

# Listening Group Prompts

Timing note: If your group allocates two hours for this conversation, that will allow 15 minutes for each of the six overarching prompts plus 15 minutes of worship at both the opening and the closing of the conversation.

1. Opening go-around:
  - a. Each person is invited to share something that stood out to them reading the background materials and one change to Sessions they would make if they had a magic wand.
  - b. As the time available and the size of your group allows, this initial sharing could also include briefly describing their relationship to/personal history with Sessions or anything else they would like the group to know as the conversation begins.
  
2. What has life:
  - a. Throughout the year and at Annual Sessions, Quakers in New England from various meetings come together for corporate discernment, worship, fellowship, learning, and witness<sup>1</sup>. What about these regional gatherings has particular life for you and your community?
  - b. What is a gift you and your meeting experience (directly or indirectly) from these opportunities?
  
3. Possible adaptations:
  - a. As you reflect on the background materials and the condition of Friends meetings and individual Friends you know, what stands out to you as an ideal yet sustainable version of Sessions and/or Yearly Meeting activities that would contribute to the overall spiritual health of Friends in New England?
  
4. Indicators:
  - a. As the Yearly Meeting moves towards new approaches, what indicator that we are on the right path feels especially important to pay attention to?
  - b. Conversely, what is something we need to be prepared to hold lightly, let go of, or intentionally not prioritize for the time being?
  
5. Reflection on unity:
  - a. What did you hear underneath the words in this conversation?
  - b. Where in this conversation did there seem to be unity?
  - c. Where in this conversation were there perspectives or values that seem to be in tension?
  - d. What questions does the group still seem to be wrestling with in relation to this topic?
  
6. Closing go-around:
  - a. Each person is invited to share what is on their heart and mind coming away from this conversation. This could include acknowledging a feeling, a new insight, a hope, or a prayer.

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<sup>1</sup> Events formally organized by NEYM include retreats for youth and young adults, Meeting Care Day, Living Faith, Meeting for Listening, Monthly Meeting Leader Calls, and various interest groups and workshops.







# Possible Sessions Scenarios

The goal of this section is to outline some scenarios we could adopt for future Sessions, holding these realities with the impact of each. The intent is to share the thinking that has already been done to fuel deeper discernment on the shape of Sessions, not to limit the possibilities considered in our collective brainstorming

## Options:

From initial exploration, here are six possible models the Yearly Meeting might consider for future Sessions. Each has a potential impact on our ability to serve various populations of Friends as well as implications for Yearly Meeting staff time, Sessions-specific staffing (seasonal paid and volunteer roles), and the finances of the Yearly Meeting.

Those scenarios are:

	<p><b>Limited Housing:</b> Find another location that can accommodate us without the same amount of housing<sup>2</sup>.</p>
	<p><b>Only Families On-Site:</b> Hold youth programs in person with housing for families, and adult programs virtually.</p>
	<p><b>Entirely Online:</b> Hold Sessions entirely online.</p>
	<p><b>Regional Network:</b> Hold regional events that are brought together virtually.</p>
	<p><b>Shorter On-Site:</b> Significantly shorten the residential portion of Sessions to a length that is logistically and financially more attractive to Friends (e.g. a long weekend).</p>
	<p><b>Every Other Year:</b> Hold Sessions in person every-other year rather than annually.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Currently the vast majority of people at Sessions stay on campus in the dorms or camp on campus. A site that might otherwise support Sessions would require Friends making their own arrangements using resources identified by the YM. This could include commuting, connections with Friends in the local area willing to offer home stay or blocks of rooms at area hotels or nearby colleges, with far fewer people residing on site.