Religious Education at Stony Run Friends Meeting

for parents and all members of our faith community

2026-2027

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Overview of Religious Education at Stony Run

The Religious Education Committee provides year-round Sunday morning activities for children of all ages through a variety of programs.

Meeting for Worship is always open to children of all ages. Children under six years old have space to gather every First Day in the Nursery pre-primary room. The Elementary First Day School class welcomes children from kindergarten through fifth grades. Our Middle and High School Class includes those in grades six through twelve. Once a month (normally near high-travel holidays) and in the summers, all our school-aged youth gather in one group for Assemblies.

Our program uses the time together for showing and guiding students to see the variety of spiritual paths available to them. Community-building is a prime goal. Religious education honors the Light within all and respects the contributions of the individual students, teachers, and parents in the program.

Per courtesy, safety and Maryland law please don't allow children younger than 13 to wander Meetinghouse halls or the playground during Meeting for Worship or other events without an adult presence. Please be considerate of our childcare workers and meet your children at Simple Lunch quickly after the rise of Meeting.

We encourage parents and caregivers to become active in the programs provided. You are welcome at all activities.

Meeting for Worship

Meeting for Worship offers time for expectant silence (sometimes called "silent worship"), vocal ministry, and seeking of the Inner Spirit. Friends have a saying, "religion is caught, not taught." The best way for children to come to know Meeting for Worship is to participate in it. We provide tools for children, just as we provide them for adults, to help them to enter fully into worship. These materials are located outside of the Meeting room, under the table in the hallway, and children are invited to choose whatever might help them to enter and be in that contemplative space.

Children are welcome in Meeting for Worship at any time, though they customarily attend the first 20 minutes of late meeting and are then escorted to age-appropriate First Day School classes. Parents do not need to leave the meeting unless they want to accompany their children, but if it is your first time taking part in our youth programs, parents are invited to come down to fill out some simple registration paperwork.

Classes and Curriculum

Childcare in the Nursery *(Room 214; ages infant-age 5)*

Stony Run is committed to providing childcare for everyone for all Meeting events. The Nursery is open to all children up to age 5 every First day during Meeting for Worship (9:00 am – 12:15 pm September through June; 8:00 am – 11:15 am in July and August.) Two care-giving adults will be present at all times. All our Nursery workers have received background checks.

First Day School for grades K-5 *(in the Double classroom (rooms 101-102), 1ages 6-11)*

Elementary aged children are led by a teacher and an adult assistant each week. Our focus includes the power of Spirit in our lives, what Bible stories mean to us, and the example of Quakers past and present through stories and activities that speak to children. Once a month, normally on the 2nd Sunday, we feature lessons from Faith & Play and Godly Play.

Young Friends for grades 6-12 *(Room 202; ages 12-18)*

These students are a self-governing group. The group traditionally has held Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business on the First Sunday of the month (Bagels for Business), which is their business meeting and time for planning their time together. This includes planning service projects, such as organizing a Meeting-wide picnic at the Burial Ground, baking cookies for the Meeting Christmas carol-sing, a “Pie day” bake sale, organizing Easter assembly and an Earth Day electronics recycling day.

Policies

The RE Committee respects the policies put in place by the Meeting community for the smooth and ethical operation of our program. The details of various policies are below.

Fire Drills

If there is a fire drill, teachers calmly escort the children in their classroom to their designated safe spot and stay with them until the fire drill is over (at which time class may resume, time permitting), or parents pick their children up.

Record-keeping

Teachers keep attendance rosters complete and up to date; these are documents which will be filed and available should any children later wish to have them as evidence of their intentions to be Conscientious Objectors.

Teachers track all volunteer attendance within the class (even parents) at the bottom of each printed roster of class attendance. Please record the date and name of any volunteer.

Child Safety Policy

Stony Run has adopted detailed standards governing our supervision of children's activities. The entire policy is available in a binder in the Library and on the website.

The following is a summary of our guidelines set out for all members of the Meeting community who interact with children, including within the context of First Day School:

- Parents are responsible for supervising their children before and after First Day classes and during all meeting events. It is the responsibility of parents to teach their children about appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. This includes going outside or to the Dining room for Simple Lunch. Classes end promptly at the close of Meeting.
- Our goal is to have two adults present in each class, but at times the ratio is one adult to up to 5 children or youth. If there is ever an instance of a class with just one adult and one child, that adult will combine their class with another group.
- Regular teachers and program leaders must complete a background check every three years (administered and seen only by the Facilitator). The background check does not include credit checks and is focused only on child safety. Occasional volunteers (like parents volunteering in their child's classroom) are not required to have a background check but it is encouraged.
- Inappropriate behaviors toward and in front of children are prohibited. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, smoking and use of tobacco, weapons possession, being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs used illegally, displays of sexual behavior, pornography, physical neglect, inadequate supervision (including lax supervision of small children on the playground), and mental or emotional injury to a minor. Overall, any behavior that would be considered inappropriate is prohibited.
- If there are situations that require a 1:1 adult to child ratio (examples may include travel on field trips, or specific instances), the parent must provide written permission for the 1:1 ratio.
- Regarding bathroom use, older children are allowed to go to and from the closest bathrooms on their own. We avoid a 1:1 ratio while helping younger children in the bathroom by propping open the bathroom door in the Nursery to provide easy, visible access.
- The Meeting requires that all teachers and program leaders report suspected child abuse to the Clerk of Meeting or the Facilitator, who will then investigate the claim, keeping the Meeting community informed of the investigation with respect to matters that are not confidential.

Expectations for Students, Parents, and Teachers

Expectations are part of our social contract within Religious Education classes, and we offer these expectations to students, parents, and teachers, asking them to agree to and respect them.

Expectations for Students

- **Respect:** Treat teachers and other students with respect and courtesy. This includes listening to others, following instructions, and considering the feelings of other students during class activities.
- **Cooperation:** Pay attention and cooperate fully with teachers and other children.

- **Positive Attitude:** Participate in class activities with a positive attitude.

Expectations for Parents

- **Respect:** Be respectful of teachers and their children by dropping off and collecting children in a timely manner. (Most First Days, we take the youth from their classes to Simple Lunch at 12:15, and you can pick up your child there.) If needed, allow time for a reasonable parting from their children when dropping off.
- **Cooperation:** Work with teachers to manage any problems that arise in the classroom. Please note that if a teacher is having difficulty helping a child cooperate with others or engage in the class, the teacher may request that the child's parent stay in the classroom. That way the teacher will be able to fulfill their responsibilities to the rest of the class.
- **Communication:** Let teachers know about any specific needs as well as either permanent or temporary situations that might require special consideration. For childcare in the nursery, parents must complete a form for each child. Each time a child is delivered to the nursery, parents must complete the sign-in sheet to let the childcare providers know how to contact the parent.

Expectations for Teachers/Childcare Providers

- **Respect**: Teachers are expected to model the values of the Friends community for the students, and to treat students with respect and courtesy. This includes maintaining a note of discretion with other adults in discussing perceived classroom issues and avoiding airing of negative comments about the children within their hearing after class and within the larger community.
- **Cooperation**: Teachers may need to work with parents to manage problems that arise in the classroom. If a teacher is having difficulty encouraging a student to be part of the class or cooperate with others, the teacher may ask the parent to stay with the student during First Day School, so that the parent can help the student acclimate while the teacher helps the rest of the class with the lesson.
- **Participation**: Welcome children at 11:20 and keep them until 12:15, when First Day School is dismissed and parents either pick up their children or we go together to Simple Lunch.
- **Communication**: Teachers will communicate with parents and children at the pickup about child's specific needs, as well as either permanent or temporary situations that might require special consideration. If unavailable to teach a session, teachers are expected to arrange for a substitute or ask the Committee to find a substitute.

Teaching Opportunities

All classes and assemblies are guided by active participants in the Meeting community. There are opportunities to teach First Day School classes, lead Young Friends activities, and lead All-age Assemblies. Although class schedules are set at the beginning of the school year, the Committee is committed to finding opportunities for new teachers and leaders at any time of the year.

The RE Committee continues to offer pay to our teachers for their work with our children. We realized that many who were called to teach cannot afford to miss paid opportunities to work on Sundays or have other conflicting obligations. The ability to volunteer is a privilege. We have set aside money to pay our teachers, as something that is intertwined with our core values and testimonies, at a rate of $25/hour.

Teaching support

Religious Education teachers are active participants of the Meeting community and we value their contributions. To support teachers in their efforts, the Usher will check the hallways and classrooms shortly after 11:20 to ensure compliance with the Child Safety Policy.

We encourage teachers to bring student concerns and issues quickly to the Religious Education Committee for resolution. We want to ensure that disruptions to the classroom environment are resolved quickly with little effect on other students in the classroom.

Throughout the year, if there are new children in the classroom, parents are asked to fill out a Child Information Sheet so that we may update the roster.

For extra physical materials, there are resources in the Double classroom as well as in the Nursery. If you need to purchase additional supplies to support your teaching, you can either request the Facilitator to make a purchase on your behalf or make a purchase and submit a request for reimbursement.

Teaching requirements

All teachers and regular substitute teachers are required by the Meeting's Child Safety Policy and Maryland State law to undergo a background check before working with students. This check looks for criminal activity related to children and does not include credit checks.

Adult Religious Education

Gathering regularly to deepen our faith and learn about Quaker practice and belief, ways to live our faith in the world, and groups and initiatives Stony Run is participating in is an important part of our community. We take part in these gatherings on Sunday mornings and at other times throughout the week, both in person and in hybrid meetings.

We hold regular forums (usually from 9:15 - 10:30 AM) about Quakerism and other topics of interest to Friends. Recent topics have included discussions about recently published Pendle Hill pamphlets, how we worship, Quaker camp for families, and presentations from international and local community partners. A forum can be a panel presentation, discussion of a reading provided in advance, or another format, but they always include time to share with each other, get to know each other, and learn together.

About every year or two, we offer a series about the basics of Quaker worship, decision-making, testimonies, and beliefs. While this series is designed with seekers and those new to Quaker practices in mind, even long-time Friends can be surprised with new ways to think about what we do here. There is no required reading, though several resources will be shared. We are in the process of scheduling a series of gatherings for 2026, so please stay tuned.

Monthly Bible Study Hour from a Quaker perspective is led by Paul Isayi, normally on the second First Day of the month. The Zoom link may be found in the weekly Silent Announcements.

Each year, Stony Run Friends take part in the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Spiritual Formation Program, which offers practical ways for seekers to deepen their personal spiritual experience while building spiritual community. From September-May, participants gather in facilitated small groups of 5-8 to share stories of our spiritual journeys. We also have a monthly large group meeting to learn together through readings and discussion and to continue to deepen our relationships with the Divine and one another.

Forums and other opportunities for adult spiritual formation are announced in the Silent Announcements and monthly Newsletter.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camping & Youth Programs

Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) holds a series of **weekend conferences** for Junior Young Friends (JYF's) and Young Friends (YF's). Children in sixth through eighth grades are Junior Young Friends (JYF) and high-school aged children are Young Friends (YF) for the purposes of Baltimore Yearly Meeting activities. The conferences, or "cons", are held at different Quaker Meetinghouses throughout the school year. Cons are a fun way to see friends from other Meetings and camp, make new friends, and retreat from the pressures of teenage life, while still developing skills around living in community and having a lot of fun.

- Sep 25-27 - YF Con @ Gunpowder
- Nov 20-22 - YF Con @ Langley Hill
- Jan 8-10 - YF Con @ Herndon
- Feb 12-14 - YF Con @ TBD
- April 10-12 - YF Con @ Shiloh
- May 14-16 - YF Grad Con @ The Clearing
- Nov 7-8 - JYF Con @ TBD
- March 6-7 - JYF Con @ TBD
- April 30-May 2 - JYF Grad Con @ TBD

Baltimore Yearly Meeting's **summer camping programs** provide opportunities for spending extended time living in functioning Quaker communities that encourage tenderness, loving concern, dynamic activity, laughter, respect, work, honesty, silence, and joyful noise. Camps at Catoctin, Opequan, and Shiloh offer youth ages 9-14 two weeks of building community, lots of time with nature, and deep spiritual experiences. The Teen Adventure program is for youth ages 15-17 and operates from a base camp in Lexington, VA, and trips of twelve campers and two leaders embark for three weeks of hiking, canoeing, and service projects.

Stony Run is committed to participating in and supporting BYM's camping programs and encourage our children and youth to attend and help spread the word about Camp. Stony Run offers financial support to families from both communities active in our First Day Programs to help them attend camp. Information about how to receive financial assistance will be available by March 2026.

During the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions, youth are invited to take part in **Junior Yearly Meeting** and **Young Friends** gatherings. Annual Sessions are held in late July-early August each year, and participants take part in activities that help connect us all across worshipping communities.

Friends School

Friends School of Baltimore is adjacent to the Stony Run Meetinghouse. Founded in 1784, Friends School of Baltimore provides a coeducational, college preparatory program guided by the Quaker values of truth, equality, simplicity community and peaceful resolution of conflict.

Friends Church Baltimore, a programmed meeting, holds worship on the FSB campus. We share religious education experiences, the playground, simple lunch, and some facilities with each other.

For more information about a Quaker education, please visit the school's webpage at friendsbalt.org.

Calendar of Events 2026 – 2027 *(subject to change)*

September 20	First day of regular classes and FDS classroom Open House for families
October 24	Family festival @ the Friends Burial Ground, 4:30 pm
November 21	Pie Bake (Middle and High School Young Friends)
November 29	All-ages Assembly for Thanksgiving
December 20	Young Friends cookie baking afternoon
December 27	All-ages holiday Assembly
March 28	All-ages Assembly for Easter; Egg hunt led by Young Friends
May 30	All-ages Assembly for Memorial Day
June 13	Last regular class, presentation of gift books and Ice Cream Social
June 20	Summer Assemblies begin

Please contact any member of the Religious Education (RE) Committee with any questions, concerns, suggestions, or ideas.

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