

How to Include High Schoolers in the Meeting

It can be challenging for meetings to integrate high schoolers into the community due to some different needs and interests, but it's not impossible. Here are some ideas about how to discover ways to connect and capitalize on those needs and interests you have in common:

- Have a time for socializing and snacks after meeting. Schedule times for playing, singing, interacting in ways other than meeting for worship, such as a meeting-wide service project.
- Hold meeting a little later in the morning.
- Encourage high schoolers to attend meeting gently and persistently, but not forcefully; tell them what you would gain from their presence and what they might gain from participating.
- Talk to them! Make the youth feel wanted and appreciated. Show genuine interest in their activities, passions, and spiritual journeys.
- Don't be frustrated with youth if they miss meeting; instead, you might inquire if they need a ride or if an evening or mid-week meeting might better fit their needs.
- Maintain a meeting website with information to invite those seeking a new spiritual home.

How to Include Younger Friends on Committees

- Talk to younger people; get to know their skills and gifts. Affirm their gifts by encouraging them to serve on an appropriate committee and submit their name to nominating committee.
- Seek out younger and new people to be on committees, so you don't target the same people all the time. If you find a younger Friend who says no, ask them for suggestions for other names. Talk to those who coordinate youth activities in your monthly or yearly meetings for ideas.
- Dare to nominate or include someone who does not have a lot of committee experience—this is how people learn about Quaker process.
- Consider looking at new ways of doing things that may be more welcoming to younger Friends. Be open to adjusting your committee structure and environment so that it is more easily accessible to Friends of all ages.
- Make child care available for Friends who have children.
- Don't assume that younger Friends (even those with children) should be on child care or religious education committees.

How to Stay in Touch with Teens from your Meeting After they Graduate from High School

High school graduation is on the horizon! Those Friends who have been with the meeting for years are ready to head off to college, a new job, or some other adventure. And just as we have nurtured them for years, we can continue to support these young adults and let them know that they still have a home meeting and they will not be forgotten. Here are some ideas on reaching out to them when their journey takes them away:

- Send birthday cards.
- Give them a gift subscription to *Friends Journal*.
- Bake cookies and send care packages.
- Send them the monthly and yearly meeting newsletter.
- Write a note of introduction to the clerk of the meeting where they now live.
- Take turns writing them once a month; invite middle and high schoolers who knew them to participate in this.
- Acknowledge them after meeting if they are back for a visit.
- Have a spiritual Friend or elder keep in touch with them.
- Set up an email group of other younger Friends in the meeting who have graduated.



- Offer to give them a letter of introduction.
- Invite them personally to the next yearly meeting session.
- Inquire if they need financial assistance to attend yearly meeting sessions.
- Create a regular newsletter section that contains news from these Friends, and invite them to write about their experiences.
- Welcome them back during holiday breaks—make a fuss, celebrate!
- Continue their beloved meeting traditions and invite them to take part whenever they can.



- Recognize that younger Friends may be in the beginning stages of careers or some type of school environment and may not have the flexibility or financial resources to be at all meetings for the entire time. Hold them accountable for coming as much as is possible, and be tender with them as they discern this. Find ways to work with them (i.e. teleconferencing, welcoming them when they arrive, arranging carpools or locating meetings near public transport).



- Include high schoolers in the meeting's outreach efforts and other meaningful tasks; seek out their opinions and suggestions, and act on them.
- Have some younger Friends on committees; pay attention to their gifts and encourage their participation by naming those gifts to them as well as nominating committee.
- Offer first day school with teachers enthusiastic about the spiritual journeys of those who attend as well as the material.
- Have a living, vibrant faith, and talk about it.
- Be welcoming; introduce yourself to newcomers and learn the names of youth (and others) in your meeting; consider inviting young friends to dinner or an outing.
- Encourage the young adults in your meeting to consider membership.
- Contact the FGC youth ministries program.