

Bellingham Friends Meeting & NPYM Youth Committee
Notes from an Adult Discussion on Children's Programs
March 8, 2015

notes compiled by Jay Thatcher, Annual Session Children's Program Coordinator

Admitting our newness to this ministry, Katherine Spinner and Jay opened the meeting for some wonderings, questions, comments and ideas from local Friends.

- I love crafts. However, I'm not sure what I might do will be *meaningful*.
- How can we provide connection to the wider Religious Society of Friends for our youth?
- It's important to be in a multi-generational community, where we can work together, such as for a charitable project or on a craft project.

Jay invited Friends' simple presence with the children as the greatest gift we can bring to them.

- At Quarterly Meeting, my group of boys from 8 to 11 built a fort. There were too many emperors and dictators, but we all learned some ways of processing that.
- Kinetic learners come with challenges to some of our plans for contemplative activities.
- Perhaps its time for a Children's retreat, or a joint generations retreat.
- I noticed Easter at meeting had eggs. The kids understood that custom. But do they know who Christ is?

Katherine suggested the [Children of God Storybook Bible](#), by Desmond Tutu. Godly Play is a way to tell a story from the Bible or Friends tradition that invites wondering questions from children. She asked if Bellingham Friends were comfortable speaking about Christ among themselves.

Jay has presented the Easter morning story with narration by an adult plus dramatic action by children. His usual text is [John 20:1-18](#) He's also used stories from [Quaker history](#), including Fox's turning away from a drinking game and away from his early apprenticeship and his conventional life.

- Let's do an intergenerational Easter Sunday program.
- During worship? Or Second hour?
- This talk is making me nervous. I'm one of those wounded by an overly aggressive church.

Katherine shared a collection of books that offer a chance for children to learn spiritually. One is *The Keeping Quilt* by Patricia Polacca, which could inspire a textile project. Other good books to share with Quaker kids include:

-*The Junkyard Wonders* by Patricia Polacca
-*Giving* by Shirley Hughes
-*Alfie and Annie Rose*
-*Obadiah* stories by Brinton Turkle
-*Butterflies Under Our Hats, God's Paintbrush, In God's Name, and God in Between* by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

-*All of Me! In my Heart, and The Paper Crane* by Molly Bang
-*The Other Side, This is the Rope, Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson
-*This Little Light of Mine* illustrated by E.B. Lewis

- Personal experience is vital to Quakerism. Worship-sharing is our fundamental sacrament. It's important to share it with children.
- Our children want to share with us.
- This conversation hasn't given us an action plan, but it has provided plenty of food for thought.
- There are possibilities in our community for a work project.
- NPYM has a [Youth Opportunity Fund](#) to keep in mind.