

Faith Development Interview Guide

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Part I: Life Review

Factual Data: Date and place of birth? Number and ages of siblings? Occupation of providing parent or parents? Ethnic, racial and religious identifications? Characterization of social class – family of origin and now?

Divide life into chapters: (major) segments created by changes or experiences – "turning points" or general circumstances.

In order for me to understand the flow or movement of you life and your way of feeling and thinking about it, what other persons and experiences would be important for me to know about?

Thinking about yourself at present: What gives your life meaning? What makes life worth living for you?

Part II: Life-shaping Experiences and Relationships

At present, what relationships seem most important for your life? (E.g. intimate, familial or work relationships).

When you think of your father as he was during the time you were a child, what stands out? What was his work? What were his special interests? Was he a religious person? Explain.

When you think of your mother .. [same questions as previous]?

Have your perceptions of you parents changed since you were a child? How?

Are there other persons who at earlier times or in the present have been significant in the shaping of your outlook on life?

Have you experienced losses, crises or suffering that have changed or "colored" you life in special ways?

Have you had moments of joy, ecstasy, peak experience or break-through that have shaped or changed your life? (E.g., in nature, in sexual experience or in the presence of inspiring beauty of communication?)

What were the taboos in your early life? How have you lived with or out of those taboos? Can you indicate how the taboos in your life have changed? What are the taboos now?

What experiences have affirmed your sense of meaning in life? What experiences have shaken or disturbed your sense of meaning?

Part II: Present Values and Commitments

Can you describe the beliefs and values or attitudes that are most important in guiding your own life?

What is the purpose of human life?

Do you feel that some approaches to life are more "true" or right than others? Are there some beliefs or values that all or most people *ought* to hold and act on?

Are there symbols or images or rituals that are important to you?

What relationships or groups are most important as support for your values and beliefs?

You have described some beliefs and values that have become important to you. How important are they? In what ways do these beliefs and values find expression in your life? Can you give some specific examples of how and when they have had effect? (E.g. times of crisis, decisions, groups affiliated with, causes invested in, risks and costs of commitment.)

When you have an important decision or choice to make regarding your life, how do you go about deciding? Example?

Is there a "plan" for human lives? Are we – individually or as a species – determined or affected in our lives by power beyond human control?

When life seems most discouraging and hopeless, what holds you up or renews your hope? Example?

When you think about the future, what makes you feel most anxious or uneasy (for yourself and those you love; for society or institutions; for the world)?

What does death mean to you? What becomes of us when we die?

Why do some persons and groups suffer more than others?

Some people believe that we will always have poor people among us, and that in general life rewards people according to their efforts. What are your feelings about this?

Do you feel that human life on this planet will go on indefinitely, or do you think it is about to end?

Part IV: Religion

Do you have or have you had important religious experiences?

What feelings do you have when you think about God?

Do you consider yourself a religious person?

If you pray, what do you feel is going on when you pray?

Do you feel that your religious outlook is "true"? In what sense? Are religious traditions other than your own "true"?

What is sin (or sins)? How have your feelings about this changed? How did you feel or think about sin as a child, an adolescent, and so on?

Some people believe that without religion morality breaks down. What do you feel about this?

Where do you feel that you are changing, growing, struggling or wrestling with doubt in your life at the present time? Where is your growing edge?

What is your image (or idea) of mature faith?