

Growing Our Meeting: Discerning Next Steps

After your meeting has spent some time exploring the topics of inreach, outreach, and/or integrating newcomers, it's important to discern together the ways that the meeting is called to grow.

This time for discernment and reflection can take place at the end of a workshop or renewal or could be offered as a stand-alone session focused solely on making plans for the future. The important thing is to come together in worship as a whole meeting to listen deeply and dream big. The goal of this conversation is to guide a working group toward making concrete plans for moving forward.

Worship Sharing: Settle into worship sharing around the following queries:

- ✓ How is God calling our meeting to grow?
- ✓ What is our vision for our meeting's growth, health, and vitality over the coming months and years?
- ✓ Based on what we've learned and explored (about inreach, outreach, and/or integrating newcomers), what's next for our meeting?

Conclusion to the worship sharing: Remind Friends that growing our meetings and becoming more healthy and vital is a dynamic, changing process. This is not an endeavor with an end-point. Rather, discernment, growth, and making changes must be part of an ongoing, self-reflective practice. We encourage meetings to build discernment such as this into the annual cycle of meeting life.

Planning: In response to the worship sharing session, a working group can schedule a time to meet to reflect on what they heard and to begin creating a plan for next steps for the meeting. The Next Steps Discernment Guide offers a framework for considering where to focus the meeting's energy and efforts.

Next Steps Discernment Guide

What is our vision for our meeting's growth, health, and vitality over the coming months? Coming years? What is God calling us to do?

Where are we called to focus our time and energy? What might we need to let go of in order to make room for growth?

What activities or opportunities would we like to make happen in the next three months? Six months? Year?

Who in our meeting might lead us forward and follow through on this plan? Who else might like to get involved?

What business processes would we need to follow as we make plans? (For example, present the plan at Meeting for Business, form an ad hoc committee, request a budget...)

How do we invite Spirit in as we make plans? How do we ground all we do in worship?

How does our plan move our meeting toward greater health and vitality?

What are some concrete action steps we can take in the next 6-8 weeks?

What support might we need from our regional network of Friends, yearly meeting, FGC, or others?