

Questions

We have provided a vast selection of varied question probing why people stay and enjoy their jobs ... their ministry. Review the and select the ones that you believe will give you the best insight into your work culture and where there can be growth. Just remember when you have picked your questions, it is best to use the same set of questions for each of your staff. They are similar but there are nuances to them that might fit better with your parish. It is important to listen and gather ideas from the employee about how you and your parish can engage and retain them. You can always mix and match from the examples provided.

What do you look forward to each day when you come to work?

This question helps bring the employee into the here and now and directs the focus to the daily duties and challenges rather than topics like pay and benefits. Engagement is the goal here and if employees stay engaged, more often than not, it is based on their relationship with their supervisors, priests, parishioners, volunteers, and fellow coworkers. Some helpful tips to go deeper into the question are to ask open ended and follow up questions such as: *“Can you give me an example a time when you truly felt the Spirit at work through you.”* *“Tell me more about when you were so involved in your work that you lost track of time.”*, *“Who do you look forward to working with the most and why?”* *“Tell me the best day you ever had working here, when was it, and what happened that day to make it so great?”*

What are you learning right now and what do you want to learn?

This question invites your employees to tell you about their interest in their professional development and their careers. You might find that some are already thinking about advancement, some would like to learn more and are curious about what they just do not know yet, others you will find only want to do their work and go home. This may produce an “engagement and possible future career plan” Some helpful tips to go deeper into the question are to ask open ended follow up questions such as: *“Which other jobs at the Parish look attractive to you?”* *“What skills do you think are required for those jobs that interest you?”* *“What skills do you think you need to build to be qualified for those jobs and the responsibilities of those jobs?”*

What keeps you here? Why do you stay here?

This question may seem simple, *why employees want to stay with us*, but it can open up a great discussion. Many times, employees have not thought this one through, or at all, so you will want to make sure to let them ponder it, so you get a thoughtful answer. An effective way to preface the question is: *“Take your time*



because I really want to know." This helps them thoughtfully talk about what they value most about their jobs. Some helpful tips to go deeper into the question are to ask open-ended follow up questions such as: *What is important to you, tell me more why this is so important.*" If they give only one reason you can ask, *"Is that the only reason you stay or are there others?"* On the other hand, if you get bunch of reasons, then ask them to *"pick one"* or *"pick the top three reasons you stay and why."*

When was the last time you thought about leaving the Parish? What prompted it?

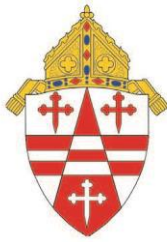
Whether you want to hear it or not everyone thinks about leaving at one time or another. This is a question that can spark a "real" conversation between the two of you that you need to have. WHEN the employee thought about leaving, will tell you the urgency and the WHAT tells us WHY they wanted to leave. Some helpful tips to go deeper into the question are to ask open-ended follow up questions such as: *"Tell me more about what and how that happened."* If it were something someone said, *"what exactly did that person (could be you!) say and how did that make you feel, what did you think?"* *"Why did you decide to stay?"* *"As you manager what could I have done to either stop the reason for you to want to leave or help with your decision to stay?"* *"Is the reason you were think about leaving resolved or do we still need to deal with it?"* *"How important is this issue or thing on a scale of 1-10?"*

What can I do as your priest or supervisor to make your job better for you?

This question might spur a bunch of feedback and, brace yourself, this can be all about you! You can choose to see this feedback as just criticism or even a personal attack, and it might be, but it is much more helpful to see each comment as an opportunity to do things better. So put on your "ego armor" and do your best to avoid appearing or sounding defensiveness, do not offer objections even if what they are saying is way off and really listen, only offer to repeat exactly what you hear. Tell them you are repeating back what you hear, so they understand that you are hearing them correctly, because you care and what to know. You will be amazed how often they will start to talk it through very harshly and then as they "talk to think" they will soften and at the end offer up some really helpful stuff. Some helpful tips to go deeper into the question are to ask open-ended follow up questions such as: *"Do you feel that I appreciate you and your work?"* *"Do I tell you when things are going well?"* *"Do I help do your job better?"* *"Do I offer enough support?"* *"Do I encourage you?"* *"Do I ever catch you doing things RIGHT!?"* *"What are three ways I can be a better manager for you?"*

Where are we going?

This is noticeably big picture and might be helpful with finding out the employee's perspective on Partners in the Gospel. The PAA or Priest can share important things such as goals, vision and priorities and then ask the employee their thoughts on the same. This question helps create an opportunity to point out similarities, clarify expectations and understand the vision of the employee and if that supports the work



you are doing as well. This engagement is important for the employee and often you will gain insight on how you can better support your employee.

Where are you going?

This question focuses on the employee's work, opens, and invites a good discussion about how well aligned their ministry is with the vision, goals and priorities that were discussed in question just above. This opens the door for you to have an open discussion around their career with the church and might glean vital information on how you can support them on that journey at the Parish, the Archdiocese. Often employees will feel you are invested in them and their future. This is the perfect opportunity to focus your staff in prayer to understand the Lord's plan for them during and through all of this excitement.

What is going well?

This question calls to the employee's attention all the actions that "hit the mark." We are so "problem" focused we forget to pay attention to all the things that are great. It is good to be specific and sincere here. Almost all employees want to do excellent work, especially as ministers of the Lord, and be the recognized for it. When recognized the employee will know what that mark is and will be more likely to repeat that "on target" type of behavior in the future. We are such target creatures ... this will help them aim. Staff that are doing an excellent job, and know they are doing an excellent job, want to stay and continue to be successful!

What are your key suggestions for improvement?

This would be only the key things. It is important to focus on the key priorities. It is like the feedback question but more general. For example, you could ask: "*If there was one thing I could do better to support you in your job here, what would that be?*" You may get the same answers you did for the feedback question, but you might be surprised. This helps your employee focus on one or two things that could make a significant difference overall.

How Can I help?

This is your golden opportunity to listen. You want to really listen. You want your employee to open up and talk through where they need help. Do not start problem solving for them, only reflect back what you understand them to be saying. Ideally, they will either solve it themselves or at the end give you real, tangible, actionable solutions for them and maybe for the whole ministry (that seems to be how the Holy Spirit works). In the end you may not be able to fix everything. They will understand that. Your employee just needs to know they were heard and that what you can and should fix you will. That will make an enormous difference. Do not ask this question, unless you are ready to make the changes that are being called forth.