



# “What’s Next?” Looking Head Planning Guide Children & Youth Programs

## **Part I: Where has the Light been for you?**

What do you feel good about from the past year in your religious education program:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## **Part II: What do we know for the coming season(s)?**

Thinking broadly about the next 3-6 months, what are the things that you can count on happening? Try to focus on what you *do* know rather than what you do *not* know and trust that you will fill in the details later!

*Examples:*

- *We will have a fall fellowship event as a meeting and invite families.*
- *We will gather for some sort of worship that includes children and families.*
- *We’ll send communication to families in August about what to expect in the fall.*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Part III: Guiding Light** — As you think about planning outreach and religious ed programs, what provides guiding light in your meeting? Big questions for brainstorming together as a committee — or as a meeting community!

- *Why do we offer a religious education program for children/youth?*  
Community building and fellowship? Developing Quaker faith, practice, and identity with young people? Exploring spiritual practices? Witness and service?
- *What is at the center/heart of your meeting's programs for children and youth, no matter what you're doing or how you do it?* What practices, events, shared priorities ground your program?

**Part IV: Reuse & Release** — Again, thinking broadly for the next 3-6 months, think through some of the things you can reuse or release.

**Reuse:** What are things — books, curricula, stories, projects, etc. — that have been well-received in your program? What's tried and true and you feel positive about repeating?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Release:** These are the things you could *stop doing completely* or *drastically reduce*. Examples: programs that have poor attendance or outcomes (reduce the number of times you do them — if weekly, try monthly, if monthly, try quarterly.) Is there a program or event you could release this coming year? What no longer has energy?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Part V: New Growth** — Skip this if you're not in the mood to talk about new things or big ideas right now. If you are, go for it!

Think of any big ideas you've got. List the idea, and then below it list 2-3 variations of it you could try to test it out. Example of tree-sized idea = weekly multigenerational program on Wednesday nights for all ages that includes dinner, games, and a lesson/story. Sapling-sized variations = one summer Wednesday night popsicle drive-by with a 10 minute story; community worship once a quarter on the same week as a shared lunch after.

Tree Idea #1:

Sapling Variations:

Tree Idea #2:

Sapling Variations:

Tree Idea #3:

Sapling Variations: