

The Letter for Next Summer



Continuity · reunions, camps & recurring groups

A group writes to its future self, then makes room for someone who may not be there next year.

Four reader parts. About 2–4 minutes of reading, or 12–20 minutes with discussion and the closing activity.

Free preview booklet. Read together or pass. Home-print edition; this is not a bound-book order.

READER 1 / PASS THE STORY

On the final afternoon, the cousins wrote a letter to open next summer. They listed the things that must stay the same: the lake picnic, the terrible card trick, the breakfast pancakes. Then Anya said she might not be able to come. Her family was moving farther away. The pencil stopped. Their list suddenly looked less like a celebration and more like a set of rules.

READER 2 / PASS THE STORY

“We could change the date,” someone offered. Anya did not know her dates yet. “We could video-call the whole picnic.” She smiled, but that did not sound quite right either. They sat with the problem until their grandfather asked what the letter was supposed to keep. The place? The schedule? The feeling of being included?

PAUSE TOGETHER

How could the group include Anya without making her responsible for solving everyone’s disappointment?

There is no single right answer. Hear each other before continuing.

READER 3 / PASS THE STORY

They crossed out MUST and wrote WE HOPE. They added a page of things someone could join from anywhere: choosing the pancake topping, sending a new card trick, adding a drawing to the letter. Anya wanted to contribute one thing now. She wrote a question for next summer: “What surprised you this year?” Then she folded the page so no one could answer early.

READER 4 / PASS THE STORY

A year later, the cousins gathered around a different table. Rain had canceled the lake picnic. Anya sent a drawing of her new street and joined them for ten minutes. They answered her question, saved a blank space for her reply, and attempted the card trick badly. The letter had not kept the summer unchanged. It had given them a way to recognize each other inside a summer that was new.

Take a breath. Then turn the page for your conversation.

After the last line

1. Which part of a tradition matters most to you?
2. How can an invitation stay warm without becoming an obligation?
3. What question would we like to answer together next time?

A SMALL THING TO DO TOGETHER

Write one question for your next gathering. Choose a keeper and an optional date to reopen it; let absent people contribute in their own time.

Host notes: Invite four readers, rotate in pairs, or let one person read it all. Listening and passing count. Suggested for ages 8+ with a facilitator who has previewed the story. Discuss the characters rather than your own life whenever you prefer.

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