

Sample Interview Questions for Ministries



CONCORDIA PLANS

You have interested candidates for an open position at your ministry ... but what should you ask in the interview? How can you make sure you're asking the right questions to get the information you need to make a sound decision?

Below is a list of questions for interview committees to consider. The list was created and compiled through my own personal experience and with input from ministry contacts across the country who've taken part in my sessions on behavioral-based interviewing. While some of the questions are written from a school perspective, they can be repurposed for other ministries.

Good luck, and blessings on your search!



Problem Solving

- > Tell us about an idea you had that was implemented at a previous employer. What was the idea? Who did you share it with? What happened after it was implemented?
- > Tell us about a time when you identified a process improvement and the steps you took to get it implemented. What was the result after your idea was implemented?
- > Have you ever been assigned something to do that you didn't have experience in? How did you figure out how to do it? Did you ask for help or figure it out yourself?
- > Tell us about a time when you solved one problem, but it created other unanticipated problems. What did you do? What did you learn from the experience?
- > Tell us about a time when you either had an abundance of resources or a scarcity of resources for a project. How did you determine what to do about the resource situation?



Interpersonal Skills

- > Describe a time when you had to give a coworker or your leader feedback. What was the situation? How did you approach the person? How did they take it? What happened after?
- > Tell us about a time when you had a positive effect on someone. What was the situation? What did you do and how do you know you had a positive effect?
- > Provide an example of a time when you had to work through an interpersonal conflict. What did you do to manage the situation?
- > Describe a work group you were on that wasn't working together smoothly. Why weren't they working effectively and what did you do to try to improve the dynamic?



Collaboration / Teamwork / Peer Communication

- > Describe how you've effectively worked with your pastor at your last ministry.
- > Occasionally you may not agree with another person's decision or opinion. Describe a time at work when you had to provide feedback to that person. How did you approach the conversation? What was their response?
- > Describe a situation in which you had to work with or interact with someone from a different background or culture. How did the differences in your backgrounds/culture impact what you were working or interacting on? What did you do?
- > Tell us about a time when you pitched in to help a team member who was struggling when you didn't have to.
- > Tell us about a time when coworkers weren't working collaboratively. What did you do?
- > Describe a time when you were able to overcome a communication barrier.
- > Tell us about a time when you thought someone wasn't listening to you. What did you do?
- > What does a healthy team look like? What are the components? Tell us about a time when you were part of a healthy team. What role did you play to contribute to the team being healthy?



Emotional Intelligence / Workplace Stressors

- > Tell us about a time when you were frustrated with your leader or administrator. What was the situation? Why were you frustrated? Describe how you handled your frustration.
- > What was the most stressful situation you ever had to work through at a job? What did you do to work through it?
- > What was the most difficult work decision you had to make? How did you decide what to do?
- > Tell us about a work "nightmare" you were involved in. What happened and what did you do?
- > Have you even been caught off guard by feedback at work? What was the feedback and why were you off guard? What did you do with the feedback?
- > Tell us about a time when you have felt overwhelmed at work. What was the situation and what did you do?
- > Describe a time when you made a mistake at work. Why did you make it, and what did you learn from it?
- > Describe a time when you felt you had strong work/life balance.



Accountability / Responsibility

- > Sometimes a person may feel their workload is unmanageable. Tell us about a time when you were unable to meet multiple deadlines or that you couldn't complete everything you needed to. What did you do about it? How did you prioritize what to focus on and what not to do?
- > Tell us about a time when you went above and beyond what was expected of you. What was expected of you and what did you do that was above that?
- > When you have had extra capacity (time available) at your last job, how did you use it effectively? Tell us something specific you did during down time that helped you or your team be more effective.
- > Sometimes you may have multiple projects, assignments or teams you are on. Tell about a time when you had to manage multiple priorities and did so successfully. How did you determine what to work on? How did you make sure your work was all completed on time and met expectations?
- > Tell us about a time when you missed a deadline. Why did you miss it? What did you learn from that experience?
- > Give us an example of when you were a spokesperson or representative for your ministry or an employer. What did you do to prepare for that event?



Motivational Fit / Mission or Position Alignment

- > What devotional or bible study have you utilized that has helped you or others in the past?
- > Tell us about something that has occurred in your Christian walk that has contributed to you being a stronger person of faith or would lend itself to enabling you to be a stronger Christian role model to others.
- > Describe a time when you have contributed to a school/church ministry in the past successfully.
- > Describe a time when you have successfully contributed to a team ministry.
- > Tell us about how you utilized your top two spiritual gifts in ministry.
- > What is your favorite Bible story? (Pause to listen). Tell us about how you shared that story with children and share how you've applied it to your faith walk.
- > Tell us about a time when you shared your faith with a student, and it impacted the student.
- > Tell us about an extracurricular activity you have assisted with in the past that you are proud of or enjoyed.



Strengths / Continuous Improvement / Learning from Previous Experiences

- > What five words best describe your strengths? (Pause) Tell us about a time when one of those strengths was highlighted in your previous work experience.
- > Tell us about a successful professional development activity you took the initiative on that helped you develop. (Book? Class? Mentor sought?)
- > What would your coworkers say are your strengths? (Pause) Tell us a specific example of when you've used one of those strengths in the past.
- > Tell us about a situation that you wish you had handled differently.
- > Tell us about something you have been working on to improve yourself. What was the catalyst that helped you identify this as an area requiring attention? What steps have you taken to work on it?
- > Tell us about a great leader you had and what they did to be great. (Pause for them to answer) Tell us about time that you've emulated something you learned from that leader.



Management / Leadership / Administrator Roles

- > Tell us about a time when you had a teacher or staff member who was ineffective at their job. How did you address the situation?
- > Share an experience that was stressful you had to work through as an administrator / leader.
- > Describe a time when you had to address a behavioral concern with a staff member.
- > Give a specific example of a decision you made that was not effective.
- > Tell us about how you appreciate or reward your team. (Pause) Give us a specific example of a time when you provided recognition that was effective to a team member.
- > Describe a creative solution you implemented to support your staff.
- > Describe a work accomplishment of which you are proud.
- > Tell us about a successful program or policy you implemented.
- > Share a specific example of how you have supported a staff member or your team.
- > Provide an example of a time when you had to deliver difficult news to someone. What was the situation? How did you approach it? What was the result?
- > Describe your experience working with a board. Describe a time where you did not agree with a board decision and how you handled it.
- > Share an example of how you supported a new staff member in their onboarding and/or who took a new role. How did you help set them up for success?
- > Tell us about a time you had to handle a crisis at work.
- > Tell us about a time when you had to establish or repair a relationship with a parent or board member.



Parent Relationships / Communication

- > Sometimes parents aren't supportive and can be challenging. Tell us about your most challenging parent interaction.
- > Tell us about a time you had to respond to a complaint from a parent. What was the situation and how did you work through it?
- > Tell us about a time that you feel you communicated well with a parent. Explain the situation and why you felt it went well.
- > Tell us about a time that you communicated with a parent and you don't feel it went as well as it could have. What was the situation? What was the impact? What did you learn from the experience?
- > Describe a time when you had a parent who wasn't happy with a decision you made. What did you do to handle the situation?
- > Tell us about a time when a parent was angry. What steps did you take to resolve the situation?
- > Describe how you have successfully communicated with parents about what is happening in your classroom.
- > Sometimes parents can have really high expectations. Tell us about a time when you had someone expect something from you that wasn't realistic. How did you deal with the situation?



Teaching / Pedagogy

- > Tell us about a time when you had to educate yourself on a topic that you needed to teach to others. How did you obtain the necessary information and/or skillset? What was the outcome?
- > Tell us about a time when you took a risk in your classroom or teaching approach. How did it go? What did you learn? What's the next risk you've thought about taking or implementing?
- > Tell us about a time you used differentiation / personalization / individualization in your lessons.
- > What role do you think relationships play in education with administrators / workers / families / students? Give us a specific example of how you've built a relationship with each of those groups.
- > Tell us about a lesson you taught well.
- > Tell us about a lesson that did not go well and what you learned from it.
- > What instructional strategies do you use? (Pause to listen) Tell us about a time you had to decide which strategy to use.
- > How comfortable are you with technology? (Pause) Tell us about a time when you used technology in the classroom to enhance a lesson.
- > Tell us about a time when you motivated a student to learn a difficult concept. What strategies did you employ in the classroom that promoted the student learning?
- > Tell us about a time when you had to motivate a student who wasn't interested in your class.



Student Relationships

- > How do you form relationships with your students? (Pause) Tell us about a specific time when you were successful at building a relationship.
- > Tell us about a time when you struggled establishing a relationship with a student. How did you modify your approach with the student?
- > Tell us about a time when you had to set healthy boundaries with students or a student.



Classroom Management

- > Tell us about a time when you had a student misbehave in the classroom. What steps did you take to handle the situation?
- > Describe a time that you had to address a student who consistently interrupted or challenged you. Was it effective or ineffective? If it was ineffective, how did you adjust your approach?
- > Share an example of how you have used biblical principles in a classroom discipline situation.
- > Tell us about a time when you've had a child who said no to an instruction you provided.
- > Describe a specific time when you had to address an issue in which multiple students had behavioral issues in a class.

Beth Jones, SPHR, is a Human Resources professional with almost 20 years of human resources experience. She has experience in a variety of industries, including education, health insurance, financial services, and nonprofits. She has led teams, consulted, and provided services to employers of all sizes--from large Fortune 100 employers to small nonprofits--and for a wide range of HR disciplines including workforce relations and planning, culture and engagement, compensation and benefits, reward and recognition, payroll, and training and development.



As an active SHRM member, Beth has found it rewarding to mentor and guide new HR professionals entering the field and has volunteered her time and skills to help small nonprofits with HR issues. As she is most passionate about serving nonprofits, she finds her current position as Director of Ministry Solutions at Concordia Plans fulfilling as she can focus exclusively on helping nonprofit ministries obtain affordable products and services that ease administrative burden, help nonprofits focus on their missions, save money and reduce employer risk. Current solutions available to ministries include HR, payroll and compensation services, as well as MyAdminPartner™, a new service for some ministries that provides back-office support for bookkeeping, payroll, and benefit administration.



QUESTIONS?

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