



“What’s Next?” Looking Ahead 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 want to reuse or release.

Reuse: What books, curricula, stories, projects, etc. 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 — 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 Wednesday night pizza party this quarter; an all-ages community worship once a month on the same week as a shared lunch after.

Tree Idea #1:

Sapling Variations:

Tree Idea #2:

Sapling Variations:

Tree Idea #3:

Sapling Variations: