during the FDS classes. Please let us know of any dietary restrictions so that we serve your child appropriately. You can sign up to be snack provider one Sunday on the RE bulletin board.

Special Needs: We are willing to make accommodations so that your child will have a safe and rewarding experience in First Day School. Please let us know if there are on going or temporary special needs so that we can try to accommodate your child's needs. Talk with the Religious Education Coordinator- Susan Stephens, your child's teachers, or a member of the RE Committee.

Visitors: Visitors are always welcome to First Day School. It's best to arrive 5-10 minutes early on your first day to visit so that you will have plenty of time to find your way to your child's class before Meeting for Worship begins at 10 am. You may, of course, go to class with your child. Your child can also invite a friend to attend First Day School for a visit

After your second or third visit, if you would like your children to continue to participate, we ask that you register them. Registration forms are available from the RE Coordinator or the teacher. It is not required that parents be members/attenders of the meeting before enrolling their children in FDS. We do ask that an adult responsible for them is on the premises during the FDS programs, and that the teacher knows whom this person is.

FDS Email List: If you'd like to receive email notice of events of interest to FDS families, please give your contact info to Susan Stephens at susan@operant.com

Class Emails: FDS teaching teams for K/2, 3-5 and 6-8 will periodically notify parents of plans for upcoming classes, so that parents can support their children's participation. Teachers/mentors for Senior Young Friends will contact students directly, with copies to parents.

First Day School "STAFF"

The Religious Education Coordinator provides teacher training and support and oversees the smooth running of the First Day School program (ages 5-19) during the school year and summer.

The Religious Education Committee works with the RE Coordinator to plan the FDS year. It usually meets 3rd Sundays at 8:45 in the Fellowship Room. Childcare is provided and visitors are welcome. Please contact Polly Feitler, convenor, at 303-682-0643 or pfeitler@yahoo.com if you would like more information.

Volunteer Adult Teachers: a team of adult teachers and assistants volunteer to lead the First Day classes. They are often parents or others in the meeting with little formal teaching experience but a desire to work with our children. These individuals rotate between leading lessons and attending Meeting for Worship. This allows each teacher or assistant enough time with the children to build a positive relationship and to provide the consistency children need while still attending Meeting for Worship some of the time. Teachers are supported in their work by the REC, the RE Coordinator and other Friends. The RE Coordinator plans a teacher orientation each August, and REC sponsors a retreat for teachers in February. Teachers may join REC, but are not required to do so.

We try to have two adults in the classroom for K-8 each Sunday: a lead teacher and an assistant. If there are 4 teachers per class, teachers get to trade off being the lead teacher so that they only plan a lesson for 1 Sunday and are only in the classroom twice/month. If needed, a parent or other adult volunteer will be recruited to assist a teacher. These adults gift us with extra hands during the lesson and help to ensure the safety of our children and teachers.

We encourage parents to serve as teachers or to support RE in other ways, such as helping with special projects or multiage activities. Simply attending the first 15 minutes of Meeting for Worship with your children and supporting your children in participating in classes is appreciated deeply by Friends. Friends who teach, serve on REC or assist with youth programs may find this an enriching part of their spiritual path.

Nursery Caregiver: Paid caregivers recruited by coordinator Sara Williams-Mann provide loving nursery care. The coordinator can provide parents with an introduction to the caregivers. A few Senior Young Friends who have received an orientation from Sara may assist the adult caregivers by prior arrangement. Parents or other Friends may be recruited as “babyholders” in years when the youngest population expands! Our youngest children share the delightful space occupied by the New Horizons Cooperative Preschool during the week. Parents are asked to sign their child(ren) into the nursery each Sunday.

PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM

Lessons centered on themes that change monthly provide continuity from week to week and over the years, while permitting religious explorations and activities to address the interests of children in an age appropriate way.

Sept. The Light Within, Quaker Values (the Testimonies)
Oct. Service & Personal Responsibility (CROPwalk)
Nov. The Bible and other Sacred Writings
Dec. Advent, Christmas and Other Religious Observances
Jan. Equality, Harmony and Peace Making (MLK, Jr. Day)
Feb. Quaker History
March Living Religions Today
April Stewardship and the Web of Life (Earth Day)
May Living Simply, Personal Choices

Curriculum Used In The Classroom

Using a variety of sources and the guidance of the RE Committee and RE Coordinator as needed, teachers develop lessons to meet the needs and interests of our children. Many lessons are based on successful curricula published byStill others are generously shared by other FDS programs, or adapted from youth programs such as Teaching Tolerance, Reading to End Racism, Anti-defamation League and other sources. The RE Coordinator has prepared a booklet for each team of lessons appropriate for the age level and monthly theme.

In order to engage children with a variety of learning styles, teachers try to combine high interest, high involvement activities with quieter, still projects and reflection.

- Kids are introduced to the “Mystery of Silence” in developmentally appropriate ways. This may include moments of silence before activities or at the end of class, guided meditations, etc. The idea is to build on other experiences such as attending the 1st 15 minutes of Meeting for Worship (or fewer minutes when starting out), using silence in family mealtime rituals, and so on.
- Every month in the Miscellany there will be an article letting parents and others know what we are doing in the classrooms. There will also be suggestions for how parents can incorporate Quaker themes and practices at home.

OUR CLASSROOMS

We enjoy the benefits of small classrooms that are multi-aged. The children work together, learning to help one another and enjoying being both the helper and helped. They can learn to work as an extended family group. Because we try to plan carefully for the children in each class, please check with teachers, the RE Coordinator or the RE Committee before having your child attend a class for a different age grouping.

Elementary School: Youth in K/2 & 3rd-5th Grade Classes

Goals: By the end of fifth grade, to know the Quaker concept of "The Light Within" and Quaker Testimonies; to have familiarity with Bible stories and to know basic facts about the Judeo-Christian tradition; to know basic differences and similarities between the world's major religions; to feel a sense of belonging to our community; to discuss their personal beliefs.

Middle School: Youth in 6-8th Grade Class

Goals: By the end of eighth grade to relate Quaker Advices, Queries and Testimonies to different world religions; to apply their understanding of diversity, peace, and justice to their daily life and in the greater community; to understand similarities and differences of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam through study of the Torah and Bible & Koran; to begin to develop a personal credo; to develop self-worth, dignity, self-respect, compassion, and responsibility.

Senior Young Friends: Youth in 9th through 12th grades.

The Senior Young Friends meet on the second and fourth Sundays. The second Sunday is dedicated to exploring Quaker topics, including history, comparative religions and discussions of topical relevance. On the fourth Sunday we walk to a nearby coffee shop for Friendly conversation and fellowship. Throughout the year SYFs participate in a variety of activities including visits to other congregations, cooking at the homeless shelter and participation in the yearly Christmas celebration at the meeting house.

Classroom Management:

Adults and children are expected to treat one another with kindness and respect, while acting responsibly and safely. Communicating in person and addressing issues or needs as they arise can help things run smoothly.

To honor children's inherently curious, active, and experiential nature, lessons are planned to reflect the need to move around and change activities without chaos. The teachers are coached to practice active and engaged listening, and to ask the same courtesy from the children.

When a child steps outside the boundaries of kindness, respect, responsibility and safety, positive methods of re-directing behavior will be used. Teachers are coached on a variety of ways to help a child act with kindness, respect, responsibility and safety. If child does not respond to positive re-direction, a parent may be asked to assist during classes. Susan Stephens, the RE Coordinator, will meet first with the child, and then with the parents if there is a need to re-direct inappropriate behavior. Parents are welcome to ask to speak to Susan, the teachers or any member of REC.

For some Young Friends in middle school and beyond, independent study, service learning or attending Meeting for Worship might be an alternative to class.

Recognition of Infants and Children:

Once every year or two, infants and older children new to meeting are introduced during the "joys" part of Meeting for Worship, usually on Mother's Day. Children received a plaque commemorating that they were lovingly held in the light on that day. Members of Meeting may request that their children be named associate members.

Childcare During Meeting for Business:

To facilitate inclusion of parents in the life of the meeting, childcare is provided for the 1st 90 minutes of Meeting for Worship for Business. This occurs on second Sundays, 30 minutes after the rise of Meeting for Worship. Parents can bring a sack lunch for their child, or have some of the bagels or snacks provided in the Fellowship Hall. Volunteers conduct the work of the Meeting, and Business Meeting is the place to hear about it!

Our Library: Materials of interest to parents, teachers and children may be checked out from the library.

Welcoming Young Friends to Meeting for Worship *Revised January 2008, REC*

Many of us remember attending Meeting as a child: the dangling legs, the interest in what was said by adults (especially the excitement and fascination when someone was eldered!), the joy of being included in the world of adults, the boredom of being included in the world of adults, and the growing sense of accomplishment as the fifteen minutes passed by more quickly each year. Learning to worship in silence does not always come easily for adults or children, but, as Quakers know, it is rich with possibility. Thus, the first fifteen minutes of worship are designated as a time for *family* worship, too. Encouraging children to participate in silent worship and helping them feel welcome is essential both to the future of the Meeting and Quakerism.

Friends are aware of obvious challenges for children to remain quiet during worship due to very young age and usually are tolerant of attendant noise or movement. However, REC has learned that some of our children may have less visible challenges. In particular, REC thought it would be helpful for Friends to know more about the challenges facing our children diagnosed with Sensory Integration Disorders (SID), since some of the behaviors common to these kids in the preschool and elementary school years may not be well tolerated during worship.

SI Disorders are fairly common and arise when integration of the senses does not come together smoothly during development. The child may feel "out of synch" at times and may experience acute discomfort as a result. The coping mechanisms employed by the child often appear as irritating misbehaviors to others. The noises, movements and "light touches" surrounding the child in a group setting may appear magnified to some SI kids, who react in un-modulated ways. For example, the child's "whisper" to a parent might be quite loud, if he cannot sense volume level. Parental support helps children with SID to attain appropriate behaviors, but such methods go only so far until underlying SI problems are resolved. Kids with SI differences may receive occupational therapy toward this end. Given time for maturation, these kids eventually learn to cope and to compensate for any remaining differences.

Some tips for all parents: Families with wiggly children might sit in the back rows so they are less visible to others. Since the noise of turning pages of a book is distracting to some Friends, a quiet toy or board book might be offered instead for kids who need to hold something in order to focus. Some families might find that the upholstered chairs are more comfortable and allow for quiet movements. Some children might be introduced to silence in 5-minute increments, and work up to the full 15 minutes. Families could sit near the door so that a quiet early departure could be made if needed. *In all your efforts, be assured that Friends are grateful for the gift of your family's presence in Meeting for Worship.*

The Religious Education Committee appreciates deeply your help in preparing the next generation of Quakers.

“Experiences with Silence in First Day School”

The Religious Education Committee has thoughtfully considered the role of silent worship, and other forms of silent reflection, in the lives of the meeting’s children. We have reached the following conclusions:

- 1) Silent worship is the core religious practice of the Society of Friends.
- 2) We should introduce children to this practice in ways that will support their spiritual development and full participation in the life of the meeting.
- 3) Children’s experiences with silence do not have to be worshipful to be enjoyable and meaningful.
- 4) Parents play a key role in providing opportunities for their children to have meaningful experiences with silence, both at home and in meeting.
- 5) The meeting shall continue to support this learning by including children in the first fifteen minutes of meeting for worship.
- 6) The Religious Education Committee will provide handouts called, “Welcoming Children to Meeting for Worship.” The brochures will introduce newcomers to this practice and remind regular worshipers about the typical behavior of children who are still learning to appreciate silent worship.
- 7) The First Day School program shall introduce children to the many benefits of silent reflection, including the spiritual, psychological, emotional, physical, and even social value of stillness.
- 8) First Day School shall also help prepare children to participate meaningfully and appropriately in meeting for worship.

Program Guidelines

First Day School teachers shall give children regular, age-appropriate opportunities to experience silent reflection in ways that are meaningful and enjoyable for them. Teachers will also encourage the transfer of learning from these experiences to meeting for worship. These opportunities can be quite brief and need not occur every time a class meets. The children’s experience with silent reflection in FDS does not have to resemble meeting for worship. It could be a moment of intentional stillness after a lively game or following a query prior to the sharing of thoughts. Our purpose is to help children on their journey to discover their “inner teacher.”

REC will compile ideas for providing children with meaningful opportunities to experience silence, including suggestions from Friends, Young Friends, and others. We hope this resource will be helpful to teachers in their planning and to families in their personal practices.

1/19/08

Quaker Faith and Practice

Quakers believe that there is that of God—the Inner Light or Spirit—in every person. This is the foundation of our faith in the worth and potential of each student.

The Testimonies

Quaker testimonies interpret universal values. They are guiding principles and are explored and reinterpreted by each generation. The following testimonies are central to Boulder Friends Meeting:

Equality

Our belief in “the Inner Light” means that all people are equal. Everyone has the same human rights and should be treated fairly.

Peace

Quakers are most often known for their peace testimony. We believe that world peace begins with each of us. We try to settle all our disagreements without using weapons or words that hurt others.

Integrity

Integrity means being truthful and always trying to do our very best. We say what we mean and mean what we say.

Community

We welcome the perspectives of everyone, respect the worth of each individual, and value our collective wisdom. We strive to be a supportive and inclusive community.

Simplicity

Our testimony of simplicity reminds us to live wisely. In a world filled with ever-increasing amounts of external stimulation, we all need space and time to discern what is truly important in our lives.

Stewardship

We need to take care of the things we use and own as well as each other. We believe in leaving the world a better place than we found it.

Source: poster of Cambridge Friends' School, cambridgefriendsschool.org

About IMYM

Intermountain Yearly Meeting is comprised of unprogrammed Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, South Dakota and northwest Texas. Go to IMYM.org for more information about the *annual meeting in June at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico*. This is a great retreat for families, with programs for adults and young friends. It is a chance for kids to meet other Quaker kids. The cost is relatively inexpensive, and financial support may be available through Quaac (see the Committees list in the Boulder Meeting Directory for more info). The registration deadline for IMYM is usually mid-April.

Quaker Web Sites

Quaker Books

www.quakerbooks.org

Youthful approach to Quaker culture

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIMkK4_kTg&feature=PlayList&p=8620249D862971CE&index=1

Quaker Testimonies

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZzLcMbevyY&feature=PlayList&p=8620249D862971CE&index=2>

Liberal Quakers

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4l9VPJ7fT6E&feature=PlayList&p=8620249D862971CE&index=5>

Quaker Family Activities

Some family opportunities for joint activities with other Friends through the year:

- Work days with building and grounds
- Making bag lunches for the homeless
- Fundraisers (CROP hunger walk, Echo House, Sudanese Women, etc.)
- Meeting Potlucks (Valentine Love Breakfast, Easter, FDS BBQ, etc.)
- Singing hour 5th Sundays
- Candlelight worship and singing on Xmas eve
- Monthly Quaker extended family potlucks
- Kids can have extended playtime while parents attend meeting for business
(2nd Sundays, childcare provided for 1st 90 minutes)

First Day School and REC Events, 2009-2010

June, July, August*'09- Summer Native American story telling and activities*

July 2009

July 19, REC Meeting, 8:45

August 2009

August 23- REC/teacher's retreat, ~11:30-1:30

August 30- Last summer program class (Susan will be away)

September

Sept. 6, FDS classes begin

Sept. 20, REC Meeting, 8:45

October

Oct. 18, REC Meeting, 8:45

Oct. 18, 1:15pm, CROPwalk at St. Ambrose Church, Longmont

Oct. 30- Friday evening Halloween party

November*

Nov. 15, REC Meeting, 8:45

Nov. 29, K-8 activity- service, gratitude theme

December

Dec. 20, REC Meeting, 8:45

Dec. 20, Christmas Program, rise of meeting

Dec. 24, Christmas Eve worship, 7 pm

Dec. 27, combined classes for holiday weekend

January 2010

Jan. 24, REC Meeting, 8:45

Jan. 18, MKL, Jr. Day

February

Feb. 14, Love Breakfast

Feb. 21, Mid-year Retreat for REC/Teachers

March

Mar. 21, REC Meeting, 8:45

April*

Apr. 4, Easter Egg Hunt; Green Eggs & Ham potluck

Apr. 18, REC Meeting, 8:45

May

May 9, Mother's Day

May 17, REC Meeting, 8:45

May 30, end of FDS Year Multiage Activity and REC picnic

* = Months with 5 Sundays

Italicized = activities for multiple ages

First Day School Contacts 2009-10

Leslie Allen—Teacher assistant, K-2

John “Jay” Bollinger – REC, Teacher, 3-5

David Clark – Teacher, SYF

Dido Clark—Teacher assistant, K-2

Toria Clark and Noah Clark – REC

Kika Dorsey – Teacher, K/2

Michael Dorsey – Teacher, 3-5, 6-8

Polly Feitler – REC, Teacher, K/2

Sarah Feitler—Teacher, K-2

Marc Gacy—Teacher assistant, 6-8

Julia Halaby, Teacher assistant, 3-5

Clare Huntington – REC

Becky Hutchins – REC

Linda Jacobson--Teacher, 6-8

Carolyn Kuban—Teacher (every other month) 6-8

Peggy Livingston –Teacher, 3-5

Susan Stephens – Religious Education Coordinator, Teacher, 6-8

Maureen O’Shea-Stone –Teacher SYF

Kevin Slick – Teacher, 3-5

Sally Hatcher – Teacher assistant, K/2

Sonja Toutenhoofd—Teacher, 6-8

Carmela Weber –Teacher assistant, 6-8

Sara Williams-Mann and Kaia Mann – REC, Child Care Coordinator

