

Sample Questions

Some sample questions to consider and to give you ideas for further questions for the Conversion and Religious Development Interview paper.

Religious Development

1. What is one of your first memories of religion, God, or the transcendent?
2. Did your family tell stories about your religious beliefs or ideas from a time before you can remember?
3. When did religion begin to make personal sense to you (or when it became personally relevant)?
4. Was there ever a time when you doubted your faith/religion? What happened? How did you respond to that?
5. What was one of the most significant turning points in your spiritual or religious journey?

Conversion

1. Do you recall a specific time when you joined your religion or “became” religious or have you always been religious?
2. What was the process like for you leading up to making that commitment?
3. Where there times when you were less (or more) active in your religion? What contributed to that lesser or greater activity?
4. Who (if anyone) had the greatest impact on your decision to join your religion?

These questions are intended to give you some ideas, but not be an exhaustive list of questions to ask. Therefore, you should prepare a full list of questions to ask the person you are interviewing. These questions should be based on the theories you are looking to use, focusing on specific components of those theories. For example, question 5 above might be used to get at Fowler’s stages by gaining information about a transition to stage 3 or from stage 3 to 4.

Also, be aware that you will get the best information if you are able to ask good, well-prepared questions while also following up with “on-the-spot” questions to get greater clarification and being sensitive to the “language” of the person you are interviewing. For example, some very religious Christians will say that they are not religious at all, but that they have a relationship with God/Jesus. Therefore, you would be wise to use their language, not ours, and ask about their “relationship” rather than their religion.