

- they should encourage interest in and enthusiasm for the future.
- they should foster a sense of belonging to the community of the church.
- they should allow the interviewee to think that he or she is being taken seriously rather than pandered to or patronized.
- they should release both facts and feelings from the respondent, so that we know what happened and how it felt.

We also saw that generative questions tend to the narrative. They trigger stories rather than analysis, and that means that starting questions with analytically-loaded phrases like *how many*, *why*, or *under what circumstances* can run a risk of tipping over into the wrong kind of question. (Those kind of questions may however be entirely appropriate in the follow-up conversation to a genuinely generative question.) Once you have completed the training exercises, use the form in Appendix 1 to facilitate the writing and selection of your interview questions.

### Exercise 1

Here is a list of questions. They have come from the preparatory stages of a range of appreciative inquiries. For the purpose of this exercise, the context does not matter. But note that, when you come to frame your own generative questions, the purpose of the inquiry is obviously critical.

Put a ✓ in each column that you think is generative (that likely meets the requirements above); put an X in columns that you are sure do not; and put a circle for those about which you are not sure:

	encourages best memory of the past	encourages enthusiasm for the future	fosters a sense of belonging	interviewee is being taken seriously	releases both facts and feelings
1. When do you think this church is at its best?					
2. Why do you like coming here? What is it about this church that makes you glad to be a member?					
3. Tell me a story about when you have felt most energized by an event at this church.					
4. How often do you come to church? What makes you decide to come and what makes you decide to stay away?					
5. When do you think this youth program most nearly meets its goals?					
6. What problems can you identify with the administration of this church?					
7. What do you pray for this church?					

	encourages best memory of the past	encourages enthusiasm for the future	fosters a sense of belonging	interviewee is being taken seriously	releases both facts and feelings
8. When does this church come alive to the glory of God?					
9. What would give Jesus the biggest buzz if he were to join us for worship next Sunday?					
10. What do you think accounts for the rapid rate of growth of this church? How can we be sure that we can keep on growing at this pace?					
11. Tell me a story about when you have felt that being a member of this church has really helped you in your walk with God.					
12. What do you find most enables you to grow into spiritual maturity as a Christian? Is there any way in which this church helps you in that?					
13. Christians often talk of joy as being one of the fruits of the Spirit. Where do you find joy? How does being a member here contribute to that?					
14. What does God want for this church?					
15. If we could start all over, how would you like this church to be?					

### *Exercise 2*

Discuss in your group all the questions against which individual members have put circles. The aim is not necessarily to decide whether they are truly generative or not; but rather to understand better what identifies a generative question from an analytical one.

### *Exercise 3*

After this discussion, go back to all the questions against which you have put an **X**, indicating that they are not generative, and rephrase them in an appropriate way. (You may think some cannot be rephrased but need totally rewriting. That's fine; simply rewrite them, keeping to the spirit of the original question as much as you can.)

### *Exercise 4*

Design a range of generative questions for an appreciative inquiry to assist in the planning for one or more of the following groups or agencies. (If it helps, you might like to imagine that at least some of these agencies are located in your own church.)