



# The Tote Bag

PYM Religious Education  
& Family Resources



Summer 2021

Dear Friends,

Summertime! I hope these days are filled with what brings you joy -- sunshine and rain, fresh berries and cold popsicles, rest and adventures.

Perhaps your thoughts have also turned to **planning for the fall**, and wondering what community life and programs for young people will look like. Two stories on the PYM website, "*Where have we been? Where are we going? Supporting Families and Religious Education*," share insights from the spring RE questionnaire and what we've learned, and look ahead to how we might approach religious education in ways that connect our local and yearly meeting programs:

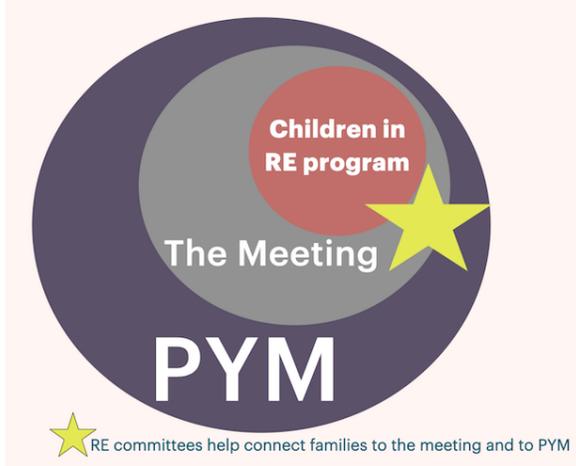
- [Part 1: What's Been Uncovered and Learned, Centering Needs of Families](#)
- [Part 2: Queries to Guide, Planning, Community, Safety](#)

One certainty is the importance of staying connected with families and one another in our overlapping "circles" of spiritual community -- Friends supporting RE in their meetings are vital to these connections!

**How to best support YOU? Let's starts with some tools for planning on the PYM website:**

The "[What's Next Planning Guide](#)" is a practical tool for meetings to use as they think about where they've been in the last year and what's next. The questions guide Friends to focus on where the Light has been, and what feels possible with what we know at this time. There's space to dream and also to be very realistic!

## CIRCLES OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY



Another ready-to-use tool is the [Planning Calendar for 2021-22](#) which includes links to Quaker religious education resources on the Quaker RE Collaborative website and has special dates noted (World Quaker Day is October 3rd!).

### Coming in August:

- *Building the Quaker*

*Community We Want to Be* -- Announcing the Youth Programs theme for the coming year, and the hope that local meetings will consider the invitation to collaborate and use this theme in your programs. Watch for more specific curriculum resource-sharing to support interest in thematic planning shared between our circles of spiritual community.

- *"Open Office Hours"* -- Will be opportunities for our RE community of practice to drop in on Zoom for conversation and sharing ideas, questions, tips, and suggestions. Watch for dates and times in coming weeks.

And, in September, Giant Children's Meeting for children, and Youth-led Meeting for Worship for middle and high school Friends will resume!

Hope to see you at Annual Sessions!

In friendship and service,

Melinda Wenner Bradley  
*Youth Religious Life Coordinator*  
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Recipients are subscribed to the PYM Religious Education news list.

# REsources for Meetings & Home

## Books and Ideas:

**Summer means green & growing days!** Pictured are some of my favorite garden books. We had fun at Spring Continuing Sessions making paper pots (that can go right into the ground!) and when we reprised this activity at my meeting, I spent most of worship one Sunday watching (on Zoom) a child carefully folding and filling pots with soil and seeds at their home. [Here's the link to a YouTube tutorial with two ways to make the biodegradable pots.](#)



## Gardening with PYM Friends this Summer!

- We've added a Children, Youth, and Families visit to [Historic Fair Hill](#) on **Sunday, July 25 (9am-12pm)** to kick off Annual Sessions. The historic Quaker burial ground is a hub of community activity, including a gardening program. Youth Programs staff will lead a morning of gardening, fellowship, worship -- and possible playing in the sprinkler -- together. ***Please encourage families in your meeting to attend this summer First Day program for all ages!***
- **4-5pm on Friday, July 30**, the Children's program at online Annual Sessions will "dig in the dirt" differently, with an **art project exploring the Sessions theme "Uprooting Injustice, Rooting Justice"** (*Children who register will receive a "spiritual care package" in the mail*)

before Sessions starts, with materials to use during two afternoon online program times.)

## Workshops and Programs:

The [Quaker Parenting Initiative](#) (QPI) is an incredible resource that has its roots here in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Founder Harriet Heath is a long-time member of Radnor Meeting, now living in Maine, and we are fortunate to have more than one QPI workshop leader in our YM!

QPI has a [wonderful new website](#) with a lot to explore, including online and in-person workshop opportunities and ongoing conversation spaces for parents. The [QPI Facebook Group](#) is another place for community and connection.



[This downloadable PDF flyer outlines more about what the website and QPI have to offer!](#)

## Annual Sessions is July 28-August 1

*We've scrambled our plans for Annual Sessions and made something new!*

[Explore the programs for ages 5-18 on the PYM website](#)

[Register HERE for all programs described below!](#)



Recognizing that young people are both “Zoomed out” and families are out and about more this summer, Youth Programs staff have rethought our approach to online Annual Sessions this year.

- We're very excited to partner with [Historic Fair Hill](#) to offer an **in-person event on Sunday morning, July 25**, for children and youth of all ages and their families!

- During the week of Sessions, we **scaled back online programming** to focus on special guests and programs that **explore identity, inclusion, and belonging**.
- With these programs, we're kicking off our Youth Programs theme for this year: "Building the Quaker Community We Want to Be."
- **FOR PARENTS:** Saturday, July 31 Evening (9-10pm) Parent Worship Sharing -- We will gather for a time of grounded listening, spiritual care, and joy together. People who are parenting children ages 0-18 are invited to join!

**Please Share with Families!**

## Special Multigenerational Social Justice Workshop at Sessions for Teens

*For high school-age youth and adults in your meeting to attend together!*

Young Friends provides a spiritual home for high school aged Quaker and Quaker-friendly youth. This year, mediator, published poet, social worker, rapper, singer/songwriter, music producer, and Friday-evening keynote

speaker **Mai Spann-Wilson** will lead Young Friends in a multi-part workshop on social justice. Rising 9th-12th graders should register [HERE](#) to attend the online workshop sessions, Thursday and Friday, 4-5pm.



- **Adults who are family members, meeting friends, and mentors to Young Friends should please sign up to do the July 6 workshop with Mai as preparation for adults to join the multigenerational session on Saturday, July 31!**

**[Register to be an Adult Friendly Presence for this workshop](#)**

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

I hope as you create programs, activities, and try ideas you're excited about, you'll share your lesson plans, handouts, calendars, etc. The place for easy access and sharing among our Community of Practice:

The **[folder in Google Drive is available](#)** to contribute 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)

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