

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help interviewers get to know the applicant during the interview process. They draw on the candidate's current and previous work experience, as well as behavioral and situational questions that will shed light on how well the candidate will fit the position applied for.

Modify and revise as appropriate. You will need to pick and choose the questions that will best suit your needs. A typical interview will consist of 10-12 well rounded questions.

Pastoral Associate/Pastoral Assistant Positions:

- The _____ position is a significant leadership position for this faith community. It requires you to know, understand and articulate the journey of faith we are all invited to walk. Please describe a specific time in your life when your own personal faith was challenged. What happened? What did you learn?
- What are two or three core faith beliefs for you? What issues/questions provide challenges to your faith?
- Think about a time someone you knew was having a challenge to their faith. How did you respond? What happened? What could you do differently next time?
- What do you believe are two or three significant concerns/challenges for the Church in the next five years on a local, national, and universal level?
- Please identify two or three differences and two or three common elements between a Christian and Roman Catholic approach to religious education?
- Some of our parishioners of all ages are not familiar with even the "basics" of our faith, e.g., the Ten Commandments, prayer, social or moral teachings, etc. Give an example that demonstrates your ability to respond to this challenge.

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- What is your understanding of the relationship between worship and catechesis? Give one or two examples of how you believe this relationship can be enhanced.
- What do you believe are the one or two most significant challenges parishes have in preparing excellent Eucharistic celebrations?
- In this position, you will be a public representative for our parish. What most attracts you to serve in a leadership position for the institutional Catholic Church? What least attracts you?
- Please describe your education, training and/or work experience in pastoral care.
- Give a specific example of a successful and unsuccessful experience you have had leading others in a collaborative effort. Describe what made it successful and unsuccessful. What is your best quality as a leader?
- Please briefly describe what you have come to identify as your philosophy of (insert work area here).
- Identify 5 words that describe your management style.
- Describe a current or previous work situation that requires you to enable, empower, and call to accountability people involved in varied, disparate and sometimes competing agendas.
- Have you preached in front of a congregation? If so, how often and about what? On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being high, how would you rate your preaching abilities?
- Please describe an experience you have in providing specific spiritual guidance/counseling services to patients, their families and sometimes, the staff of an institution.
- Please identify what you have come to describe as your leadership/supervisory style, with particular emphasis in leading within

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- a faith community. What have you been consistently told by people who have observed your leadership style is your best quality as a leader?
- It is sometimes said that the Church's social encyclicals are its best kept secret. Describe one or two teachings from encyclicals that have had a significant impact on your life.
 - What do you believe are the two or three most significant challenges for developing and implementing an excellent _____(RCIA/Youth Ministry/R.E., etc.) program in a parish?
 - Describe any particular training/involvement you have had in development/maintenance of small faith communities with a parish.
 - What components of the mission of the Roman Catholic Church are you most and least comfortable/compatible with? Why?
 - Give an example in your past or current work experience that demonstrates your ability to plan, organize and implement a program.
 - Describe a time you were responsible for convening and facilitating a process which involved individuals with different and perhaps competing interests. What happened? What did you learn? What would you do differently next time?
 - Describe a positive and negative experience you have had using a "team" management model. What did you learn from these experiences?
 - As supervisor, what has been the most challenging (i.e., difficult) type of person for you to motivate? What did you do that worked? What would you do differently next time?
 - Describe an example you have had serving as staff to an advisory board or commission. Describe one way your leadership style enabled the group to be effective. Also, think of an example of how your leadership style inhibited the group's effectiveness.

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- One of the responsibilities is to develop and administer an annual budget. Describe what your approach has been in developing a budget.
- What are three adjectives that describe your leadership style? Include one example of how your leadership style has changed in the past five years; in the past year.
- This position is a public representative of this parish/school. Is there anything the pastor/pastoral life director needs to know about you personally or professionally that would compromise your ability to do this ministry?

For Administrative Assistant/Secretary Positions:

- Describe a time you have had to complete work for several people. How did you determine your work priorities?
- Describe a situation where you had to coordinate multiple projects or activities. Identify what the projects were, who you were interacting with, and what activities were involved.
- On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being high), how would you rate yourself in the following skills and abilities. Please give examples of when you have utilized them:
 - communication skills on the phone/ handling a difficult caller
 - written communication skills including writing, editing, re-writing, spelling, grammar, and proofreading
 - interpersonal and public relations skills
 - organizational skills
 - collaborative skills
 - computer proficiency
- Describe your experience creating forms, checklists, correspondence, and other documents.
- Describe a time you designed, maintained, or improved a filing system.

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- Describe a situation where you had to interact/communicate with people of diverse backgrounds, communities, culture, and/or race.
- Describe the most difficult and easiest supervisor you worked for; why did you like or not like their supervisory style?
- On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being high, how have previous/current supervisors described your punctuality and work attendance?
- Describe a time that required you to be an excellent public relations representative for an organization. Describe the elements of judgment or discretion that were required.

For any type of position:

- Please explain how your background and qualifications “fit” into the requirements of this position.
- In your experience and/or opinion what is a healthy team environment in the workplace? What specific qualities do you bring to a work team?
- Describe a work situation that required you to handle information and materials that were very confidential. What procedures do you do differently when handling confidential information?
- Give an example in your work life that demonstrates your ability to work effectively with people of diverse backgrounds in culture, languages, and communities.
- What have supervisors consistently described as your 3 or 4 greatest strengths? What have you been consistently told about your work habits and abilities that could be improved? What have you done to improve?
- How are you regarding punctuality? Are you able to meet the attendance requirements for this position?
- Why are you applying for this position?

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- What are your thoughts and perceptions about working for the Catholic Church?
- What do the following terms mean to you:
 - collaboration
 - diversity
 - ministry
 - work
- What has been the most political work situation you have experienced? Explain how you dealt with it.
- Describe a specific example in your work life that demonstrates your commitment and/or sensitivity to multicultural inclusion and advocacy within an organization or community.
- What evaluations have you received from your current and/or previous supervisors that show your strengths? What did they say about your work habits or ability that could be improved? What have you done to improve?
- Think about a time you were involved in a significant interpersonal conflict. What happened? What did you do to manage/resolve the conflict? What would you do differently next time?
- What has been the highest pressure situation you have experienced in the past one or two years? What was the source(s) of pressure? How did you cope? What did you learn?
- In your current/most recent position, describe what strategies you use for managing your limitations (e.g., time, budget, personnel, etc.).
- What does someone who knows and respects your work describe as your two or three best strengths/assets? What have they described as your “Achilles Heal?” What have you done to compensate for this?

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- Think of a time you were required to verbally communicate difficult information. How did you prepare? What happened? What did you learn?
- What were the “green” lights that prompted you to apply for this position? What were the “yellow” and “red” lights?
- Should you be chosen for this position, in what ways do you see yourself becoming a part of this faith community?
- After having read this position description, what are the one or two responsibilities that you could assume most easily? What one or two responsibilities will require the most “new” thinking and learning?
- Please identify Catholic heroes/heroines, including thinkers, writers, theologians, leaders or personal role models who have significantly influenced your life.