

Thresholds in Faith Formation • Self-Assessment

Read each of the following statements. Use the following scale to indicate your response:

(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) not sure (4) agree (5) strongly agree

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- 1.1. I have some issues trusting what the Church says and does. _____
- 1.2. I feel Church teaching was used to control me as a child or youth. _____
- 1.3. I don't think I was told the whole truth about our faith as a child or youth. _____
- Total
-

- 2.1. I have a lot of questions about Church teachings and practices. _____
- 2.2. I wish someone could explain things which were never explained well when I was younger. _____
- 2.3. I enjoy having conversations or debates about faith issues. _____
- Total
-

- 3.1. I feel like something is missing, and I need to grow or change in my faith. _____
- 3.2. I feel like what I know about my faith doesn't really help me deal with the issues and questions I experience as an adult. _____
- 3.3. At the same time, I'm not sure I really want to change very much. _____
- Total
-

- 4.1. I feel like something important is missing, and I need to grow and change in my faith. _____
- 4.2. I'm a little scared about what this means, but I know it's something I really have to do. _____
- 4.3. I have a lot of questions and need a lot of good answers about my faith. _____
- Total
-

- 5.1. I am trying hard to live my faith as fully and deeply as I can. _____
- 5.2. I have made big changes in my life in order to be a better disciple of Jesus. _____
- 5.3. This is an exciting and rewarding challenge. _____
- Total
-

- 6.1. I am trying hard to live my faith as fully and deeply as I can. _____
- 6.2. However, I have trouble balancing my commitment to Jesus Christ with all of my other responsibilities and concerns. _____
- 6.3. I feel like I live in two different worlds; sometimes I feel guilty about this but that's the way it is. _____
- Total
-

- 7.1. I am trying hard to live my faith as fully and deeply as I can. _____
- 7.2. I don't experience as many conflicts or challenges to this as I used to. _____
- 7.3. I'm pretty comfortable living with the questions and uncertainties I can't fully explain. _____
- Total
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Thresholds of Faith Formation • Self-Assessment

When you have completed the self-assessment on the other side, total the three numbers in each of the seven sections. The section with the highest total should indicate where you are in your journey toward intentional discipleship and adult faith. The information below gives you an overview of the seven thresholds or tasks which are common as adults grow and mature. It is possible that your totals may be very close or even tied in more than one section; this would indicate that you may be in transition from one stage to another or are dealing with various tasks from more than one stage.

- 1. Initial Trust.** A person is able to trust or has a positive association with Jesus Christ, the Church, a Christian believer, or something identifiably Christian. Trust is not the same as active personal faith but it is a prerequisite for it. Without trust an individual cannot begin to invest him or her self in creating a relationship to God, to Jesus or the church.
- 2. Spiritual curiosity.** A person finds him or her self intrigued by or desiring to know more about Jesus, his life, and his teachings, or some aspect of the Christian faith. This curiosity can range from mere awareness or a new possibility to something quite intense. Usually, however, a person at the threshold of curiosity is not yet prepared to make a commitment; his or her curiosity is still essentially passive, but it is more than mere trust.
- 3. Spiritual openness.** A person acknowledges to him or her self and to God that he or she is open to the possibility of personal and spiritual change, to investing him or her self in forming a personal relationship with God and the faith community. This is one of the most difficult transitions for a postmodern nonbeliever. Openness is not a commitment to change, but a desire to consider it. People who are open are simply admitting they are open to the possibility of change.
- 4. Spiritual seeking.** The person moves from being essentially passive to actively seeking to know the God who is calling him or her. It is like “dating with a purpose,” but not yet marriage. Active seekers are asking, “Is this the one to whom I am prepared to make a commitment?” At this stage, the seeker is engaged in an urgent spiritual quest, seeking to decide whether he or she can or will commit him or her self to Christ and to the faith community which follows Jesus.
- 5. Intentional Discipleship (I).** At this stage, a person has made a positive commitment not just to the idea of being a disciple, but to actually living as a disciple. This is a life-changing decision which sometimes requires a significant adjustment in one’s vision, values and lifestyle. Initially, this new way of living is accompanied by great enthusiasm and determination, but nonetheless requires the support (and sometimes the patience) of family, friends and the faith community.
- 6. Intentional Discipleship (II).** This stage is a period of adjustment. As life moves on, an individual struggles to balance other concerns and responsibilities which may compete--or even conflict--with their desire and effort to live as a disciple of Jesus. The danger is that one’s vision and values as a disciple get postponed, compromised or compartmentalized--separated from the rest of life. The individual needs the continued patience, encouragement and support of the faith community to cope with this new challenge without losing commitment or being discouraged by guilt.
- 7. Intentional Discipleship (III).** This stage represents a process of resolution and maturation. With time and experience, the disciple learns to balance or integrate their vision and values as a disciple with the concerns and responsibilities of everyday life. In many cases, this occurs largely as the urgency of everyday responsibilities begins to recede; the individual has more time and energy to contemplate and practice the values and habits of discipleship. In this stage an individual learns to live more comfortably and constructively with the paradox of competing needs, conflicting values and unanswered questions.