

## **Queries for Young Friends and Their Parents**

**By Beth Collea, RE Coordinator, NEYM**

Note: These queries were first written as part of a Queries Calendar project. For many months, a parents' and a teens' selection of queries is offered, but not for all.

### **First Month---Meeting for Worship**

Parents:

Do you attend Meeting for Worship regularly? Do you find time to nurture your own spiritual life through prayer, Bible study, worship sharing, or other practices? Do you share your experience in the Light (the unfolding of your faith journey) with your children so that they may sense some of the joy, energy, guidance, and comfort that give texture to your life of faith?

Young Friends:

Are you finding ways to explore different modes of worship keeping an open mind and heart as you seek? Do you create times of stillness and quiet in your life leaving at least moments here and there to listen for Spirit?

### **Second Month—Religious Education and Spiritual Development**

Parents:

Do you encourage First Day School attendance and support the RE program as you feel able? Do you listen attentively to your children for possible evidence of leadings and early "promptings of the heart" naming and validating their unfolding spiritual life? Do you regard the measure of the Light in your children as just as genuine, vital, and informative as that of any adult? Do you find ways to continue RE discussions at home?

Teens:

Do you find a place for First Day School or Young Friends in your schedule? Do you stay attuned to the ability of experiences, like hiking in nature or meditating, to open you to the divine?

### **Third Month—Meeting for Business**

Parents:

Do you exercise your responsibility to participate in Meeting for Business? Do you model patiently and prayerfully bringing yourself to corporate decision making? Do you see this as part of our sacred partnership with God? Are you able to set aside the games of power and advantage of the secular world and humbly enter into the discernment of God's work for us? Do you make sure your children are treated with equal respect in a Business Meeting? Do you present the work of the youth at Meeting for Business creating a wholeness in your Meeting? Do you accept things happening on God's schedule?

### **Fourth Month—Simplicity/Stewardship/Harmony with Creation**

Parents:

Do your choices about your schedule and possessions reflect your deepest priorities? Do your choices yield a life of balance and order? Do you treat the Earth gently, mindful of the impact of our food, transportation, and clothing choices on the environment?

Teens:

Do you recognize and resist the pressure of ads and commercials to buy things you may not really need or want? Do you reserve some time for unstructured relaxation and reflection? Do you recognize the thoughts and feelings that signal that you have filled your schedule so full you are not comfortable and at peace?

### **Fifth Month—Vocations and Gifts**

Parents:

Is your work compatible with your values? Is the life of the enterprise or institution for which you work broadly in line with the Quaker values of peace, justice, equality, simplicity, integrity, and community? Do you listen inwardly for new leadings which may impact your job choices? Do you share

your understanding of the spiritual component of your work? Do you help your children or other young people to identify their gifts and possible beginnings of leadings? Do you recognize the spiritual imperative of following a leading?

Teens:

Can you begin to identify times when your work, a project, or an activity just felt right? Do you have a sense of some vocation you are especially good at or care about? Can you try out a possible vocation through volunteering or other community service work?

### **Sixth Month—Social Justice and Equality**

Parents:

Do you show respect for all people? Do you examine your inner world of assumptions and biases and fears so as to move beyond them? Do you examine your outer world of social context that may accord you privilege of position and potential just because of your color or class? Do you work to find ways to dismantle that system of privilege? Do you create opportunities for yourself and your children to meet people face-to-face who are different in culture, religion, race or dress? Do you try to follow Jesus' example of reaching out to people on the margins of society? Do you find ways to work for social justice? Are you mindful of the implicit messages in the toys and video games you buy and the media you and your family watch?

Teens:

Do you speak against the unfair, unjust, and insensitive treatment of others? Do you try to look at each person as a person aware that you are more alike than you are different? Do you try not to form a negative opinion of a group based on one bad experience with any one person? If you are over 18 years of age, are you using your voice and your vote to move our society toward social justice and racial equality? Are you beginning to recognize the manipulation and harm inherent in political fear mongering? Do you think for yourself when you hear sweeping assumptions about people who are different? Do you counter these assumptions as much as possible?

## **Seventh Month---Outreach and Witness**

Parents:

Do you find ways to explicitly interject the Quaker perspective into the world beyond the walls of your Meetinghouse? Do you help prepare your children to answer questions about Quakerism in school or the community? Do you actively welcome newcomers into your Meeting and see the disruption caused by growth as more joyful than painful? Do you gently and patiently accept the negative social consequences of speaking your truth? Do you work to find your own comfortable and genuine style of "Quaker evangelism" sharing what you have come to know of the Light and its activity in your life?

Teens:

Do you invite interested friends to attend Meeting? Do you good-naturedly answer questions about Quakerism? Are you developing a "Quakerism in a nutshell" speech so that you can share something of the special qualities of Quakerism? Do you perform acts of conscience knowing that even small displays of forthrightness, integrity, inclusion, non-violent conflict resolution and compassion show most clearly what a Quaker life really is?

## **Eighth Month---Integrity and Personal Conduct**

Parents:

Do you practice "careful speech"? Do you keep the promises you make? Do you "walk your talk" so that the activities of your life show forth your values? Do you treat people with the same respect and genuine regard when they are present or absent? Do you work to possess an inner wholeness so that you have one set of ethics and expectations for all people? Do you avoid the temptation to misrepresent a situation? Do you uphold a high standard of truthfulness that requires not only a technical truthfulness but a forthrightness and an avoidance of misrepresentation?

Teens:

Do you act from the same values and loyalties no matter what the social situation? Do you try to tell the full truth and not shade or conceal the

truth? Can you follow the Native American recommendation that your head, your mouth, and your heart are all in a straight line?

### **Ninth Month---Peace and Reconciliation**

Parents:

Do you cultivate an inward peacefulness out of which can spring a life of compassion and right relations? Do you prayerfully work in partnership with God to bring healing and reconciliation to your life? Do you consciously work to imagine a world at peace? Do you find concrete ways to witness for peace in the broader culture? Do you celebrate large and small acts of peace to help your children see the reality of peace?

Teens:

Do you give people a second chance? Do you stand up for people who are being picked on, bullied, or marginalized? Do you try to really listen to another point of view? Can you hold onto the sense that people are basically good even if they have done bad things?

### **Tenth Month---The Meeting Community**

Teens:

Do you welcome new people into your Meeting community? Do you recognize that your Meeting is a living thing, an organic whole, which requires all of its parts to function well in order to thrive? Have you found some way that you can contribute to the whole through committee work or service of some sort?

### **Eleventh Month—Care of Children**

Teens:

Do you help to create a Meeting community where all children feel safe and comfortable?

### **Twelfth Month---Home and Family**

Parents:

Do you weave the elements of Quaker worship and practice into your home life? Do you reserve time in order to bask in the company of your family? Do you take time to listen and create opportunities for teens to open up and speak about important things? Is your home a welcoming place for your children and their friends? Do you ask enough questions to know your kids are safe and have back up plans in place if things go awry? Do you apologize when you feel your judgment or behavior has fallen short?

Teens:

Do you find ways to share your life with your family through shared interests, activities, or one-on-one dates like going out for lunch together? Do you work through disagreements peacefully? Do you help to build a joyful, affirming family culture?