



Quaker Universalist Voice
**Friendly Spiritual Life
Inventory**
by Joanne and Larry Spears

Introduction: This Friendly Spiritual Life Inventory is a tool for spiritual assessment. It is provided as a tool to assess and support the dimension of spiritual life of any person or group of people. The inventory was initially formed in the Quaker tradition of the Christian tradition, but it is address universally to all. The inventory provides the structure for assessment, discernment and the identification of initiatives to encourage spiritual life into the future.

This Friendly Spiritual Life Inventory consists of a list of elements in the spiritual life of every human. This inventory process may serve any person of any spiritual tradition. The inventory can be used by anyone at any stage of an individual's spiritual journey.

The inventory can be helpful to older and younger people in their continuing self-assessment in support of their spiritual journeys. It can particularly serve youth in structuring their reflection and assessment of their lives. It can be used individually or as part of a youth program exercise.

The appendices here provide a checklist in forms for use by individual persons. Also, the appendices include forms for use by families and forms for use by Meetings or other groups.

This Friendly Spiritual Life Inventory is designed for the use of parents, godparents, grandparents, and mentors who have a supporting relationship to youth and seek initiatives to assist children and youth in their spiritual journeys. It is motivated out of respect for the roles of Quaker parents and their support of youth. It is offered to Quakers and their families as a part of spiritual health support and education.

Spiritual life is a universal. All humans lead spiritual lives. This inventory is based on the premise that spiritual life is part of every life in every culture throughout human experience. It is crafted to be useful to persons within the Quaker tradition, other religious traditions and those persons without a recognized religious tradition or affiliation as they assess their deepest values and spiritual lives.

Our spiritual lives are bound together in several communities. The inventory can be made a part of a group activity for reflecting on the life of a family, organization, Meeting, church, or other religious community.

The dimensions of spiritual life are many. The elements in any person's spiritual life are many. The scope of spiritual life that is addressed here is ample to include many important elements of life. There may be others added. This spiritual inventory is intended to address the full range of these dimensions.

As with any human effort, despite diligent work to date, this inventory may still be incomplete. You are welcome to modify and supplement this inventory to meet your view of the full scope of those spiritual life dimensions, based on your experience and reflection. For the benefit of those engaging the inventory, we encourage your restraint in efforts to limit the scope of the elements addressed.

This spiritual inventory process is voluntary, private, and comprehensive. It encourages and supports reflection. It is available with appropriate forms to aid in their use. It can be used as a checklist for identifying areas for initiatives to support spiritual life without use of the forms. It is useful for all people, those with a religious tradition or none, in seeking to lead good lives.

Take the inventory to a comfortable chair and silence. Hold the form at arm's length and reflect on the focused spiritual life as a whole. Then, make notations for each element that captures your current assessment of that element in the spiritual life. Seek specific words for each category and avoid general indications of approval or dissent. You are seeking insight into areas of great personal depth and consequence for behavior and life direction.

After completing the inventory, review the form and identify themes among the entries you have made for each element. Wait in silence for identification of possible initiatives that you might take. Set the form aside for further review at a specified date and mark it on the calendar. Make a plan for what initiatives you will take.

This inventory can be used periodically in personal development, the development of children and youth, and in the development of family life, individual lives, or community life. The key is "periodically." Long delay between uses of the inventory can lead to missed opportunities. Uses that are too frequent can lead to insufficient time for spiritual development.

This Friendly Spiritual Life Inventory is a supplement to the Friendly Bible Study (See http://www.quakerbooks.org/friendly_bible_study.php or <http://www.read-the-bible.org/FriendlyBibleStudy.htm>) and Friendly Faith and Practice Study (See http://www.quakerbooks.org/friendly_faith_practice_study_guide.php) and the Universal Friendly Scripture Study. They are parts of a common resource. They are all tools. They specifically

seek to serve the Quaker community and other religious communities. They are each consistent with the testimonies and practice of Quakers. But, the forms are also structured in a way consistent with service to any person or religious community in their spiritual journey.

Elements:

The elements of the spiritual inventory are outlined below. The forms are provided in a matrix sheet format for ease of use.

For each element, think about your experience and the reports of others in identifying their understanding. This is not time for glossing, puffing, judgment, or criticism. It is an inventory for understanding the current reality. The later theme identification and assessment provides the basis for initiatives to be undertaken.

The elements and forms do not imply the expectation of any particular answer and they do not encourage any particular answer. In personal privacy, it encourages assessment of important issues and does not indicate correct or desirable answers.

What is my current understanding of:

1. Origin of life
2. Elements of human nature common to all people
3. After my human death
4. Origin of my particular life
5. Relation of my private life to public life
6. Role of God
7. Relation of God to human history
8. Important elements in relationships between humans
9. Important elements in relationships between humans and plants and animals
10. My role in changing other humans (evangelism)
11. Evil in the world
12. Suffering in the world
13. Violence in the world
14. Worship and ceremonies
15. Relationships between humans and animals and plants to the future
16. Stewardship of financial resources
17. Stewardship of personal gifts
18. Impact of the unseen on my life
19. Communication with the unseen
20. Expectations for my life
21. Restrictions on my actions
22. Currently uncompromisable elements in my life
23. Authority:
 - Authority role of reason in my life (science)

- Authority role of personal experience in my life
 - Authority role of tradition of community experience in my life
 - Authority role of scriptures in my life
 - Authority role of current leaders (spiritual/political/familial) in my life
24. My responsibility for harmful acts
 25. My responsibility for harmful intentions
 26. Remedies I expect of myself for harmful acts and intentions
 27. Relation of my identity to national identity
 28. Relation of my identity to racial identity
 29. Relation of my identity to gender identity
 30. Relation of my identity to economic identity
 31. Relation of my identity to political identity
 32. My need for rehabilitation
 33. My ability to rehabilitate myself
 34. My experience of rising above my baseline behavior standard
 35. My experience in seeing through the eyes of another person
 36. My experience in reentering the world in which everything seems new

The Forms:

The following form in Appendix No. 1 is a simple matrix to assess the elements for you as a person at the current time in your life. Using the chart form permits easier identification of themes within your life.

Add a few words to capture the essence of the your current understanding of each element. When completed, review all the boxes in your assessment to discern recurrent themes. Then, identify any initiatives for action in your spiritual life in the future.

Separate charts are provided for use by a family (See Appendix No. 2) or other groups (See Appendix No. 3). If you are doing this inventory for a family, answer for each element for each person as indicated in the family form of the inventory. Consider the current understanding of all the persons for each separate element. In these assessments, you will be able to identify themes and possible initiatives for supporting individuals and the family.

Separate charts are provided for use by other groups. If doing this inventory for a Meeting or other group, consider treating the group as a collective person. Answer for each element for the Meeting as a whole. Then, consider the current group understanding of each separate element. In these assessments, you will be able to identify themes and possible initiatives for supporting the Meeting or group.

Conclusion:

This Friendly Spiritual Life Inventory is a tool for spiritual assessment. It is provided as a tool people can use to assess and support the dimension of spiritual

life of any person or group of people. It provides the structure for assessment, discernment and the identification of initiatives to encourage spiritual life going forward into the future.

Future Appendices:

1. Personal Spiritual Inventory
2. Family Spiritual Inventory
3. Meeting Spiritual Inventory

(These forms may vary based on the experience of those engaging in this process. We welcome contributions of form examples and suggestions based on your experience for sharing with others in this engaging spiritual life inventory process.)

Afterword:

For further information about this spiritual life inventory process, contact:

Quaker Universalist Fellowship
clerk@universalistfriends.org
<https://universalistfriends.org/>

Copyright © 2019 by Quaker Universalist Fellowship