**Sample Interview Questions**

**Character -- About Views, Accomplishments, Service & Teamwork**

*“What accomplishment are you most proud of?”*

*“Have you ever learned by mistake? Tell me the story.”*

(Did learning take place? How did the candidate handle the mistake?)

*“What do you look for in an employer?”*

(Are the responses balanced between what the candidate can get and what they can give?)

*“Describe your relationship with your most recent supervisor.”*

(Is the feedback good, bad, balanced?)

*“Did you ever disagree? How did you handle the disagreement? How have you handled disagreements with other members on staff?”*

(How do they deal with differences of opinion and conflict?)

*“Have you ever needed to ask for help? Tell me about the circumstances.”*

(Is there difficulty acknowledging the ongoing need to ask questions and seek assistance? Does ego get in the way? Does asking for help seem normal and easy?)

*“Suppose you had a problem you could not resolve before the time the store closed and you promised to get back with a customer that evening. What would you do?”*

(Do they call the customer back anyway to give them an update about what they are doing and will do next?)

*“What would you do if you were not scheduled to work the next day?”*

(Do they share the situation with a colleague for prompt follow-up?)

*“Talk about a stressful situation you’ve been in at work. How do you deal with stress?”*

(Are these off-the-floor and healthy?)

*You've applied for the role of . Talk a bit about what you think a typical day would be like.”*

(When and how does the customer get mentioned? How do expectations match reality?)

*“What would you like me to know about you?”*

(Look for kinds of things mentioned and what they say about the candidate's priorities, self-image and preferences.)

**Interests, Skills & Experience**

*“Describe your job at . What did you do there?”*

(How much of that job relates to the position for which you are interviewing

— customer contact, performing simultaneous tasks, resourcefulness, trouble-shooting? How's their level of enthusiasm?)

*“If I spoke with your supervisor, what would they say about you?”*   
*“Why did you leave?”*

*“How much notice were you able to give?”*

*“Have you ever been dismissed from a job? Why?”*

*“All of us are most productive at things we're good at doing and enjoy. What kinds of things do you enjoy doing most? Least?”*

*“Sometimes things around here can get pretty crazy -- customers can be in line waiting for you and the phone rings. Explain how you would handle this kind of a situation.”*

(Does the candidate seek help? Do they take a phone message and promise to get back with the customer during a specific time frame?)

*“Think of a time when you were working with a difficult customer. How did you handle this situation?”*

(Look for strategies to create positive outcomes.)

*“Have you ever been talked down to or insulted by a customer? How did you handle it?”*

(Do they take things too personally?)

*“What do you think are the keys to giving great service?”*

*“When you look back at your life, what are some of the important lessons you’ve learned from others?”*

(Can the candidate readily think of lessons? Will those lessons help them perform well in the bookstore?)

*“Think about a book has changed your life or had a significant impression on you. Then, sell me that book.”*

*“What are some of your favorite bookstores?”*

**Availability & Flexibility**

*“What times of the day are you at your best?”*

(Are they a morning or evening person?)

*“Being on time is critical in retail. Have you had any difficulty being on time for work? Are you able to be on time for your shifts?”*

(Discuss transportation difficulties if you think this may be a factor.

*“Do you have any ongoing obligations that would influence when you can work? Any trips or plans?”*

(Is there flexibility? Are they willing to work weekends and nights?)