

PYM Religious Education &amp; Family Resources

Email not displaying correctly?  
[View it in your browser.](#)

# The Tote Bag

PYM Religious Education  
& Family Resources



November/December 2020

Dear Friends,

We're entering into a season of gathering, giving, and joy. It's also been a long eight months, and our separations and worries are not over. All of us, including the children and families in our meetings, are feeling this as we prepare for holidays.

So my thoughts turn to "how" we're preparing; how can we be intentional about coming close to these special times, and also being easy on ourselves? Meetings will be figuring out how to make some of our traditions happen in new ways. Perhaps alongside "how," asking "why?" would be useful in our planning. Why do we gather and celebrate in the ways we have traditionally? Can there be both simplicity and authentic connection in **how** new approaches this year speak to our **why**?

We'll have two online **Conversation Circles** with our RE community of practice in the coming month, and I hope you'll join and share your whys and hows! More about those dates and how to register below.

The other topic on my mind and heart is **pastoral care for children, youth, and their families in this time**. With Covid cases on the rise, young people may be increasingly aware of the anxiety of adults around them, and their own worry. There may be changes again this winter for schools and in-person or online learning. Death is also something children are aware of and have questions about. *Watch the PYM website for an article about pastoral care for young people, and see below a few resources to share.*

Hoping to see you at a Conversation Circle, and happy to be in touch anytime. Be well, Friends.

In peace and friendship,

Melinda

## **RE Conversation Circles: New Approaches to Holiday Celebrations**



*Conversation Circles are an opportunity to bring together the wisdom of our PYM religious education and youth work community of practice. Join in listening and discussion with others carrying a concern for children and youth programs in meetings.*

**I've heard some great ideas from meetings seeking to create meaningful Christmas programs that keep Friends connected while also being safe. Bring your ideas and questions!**

**[Monday, November 30, 1:00-2:00 PM](#)  
[Wednesday, December 2 at 7:00-8:30 PM](#)**

\*This is the same conversation topic both times listed. Register by clicking date above.

**Related Resources are shared in a section below.**



### **Programs for Youth & Families**

**Events are online and FREE!**

- **Children & Families (K-5th Grade) Community Playdates**  
Next up: Winter Celebration with story and craft on **Saturday, December 12 from 10:00-11:00 AM**. [Registration and more information about the monthly program is on the Children & Families Events page of the PYM website.](#)
- **[Middle School Friends Hangouts!](#)**  
Next up: **Holiday Party! Saturday, December 12 (1-3pm)** Games and activities, favorite holiday foods, and music, and possibly a movie. [Register](#)

[here!](#)

- **[Young Friends](#)** (high school) **December 27-30: Christmas Gatherings and a Secret Santa care package exchange.**

[Details on their webpage soon!](#)

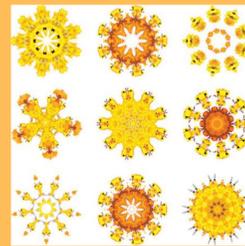
Hosted by Friends General Conference (FGC):

**[Virtual Retreats for Youth of Color](#)**, hosted by FGC's Ministry on Racism. These retreats are hosted quarterly on the first Saturday of the Quarter (excluding FGC's summer Gathering). **In 2021:** January 2, April 3, June 26, October 2.

Friends and Families from across the Yearly Meeting are joining together for a monthly religious education program (First Day School). **The next one is this Sunday, November 22!**

[Register a family or register to share with others in your meeting](#) and join the Spirit-led fun!

## GIANT Children's Meeting 4th Sundays at 9:00am



Each 30-45 minute program hosted on Zoom will feature a theme and seasoned facilitators leading us through *grounding, exploring, wondering, and creating*.

September 27: Celebrating New Beginnings

October 25: Friends and Neighbors

November 22: Gratitude and Gathering

December 27: The Light in Winter



## Gathering, Gratitude, Thanksgiving:

[QREC: Resources for Thanksgiving and Native American Heritage Month](#)

Includes books for children and curricula resources that move beyond stereotypes and the myth of the first Thanksgiving to celebrate diverse Indigenous cultures. Also on the PYM website: [Choosing Excellent Children's Books By & About American Indians](#)

## Getting Ready for Christmas:

Advent begins on December 1, and while Quakers do not traditionally follow the liturgical calendar and observances like Advent and Lent, these may be personal practices for some individuals and families, and Advent can be a way to slow down and focus the time before Christmas on the Nativity story and also on giving.

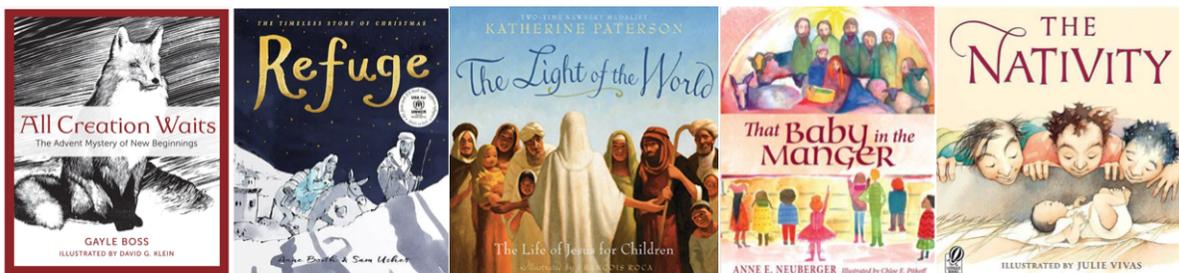
This **"Reverse Advent" activity for families** is something we've done for the last few years at my meeting. The attachment includes suggestions for giving to local food cupboard or shelter, and holding neighbors in the Light during the weeks leading to Christmas.

**QREC: Seeking Wonder and Light in the Spirit of this Season** includes many ideas and resources for Friends!

**"Nativity for the Modern Age"** created by Kennett Meeting in 2016 is still remarkably relevant, and three other **Plays for the Christmas Holidays** (shared by Nancy Pickering of Middletown Friends Meeting) are also linked. A costumed-at-home performance might be quite fun on Zoom!

**Illustrated Ministry** created teaching materials for this Christmas season focused on the theme, "Do Not Be Afraid." **Discover more on the website.**

**Books!** There are so many wonderful choices for this season . . . Come to one of the Conversation Circles to hear more about these titles!



### Support for Kids During the Pandemic:

**COMIC: A Kids' Guide To Coping With The Pandemic Includes a Printable Zine!**

**Prayers for When You Feel Anxious Coloring Pages**

**"Five Things Kids Need in Order to Learn and Thrive During this Pandemic Year"** written by a parent.

## The Bridge Film Festival: *Let Your Film Speak!*

The Bridge Film Festival (BFF), founded in 2000, provides a voice for students attending Quaker schools **and Quaker Meetings worldwide**. BFF invites creative and socially conscious students to produce films that focus on messages through a Quaker lens. There are four categories for telling stories: Narrative, Documentary, New Media, and Public Service Announcement (PSAs). **The deadline to submit is March 12, 2021. [Learn more here!](#)**



## Sharing Ideas for First Day programs: *Patterns and Examples!*

At the PYM Conversation Circles in August, focused on planning for religious education programs this fall, Friends shared great ideas and offered to make available their handouts, calendars, etc. We needed a place for easy access and sharing among our Community of Practice! **[A folder in Google Drive is available](#)** to share and find fresh ideas.



### Stay in touch!



[The Quaker Religious Education Collaborative \(QREC\)](#) has a group on Facebook for sharing of support and resources, [Valiant Together](#).

Visit [PYM Religious Education](#) for resources and support. When you find, "I have a question about resources, programs . . . or a great idea to share!" reach out to Melinda Wenner Bradley, Youth Religious Life Coordinator, [MWennerBradley@pym.org](mailto:MWennerBradley@pym.org)

*Copyright © 2020, All rights reserved.*

**Our mailing address is:**

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

11/20/2020

November/December Tote Bag: PYM Religious Education & Family Resources

1515 Cherry Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

[update subscription preferences](#)