Innovation Application Packet

Please read through the instructions for the whole of the application before beginning to answer individual questions. Note what kind of information is requested in each section and the word limits set. Be clear and concise with your answers. You do not need to repeat information provided in one section in your responses to other sections.

Submit completed application at https://www.realkidsrealfaith.org/innovation-hubs/.

1. **Briefly describe the focus of the proposed innovation.**

   *Describe what your innovation is and what it hopes to achieve. Think of this as your 3-minute summary, 'elevator speech', or whatever other quick explanation you would give if someone asked you what you are proposing. **(150 word limit)***

   Put this proposal summary here and also copy it into the text box on the website when submitting your completed application.

2. **What condition does the innovation aim to address?**

   *Effective innovations meet a contemporary need experienced by children and their families. Tell us what need you will try to meet or problem you hope to solve. **(50 word limit)***

   Here are some examples:
   - *Children are ill-prepared to deal with the death of a loved one, and families need effective tools for reflecting together on life and death issues.*
   - *Children have few opportunities to express themselves freely and need safe spaces to practice sharing their hopes and fears for a just world.*
   - *Children don't have the skills to connect with the natural world and need opportunities to encounter nature individually and as a group.*

3. **What is your new idea to address the condition you identified in #2?** OR *(if your project primarily builds on previous work)* **What significant changes to your prior work are you proposing to better address the condition you identified in #2?**

   New research has changed how we understand child development, but these learnings have yet to be applied to children's spirituality. We are looking for new practices, projects, or programs that utilize current research to nurture children's spirituality. New

innovations will work outside traditional schooling models and will not be something that you are already doing.

- *For example, developing a new curriculum for a children's Sunday School class is not a new innovation. A new innovation would be starting an arts program that helps children and their families create murals in local public or private spaces. Participants would explore social justice issues and strengthen family and community connections through spiritual reflection and action.*

Our focus is on new innovations, but we will consider innovations that adapt an existing youth or adult program or practice for children.

- *For example, adapting a process currently used by schools to help prevent youth suspensions and expulsions to create a program for children focused on restorative conversation skills. The proposal shows how current research and best practices re: developing children's prosocial and communication skills has reshaped their youth approach into something more child-oriented. It explains why any retained features of the youth process are appropriate for a younger age group.*

We would also accept innovations that significantly change a current practice or program with children. These innovations would apply current research and expand the scope of the existing work.

- *For example, an existing Mommy and Me group uses singing to strengthen relationships. The proposal shows how a review of current research on child development suggests that multi-sensory art experiences would be more effective for cultivating strong spiritual relationships. It also explains why the organization wants to expand the program to reach families who may not have access to art classes because of financial constraints and to add an additional research-based component that will foster respect for diversity among participants.*

4. **What social science or similar research supports your proposed innovation?**

All Hub innovation proposals must be grounded in research findings from the last 10 years (and we'd prefer the last 5 years). We are interested in how new discoveries in child development, neuroscience, education, or other social science research fields have shaped your proposal idea. Please share 2-3 articles, books, or people and explain how each reference has informed your work. **(300 word limit)**

Here are some examples:
- Susan Engel (*The Intellectual Lives of Children,* 2021) talks about children's curiosity and imagination. Her ideas helped me think differently about how children make meaning and develop their spiritual identity out of their daily routines within their community (family, school, and friends).
- The work of Paul Harris (Harvard) focuses on the role of trust in moral development, which is important to how we imagine cultivating spiritually rich adult-child relationships.
- Three Edutopia articles (How to Get the Benefits of Interactive Notebooks in Digital Formats, How to Use Digital Media to Support Preschoolers' Learning and How to Create a Digital Library That Kids Eat Up) helped to expand our understanding of digital learning strategies and to ask how digital engagement and connection building can nurture spirituality in children.

If you are unaware of pertinent research related to your idea, do not complete this form. Instead, please complete our Innovations Interest Form [LINK].

5. **How will you know if your innovative approach is successful?**

*Evaluation is an essential aspect of a Hub innovation, and we would like to know how you plan to evaluate the effectiveness of your project. There are many different ways to gather information about effectiveness, including direct observations, individual or group interviews, surveys, and tests. (If you need more information on the purposes and types of evaluation, check out this summary sheet LINK.) Tell us what you hope to accomplish (your outcomes) and how you plan to gather useful information to assess how well you met those goals. **(150 word limit)***

6. **Please include letters of support from the governing body of your organization and any key collaborators.**

   Who in your organization is responsible for approving initiatives, or who will be a crucial collaborator in your innovation? Please include letters from those people and/or groups describing how your proposal falls within the organization's mission and specifying the types of support they will provide. These might include funds, a certain amount of hours per week, a designated team to help with implementation, or other forms of support and accountability.

Proposal Deadlines
Proposals are accepted on a rolling basis.

Questions
Contact Erin Reibel, Associate Hub Director at InnovationInfo@RealKidsRealFaith.org.

Not sure how to design an innovation project after reading through this form, but know what you're doing isn't as effective as you'd like? We would love to explore how we might help you design a project using findings from the Hub's research. Fill out our brief Innovations Interest Form at LINK, and we will get back to you to schedule a conversation.