

## How to Make a Ministry Choice When You Are Undecided

### Assess Yourself

Before you can choose the right ministry, you must learn about yourself. Your values, interests, soft skills, and aptitudes, in combination with your personality type, make some occupations a good fit for you and others completely inappropriate.

Use self-assessment tools, and ministry tests to gather information about your traits and, subsequently, generate a list of occupations that are a good fit based on them. Some people choose to work with a ministry counselor or other ministry development professionals who can help them navigate this process.

### Make a List of Ministries to Explore

You probably have multiple lists of occupations in front of you at this point—one generated by each of the self-assessment tools you used. To keep yourself organized, you should combine them into one master list.

First, look for ministries that appear on multiple lists and copy them onto a blank page. Title it "Occupations to Explore." Your self-assessments indicated they are a good fit for you based on several of your traits, so they're definitely worth exploring.

Next, find any occupations on your lists that appeal to you. They may be ministries you know a bit about and want to explore further. Also, include professions about which you don't know much. You might learn something unexpected.

### Explore the Occupations on Your List

At this point, you'll be thrilled you managed to narrow your list down to only 10 to 20 options. Now you can get some basic information about each of the occupations on your list.

Find job descriptions and educational, training, and licensing requirements in published sources. Learn about advancement opportunities. Use government-produced labor market information to get data about earnings and job outlook.

### Create a "Short List"

Now you have more information, start to narrow down your list even further. Based on what you learned from your research so far, begin eliminating the ministries you don't want to pursue any further. You should end up with two to five occupations on your "short list."

If your reasons for finding a ministry unacceptable are non-negotiable, cross it off your list. Remove everything with duties that don't appeal to you. Eliminate ministries that have weak job outlooks. Get rid of any occupation if you are unable or unwilling to fulfill the educational or other requirements, or if you lack some of the soft skills necessary to succeed in it.

### Conduct Informational Interviews

When you have only a few occupations left on your list, start doing more in-depth research. Arrange to meet with people who work in the occupations in which you are interested. They can provide firsthand knowledge about the ministries on your short list. Access your network, including LinkedIn, to find people with whom to have these informational interviews.

### Make Your Ministry Choice

Finally, after doing all your research, you are probably ready to make your choice. Pick the occupation that you think will bring you the most satisfaction based on all the information you have gathered. Realize that you are allowed do-overs if you change your mind about your choice at any point in your life. Many people change their ministries at least a few times.

### Identify Your Goals

Once you make a decision, identify your long- and short-term goals. This helps to chart a course toward eventually landing work in your chosen field. Long-term goals typically take about three to five years to reach, while you can usually fulfill a short-term goal in six months to three years.

Let the research you did about required education and training be your guide. If you don't have all the details, do some more research. Once you have all the information you need, set your goals. An example of a long-term goal would be completing your education and training. Short-term goals include applying to college, apprenticeships, other training programs, and internships.

### Write a Ministry Action Plan

Put together a ministry action plan, a written document that lays out all the steps you will have to take to reach your goals. Think of it as a road map that will take you from point A to B, then to C and D. Write down all your short- and long-term goals and the steps you will have to take to reach each one. Include any anticipated barriers that could get in the way of achieving your goals—and the ways you can overcome them.

This may sound like a lot of work—and it is. But it's much easier to forge a ministry path when you know what you want. Taking these steps early will save you a lot of struggle and uncertainty in the long run.

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