

Alternative ministry congregational/group interview guide

For use in ESR Lilly Grant projects

Introduction

My name is XXX and this is xxx. We are conducting a research project into different types of ministry for Earlham School of Religion which is funded by a grant from the Lilly Endowment. We want to learn more about the ministry that you are involved with. The purpose of this project is to inform future educational programs to prepare new ministers and congregational leaders. This interview is confidential, and the contents will not be reported widely. Your name will not be associated with any of the findings unless we contact you and ask for your permission to make a specific statement.

With your permission, I would like to audiotape our conversation so that we don't have to take extensive notes. This should take about half an hour (for individual interview)/two hours (for group interview) , depending on what is happening with your group.

We may also want to continue this conversation later to see how things are changing, if that is ok with you. Do I have your permission to proceed?

Are you ready to start?

Participation

1. How did you hear about this group?
2. How long have you been attending this faith community?
3. Were you involved from the beginning?
4. How often do you attend?
5. Which of the services/sessions/meetings do you attend? (Probe for each of the following: Worship service, Bible study/discussion, Discipleship session, Discernment session, Meeting for business, Fellowship with food, other)
6. Are you involved in any way other than attendance?
7. Are you in a leadership role?
8. Are you on any committees?

Faith Tradition Experience

1. What faith tradition(s) do you come from?
2. Were you attending another faith community immediately before this one?
3. Do you still consider yourself to be a part of that other faith community?
4. Would you say that you were in the process of actively seeking a new faith community when you arrived here?

Likes

1. What, if anything, do you like best about this faith community?
2. What, if anything, else do you like about this faith community?
3. What, if anything, did you like about your former/other faith community?
4. What, if anything, didn't you like about your former/other faith community?

Needs

1. What spiritual needs have you experienced recently? (Probe for each of the following) Need for community, Need to probe deeper than can do in a normal church service, Need to be with people who have similar beliefs as they have, Need for exploration of spirituality, Provide meaning to life, Contribute to the common good)
2. Which of these does this faith community meet? (Repeat list if necessary)
3. Which of these does this faith community NOT meet? (Repeat list if necessary)
4. Which of these did your FORMER/OTHER faith community meet? (Repeat list if necessary)
5. Which of these did your former/other faith community NOT meet? (Repeat list if necessary)
6. Do you contribute to this faith community financially or in any way other than your time?

Closing

Thank you very much for your time, we really appreciate it. The things we learn are planned to be incorporated into the curriculum at ESR. We would like to reconnect with you later to see how things are changing. Can we set a date and time for this now?

And before we finish for today, are there any other things we didn't ask about that we should know about this ministry (use appropriate word)?