

Opening Doors to Quaker Religious Education

By Mary Snyder. Published by Friends General Conference, 1999. Paperback, 128 pages.

Opening Doors to Quaker Religious Education is a thoughtful, well-organized, and thorough book on developing religious education programs so that "each person may meet the Inward Teacher." Its author, Mary Snyder, provides both a theoretical framework and a wide range of practical ideas to implement First Day School plans for young children through adults. It is, I believe, one of the most important publications on this topic put forth by Friends General Conference and serves as a companion to *Opening Doors to Quaker Worship* and *Opening Doors to Quaker Parenting* (not yet published).

The book emphasizes five ways in which we communicate as Friends: role modeling, storytelling, wondering together, affirmation, and curriculum. It discusses many assumptions underlying Quaker religious education as well as how to teach children, teens, and adults. Based upon a simple, straightforward framework, Mary Snyder consolidates many ideas used previously by Friends as well as her own innovations. She recognizes the diversity of children and age groups in Meetings and the vast fluctuations in class sizes. She blends different methods—storytelling, art, drama, games, and silence—contrasted in both single-aged groups and intergenerational settings. Her chapters on working with teens and then with adults go beyond First Day School issues to encompass community building, service, and the integration of education and worship.

I personally found this book helpful in writing a curriculum about the Four Gospels for our middle school students from our Meeting. Her approach provided a structure to articulate class goals and lesson plans. Her vast number of teaching techniques were an invaluable resource and also spawned ideas of our own. Her book was shared with others in our Meeting to help in their work with younger children and teens. This is a "must read" book for anyone, new or veteran, interested in Quaker religious education.

For More Information:

You can get [Opening Doors to Quaker Religious Education](#) from Quakerbooks of FGC.

This document was downloaded from the website of Friends General Conference. Explore the many resources and opportunities we offer for Quakers, Quaker meetings, and all interested individuals. Go to www.fgcquaker.org.

