

# Interviewing Young Adults

## *Suggestions for Boards of Ordained Ministry and District Committees on Ordained Ministry*

- Young candidates believe deeply in their faith and call experiences. You have the chance to hear how God speaks to young people.
- Young clergy bring change to the church – change that is inherent in who they are and how they hear God. New life comes with those changes! Interviewing young people to assess the gifts God has given to young people is your chance to enable the church’s transformation into new life!
- Young clergy often bring young people to the church. This happens naturally and is gift that young clergy in general bring along with their individual gifts!
- Expecting the same life and work experience from both young and older candidates is not reasonable.
- Young adults’ maturity levels should be compared to other young adults, not to older or second-career candidates.
- Today’s young people are unique in their understanding of power dynamics. More so than any other generation, they see their world as egalitarian rather than hierarchical. Frame questions in ways that invite open dialogue.

For example:

- *An open-ended question:* Tell us about a time in your life when you heard God calling you into ordained ministry.
- *A question that doesn’t invite dialogue:* Why do you think God is calling you to ordained ministry?
- A lot of assumptions are made about young people. Be open to individual uniqueness and the gifts each candidate brings.
- Share with those you are interviewing what you expect of them.
  - *For example:* what type of dress is expected and when they should arrive. Let them know that they can anticipate being asked to share their spiritual journey. Tell them how committee/board members should be addressed.
- Share what they can expect of the interview experience.
  - *For example:* if there will be parking, how to find the meeting space, how many people will be interviewed, how the board will be dressed, what time the interview starts, how long the interview will last, what types of questions might be asked.

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- As with any committee or board, it may be helpful to have someone monitoring conversations and redirecting the committee.
- Finances can be challenge for candidates, especially those going to seminary right after college. Explain the process of credit checks to your interviewees. Be clear about any financial support that might be available.
- Schedule your committee's meetings at times that are manageable for students who attend school in a different location than their home annual conference.
  - *For example:* Don't schedule your interview during typical finals or mid-terms weeks for college and/or seminary students. Try to meet with students during term breaks, when it is easier for them to return to their annual conference.
- Discernment is a constant challenge. Young people are developing a worldview at the same time that they are working to respond to a call. If your committee or board meets with a person more than once, do not assume that everything is the same as the last time you met. There may have been a lot of changes.
- Listen for the Holy Spirit, and trust that the Spirit will lead.

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