

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS

1. WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?

An interview is a face to face meeting between individuals for a specific purpose, such as an evaluation of one of the individuals.

It is essentially a dialogue between persons to share ideas, ask questions, give information, and to clarify certain points. It is important to remember that's THE INTERVIEW is not an interrogation or concealing session.

2. WHY AN INTERVIEW?

The purposes of the interview for the Secular Franciscan Order are:

- a. To welcome the prospective member
- b. To briefly explain the purpose of the Secular Franciscan Order and the commitment involved.
- c. To ask the prospect his/her understanding of the Secular Franciscan Order.
- d. To inquire of his/her motivation to look into the Secular Franciscan Order.
- e. To answer any questions the prospect or candidate may have.
- f. To ascertain eligibility of the prospect/candidate.
- g. To explain the Phases of Orientation, Inquiry and Candidacy; to stress that final entrance into the Secular Franciscan Order is a mutual, dialogical process; his/her interest alone does not guarantee automatic admission.

3. WHO MAY INTERVIEW

Ordinarily, the Director of Formation and/or the Spiritual Assistant of the Fraternity should interview both the prospects and candidates. Certainly, it should be someone on the Formation team.

However, in certain circumstances, the following might also be considered:

- a. The Minister/President of the fraternity;
- b. A specially-appointed council member;
- c. The inquirer or candidate instructor;
- d. A specially-appointed Fraternity Member.

4. WHEN SHOULD THE INTERVIEW OCCUR?

The interview should be arranged for a mutually convenient time. The interview should be neither rushed, nor should it drag on. The focus of the interview should remain on discerning the prospects interest and eligibility to become a Secular Franciscan Order. Ordinarily, 30 to 60 minutes should be sufficient time for an interview.

5. WHERE SHOULD THE INTERVIEW OCCUR?

The interview should take place in a clean, comfortable, and quiet room. Privacy and confidentiality are essential.

6. ON-GOING DISCERNMENT

The initial interview is important and provides basic information about a prospect. However, On-Going discernment of the prospective member by members of the Formation Team; Council and Fraternity Members is also a very important part of the entire formation process. Often things not learned in the initial interview will become apparent as the prospect/candidate interacts with the other members of the Fraternity, both good things as well as some negative things.

Interviewing should take place before all the major steps in the formation process, which is, before becoming a candidate, at regular intervals during candidacy, prior to permanent commitment or profession.

A) INTERVIEW AT THE END OF THE INQUIRY PHASE.

The purpose of the interview at the end of the inquiry phase is:

- a. To ascertain if the inquirer wishes to continue on to the Candidacy phase.

- b. To answer any specific questions the inquirer may have regarding the content studied in the next phase.
- c. To provide encouragement and support

If the Inquirer wishes to continue a more detailed application should be filled-out, and returned to the Formation Director.

B) INTERVIEW MID-WAY THROUGH CADIDACY PHASE

The purpose of the interview at this time would be:

- a. To ascertain how the candidate is progressing; to answer questions; to provide encouragement and support.
- b. To help the candidate prepare for commitment in the Secular Franciscan Order.

This would be an appropriate time for the Spiritual Assistant to interview the candidate to help with any spiritual concerns.

C) INTERVIEW AT THE END OF THE CANDIDACY PHASE.

The purpose of this interview is:

- a. To ascertain if the candidate wishes to be professed.
- b. To discuss openly and honestly the candidate's decision either to become professed or not to become professed.

Should the candidate indicate a wish to profess, the Application for Profession (which would have been filled out prior to the interview) could be discussed to:

- a. To impress upon the candidate the seriousness of Permanent Commitment in the Secular Franciscan Order.
- b. To help the candidate better internalized the decision.

- c. To assure the Formation Team that the candidate's decision to become professed is based upon sound judgment and spiritual motivation.

The situation may arise when the Fraternity Council and Formation Director discern that he/she is not yet ready for profession. The interview would be the appropriate place to discuss this matter with the candidate.

NOTE: It is strongly recommended that at least one of the interviews should be with the Spiritual Assistant of the Fraternity.

- a. It permits the Spiritual Assistant to get to know the candidate personally.
- b. It allows the candidate the opportunity to ask questions of a/or moral nature.
- c. It broadens the evaluation perspective. Another person in addition to the Formation Team is evaluating the suitability of the Candidate for admission into the Secular Franciscans Order.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is recommended that all applications, interview observations, correspondence, phone conversations should be kept in a confidential file folder for each candidate. This will help the Fraternity Council to make their decision about accepting the candidates for profession.

QUALITIES OF AN INTERVIEWER

The qualities of an interviewer are the qualities of a good Formation Director, as well. Ideally, the interviewer should possess as many of these qualities as possible:

- 1) **ENTHUSIASM.** The interviewer should be enthusiastic about being a Secular Franciscan, and should be familiar with the Secular Franciscan vocation and Charism.
- 2) **PRAYERFUL.** The interviewer must be a person of prayer.

- 3) **KNOWLEDGEABLE.** The interviewer should have a basic knowledge of the Doctrines and Catholic faith, should be familiar with the documents of Vatican II, especially as they relate to Lay Spirituality; and a good understanding of Franciscan spirituality.
- 4) **GOOD LISTENER.** Being a good listener is absolutely essential to a good interviewer. Interrupting and contradicting during an interview should never take place.
- 5) **COURTESY & WARMTH** “Going for an interview” for most people is stressful. Personal warmth, enthusiasm, and courtesy are important elements in making prospect/candidate feel comfortable.
- 6) **OPEN & ACCEPTING ATTITUDE.** Every person we meet is a son or daughter of a Great King. That attitude should permeate the entire interview. Christian common sense is essential. The interviewer must accept all candidates as they are. Every effort should be made by the interviewer to curtail any tendency toward stereotyping the candidate or making judgments based on candidate’s speech, dress, behavior, or ethnic background.
- 7) **HONESTY.** There is no substitute for honesty. If an interviewer does not know the answer to a question, the interviewer should simply say so, and then make an effort to find the answer.

G. THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Interviews are never exactly alike since no two individuals are alike. Consequently, the art of interviewing is learned from constant practice. It is important that the interviewer try to improve interviewing techniques by evaluating after each interview with questions such as:

What was good about the interview? What could I have done to make it the interview better? What skills need more practice? What skills do I need to acquire?

It is important that the interviewer keep records. A file might be made for each prospect/candidate where applications, interview material, and

observations might be kept. All record –keeping should be done immediately after the interview, never during the interview.

The following are suggestions for conducting the interview;

BEGINNING

- a. Warmly greet the prospect/candidate.
- b. Introduce self; interviewer might briefly share something about self- how long Secular Franciscan, apostolate, etc.
- c. Explain the purpose of the interview.

MIDDLE

The middle part of the interview is the heart of the interview. It is during this part of the interview that the interviewer should be especially sensitive and observant. If the prospect/candidate is shy, the interviewer should be supportive, not impatient. Sometimes gentle questions about the prospect/candidate's family or parish activities will help the candidate gain confidence and "open up".

- a. I see in your application the reason that you would like to become a Secular Franciscan Order is.....Could you tell me more about your reasons?
- b. Do you have any questions about the Secular Franciscan Order or Fraternity?
- c. Tell me a little about your self.

ENDING

- a. Thank the prospect/candidate for coming to the interview, and for showing interest in the Secular Franciscan Order.
- b. Invite the prospect/candidate to the next Fraternity meeting. (or Orientation meeting or Inquiry Session.)
- c. Interviewer should give own phone number and address so that prospect/candidate might reach interviewer if he/she has any further questions.

INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

For initial interviews, following-up is essential in the forming and maintaining of good relationships. Some helpful suggestions are:

- 1) Phone the prospect about a week following the interview; ask if he/she has any further questions. Firm up plans to attend the next meeting or event.
- 2) A written note expressing thanks to the prospect for interest and a reminder of the date, time, and place of the next meeting is also very welcome.
- 3) If the prospect does not show up at the next meeting, a phone call would be appropriate to inquire why.

For interviews during the various phases of Formation, a short written note with a message from the writings of St. Francis or St. Clare and a thank you for the candidate's time and interest would be an appropriate follow-up.