

Nurturing Children and Youth Dream Team Report

4/13/09

The Dream Team participated in a threshing session, consulted with the Religious Education Committee, held two interactive sessions with the children and youth to get their input, held numerous brainstorming and prioritizing exercises as a team and sponsored a parent and teacher night. From all of these, we distilled the following set of 4 goals with some samples of ideas about how to pursue those goals.

1. Children and families experience the joy of spirituality through community
Parents and other adults invited to junior meeting every other month to play cooperative games.

Encourage BYM camping programs

Family/neighborhood service groups/projects

Friendly 8s with 2-3 children with parents and other adults – focused program or games

Teach stories through role playing and drama

Create drama or musical opportunity for the kids – a choir? Godspell?

Games-intergenerational

-group building/cooperative

Dinner/game night

Games on potluck Sunday while weather is nice

Need a couple structured games to get us going, maybe spring and fall

Bingo night in winter

Multi-generational games every other month

Once a month Sunday night fun gathering—games night, movie nights, talent nights, etc. (this could be coupled with parents' fun or spirit nights)

2. Children and families honor that of God in everyone through service

A few years ago we were doing our usual end of the year assessment with the Middle Schoolers – “What was your favorite class? Least favorite? Why?” One child immediately said to the group’s agreement that the best was going to the local nursing home to sing Xmas carols. This was considered by the students one of the most rewarding sessions of the year. There have been many studies showing that a clear way to be happier and empowered is to do things for others. It is a great gift to our Youth to facilitate the happiness and empowerment that comes from service. This entails no big changes or cash out lays from the larger Meeting.

While working together as a Dream Team an important ingredient was INPUT FROM THE CHILDREN. Some of the categories that the kids wanted us

to increase were: physical activity, inter-age/generational, outside activity, field trips. All of these very concrete desires and dreams of the children can be answered with a curriculum that includes more actual service.

Service is also called for from Adelphi Adults. You can serve our youth, either as teachers or as back ground support for the RE programs. What better way to practice your Quaker faith than to spend time and energy serving our wonderful children and our future.

Some Ideas

Service project for K-12 all together

Kids select one human rights cause to learn about and contribute to during the year.

5th Sunday- service focus

Work with schools to make Adelphi service project part of or applicable to class credit or community service hours.

Include some service to members of community in need

Ideas for folding into existing service:

Enhance games day-design games, add materials/budget, pull young friends into games day,

Year-long meeting wide service project

Service to meeting

Cleaning dishes after potluck?

House and grounds, gardening

Mother Jones tutoring

Safe Haven- kids sponsor a night

3. Strengthen the First Day School program

Consider a curriculum for all classes, ie “Godly Play”

Consider changing first day schedule (9:00-9:50 first day school, 10:00-10:20, all Adelphi worship, 10:20-11:20 free play for kids.

Get parents more involved in preparation and followup to 1st day school

Activities in every FDS lesson

Review team teaching strategy for its effectiveness

Create a regular interval in which parents/teachers can provide feedback and communication about the FDS program

Have clearer signs indicating where kids go and when (including Jr. Meeting)

Ensure that there is an ACTIVE game or activity for every First Day School class

Arts and crafts beyond just coloring

Recruit parents to assist in FDS more

Promote more respectful attitude of children toward their teachers

4. Practicing and experiencing loving kindness to and from others

Repeated practice and reminders of loving kindness to teachers and peers in 1st day school

Have kids establish and practice conflict resolution steps

The curriculum for Junior Meeting includes learning and understanding more about the needs of others

Teach meditation skills to older youth (12 and up)

People in the Adelphi community share their personal stories with children (younger version of Preparation for Meeting for Worship)

In First Day School and Junior Meeting, children are prompted to say something they like about the person next to them

Non-parents “adopt” a class and classes think of something nice to do for them

Have children choose a non-family member in the AFM community as their “buddy”—exchange cards, letters and sit together in Meeting.

The Team (in alphabetical order)

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