

Stephen's first interview

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3 **Interviewer:** Stephen, what do you believe about God?

4 **Stephen:** Um – God's the creator of everything. He's – um – the one who
5 helps us do the right thing.

6 **Interviewer:** Are there any words you use to describe what you believe about
7 God?

8 **Stephen:** Um – guide, helper. He gives us strength and helps us when
9 things are really hard.

10 **Interviewer:** So have you always believed this about God?

11 **Stephen:** Um – yeah, but probably more so since my cousin had her
12 accident. She broke her neck and is now in a wheelchair.

13 **Interviewer:** So your cousin broke her neck?

14 **Stephen:** And – um – yeah, like she pulled through that. She's – they
15 thought that she'd be a full quadraplegic. She's got movement
16 in her arms and is regaining her strength. Over the past six
17 months, she's been able to like push herself around the house in
18 a wheelchair, which is just like proof of someone getting through
19 things like with a bit of help.

20 **Interviewer:** So do you see God as being the one who helped her get
21 through that?

22 **Stephen:** Um – I believe that someone's helped her but I also believe like
23 mind over matter like she's a really strong-willed person. And I
24 believe that she's like helped herself as well.

25 **Interviewer:** What does that say about God to you?

26 **Stephen:** He gives us the strength that we need to overcome certain
27 obstacles.

28 **Interviewer:** So the strong will comes as a gift from God?

29 **Stephen:** Yeah.

30 **Interviewer:** Okay. Any other stories?

31 **Stephen:** Not really.

32 **Interviewer:** What about your faith today? Is it different from what it was
33 when you were in primary school or early secondary?

34 **Stephen:** Um – I'd say it's a lot different. I used to – I used – I don't know,
35 I was pretty arrogant in primary school, like if something bad had
36 happened I'd like blame God, but I realised that He doesn't – like
37 he's given earth and people like the will to do their own sort of –
38 do what they want. So He – I understand he has a certain task
39 for us all but it's not his fault that certain things happen that
40 we've done.

- 41 **Interviewer:** Okay, so you don't see God like that now?
- 42 **Stephen:** No, I don't see that it's his fault that things happen. I see it's his
43 fault that better things happen, like things evolve.
- 44 **Interviewer:** Do you know what's led you to change?
- 45 **Stephen:** Ah – just maturity, like I don't have – I don't – I dunno, I
46 sometimes put myself in like his position, not that he could, but
47 what would you have done, like you can't watch everyone at the
48 same time. I dunno, just a bit of thought on the matter.
- 49 **Interviewer:** How does that relate to how you've changed over the years?
- 50 **Stephen:** Um –
- 51 **Interviewer:** It's okay to say you don't know. What are some key events
- 52 **Stephen:** I'm not sure. Like my Dad's been a pretty big influence on my
53 thoughts. He's a practising Catholic. He goes to Church each
54 week. Um – and –
- 55 **Interviewer:** So does that mean you go to Church each week?
- 56 **Stephen:** Not as much anymore. I used to go – um – every fortnight when
57 I was at his house, but, yeah, not as much these days.
- 58 **Interviewer:** Okay. Does that mean his influence has been less on you?
- 59 **Stephen:** Um – no. Like, I dunno, I sort of - I know you probably don't
60 agree, but I believe that I don't need to go to Church to relate
61 with God, like I can talk to him any time I want.
- 62 **Interviewer:** What about Jesus? Is Jesus different from God?
- 63 **Stephen:** Um – I don't know. Jesus was physical, he was on this earth, he
64 – I think he had the power of God, but had his own conscience
65 and with his own sort of person that God worked through so –
66 'cause if he was God he wouldn't have preached to himself.
67 Like God would still be his Father, his leader.
- 68 **Interviewer:** Good. Is that difference important to you?
- 69 **Stephen:** No.
- 70 **Interviewer:** Was there ever a time when you didn't see any difference
71 between God and Jesus?
- 72 **Stephen:** Um – probably when I didn't know the story of Jesus, like and
73 what he's done, like younger, everyone said, "Aw yeah, God and
74 Jesus, like they're the same person." But, I dunno, just the
75 same thing, like the thought of – like – and the difference.
- 76 **Interviewer:** So when did you learn the story about Jesus?
- 77 **Stephen:** Um – going to Church, just over the years. Just different
78 scriptures. Oldies taught me a lot more, 'cause I didn't go to a
79 Catholic school, I went to a public school.

- 80 **Interviewer:** So coming to St Stephen's was your first experience of a
81 Catholic school?
- 82 **Stephen:** Yeah.
- 83 **Interviewer:** Okay, I think we'll explore that a bit further later on. What about
84 the Holy Spirit?
- 85 **Stephen:** Um – what do you mean by that?
- 86 **Interviewer:** Well, how would you explain the Holy Spirit to a friend of yours
87 who isn't a Christian?
- 88 **Stephen:** I haven't really thought about what the Holy Spirit is. Is – Is that
89 – D'ye mean like the Spirit, the power around us?
- 90 **Interviewer:** It could be that way, yes. If we talk about God being Father, Son
91 and Holy Spirit, like in the Sign of the Cross, so how would you
92 describe that Spirit?
- 93 **Stephen:** Um – How – How would you – I'll sort of think about it. I don't
94 know what you mean still.
- 95 **Interviewer:** Okay, so you've never thought about that part of the Sign of the
96 Cross?
- 97 **Stephen:** I thought of the Holy Spirit as him. God.
- 98 **Interviewer:** Okay. You talked about the power in the world around us.
99 Could you say a bit more about that?
- 100 **Stephen:** Um – the Holy Spirit like just through all the saints we've had all
101 of the like marvellous people in this world – um – something has
102 to be pushing them like help- like to believe in that sort of thing,
103 leading them like they live. The Holy Spirit could be like that.
- 104 **Interviewer:** And that is what you meant by the Spirit in the world around
105 you?
- 106 **Stephen:** Mmm.
- 107 **Interviewer:** Okay, good. Now you started to talk about prayer, you know,
108 that prayer plays a part in things for you. And the changes that
109 have taken place you thought that some of that would be due to
110 the fact that you pray. So could you talk a bit more about
111 prayer.
- 112 **Stephen:** Um – well, when you pray, it's like a one-on-one with God, so
113 you hear him and he hears you. And if he gives you the strength
114 through prayer, it's like – overcome obstacles or anything, like
115 whatever you're seeking in prayer or even just thanking him he
116 sort of, I believe, will give you little signs he's heard your prayer.
- 117 **Interviewer:** Have you always believed that about prayer?
- 118 **Stephen:** Yeah.
- 119 **Interviewer:** Even when you were little?

- 120 **Stephen:** Um, yeah, like I used – aw when I was younger I – I'd always
121 start my prayer off like thanking God for my family and my
122 friends, so I've always done that. I don't know what started me to
123 do it, but I always thought I should thank him, like prayer was the
124 way.
- 125 **Interviewer:** What about now?
- 126 **Stephen:** I still actually thank him for my family and friends, so – and, ah,
127 ask him to show me, give me the answers to certain obstacles in
128 my life.
- 129 **Interviewer:** Okay, so that's the way you pray, yourself to God? Is that right?
- 130 **Stephen:** Yep.
- 131 **Interviewer:** What about to Jesus?
- 132 **Stephen:** Um – I sometimes talk to him, but I don't know, I always like
133 thought of God as the figurehead, like if Jesus – if God like
134 wanted Jesus to help me then he'd do it. But – I don't know.
135 Just – I always like say hello and I – I don't know.
- 136 **Interviewer:** What about at Mass? Is it still God?
- 137 **Stephen:** Um – the whole receiving the Christ like with Jesus kinda – I
138 can't answer that.
- 139 **Interviewer:** That's okay. You're doing very well, Stephen. So you tend to
140 pray to God rather than to Jesus and you're aware of Spirit in
141 the world in the way in which people live, and the way things
142 happen so you can get a sense of God at work in the world: is
143 this right?
- 144 **Stephen:** Mmm.
- 145 **Interviewer:** And so when you start to pray, what I heard you saying was that
146 the first prayer is a prayer of thanks?
- 147 **Stephen:** Mmm.
- 148 **Interviewer:** Okay. Let's move on. How does your belief in God shape the
149 way you live your life?
- 150 **Stephen:** Um – treat others as they would wanna – like as you would want
151 them to treat you. Y'know, just live the Christian life, just have
152 respect for one another and help out people when they need it,
153 ask for help when you need it.
- 154 **Interviewer:** Does that have any part to play in the sort of prayer that you
155 pray?
- 156 **Stephen:** Yeah, like the way I picture God is the way I ask him for help.
157 Yeah, like I said before, just the way he works, just gives you
158 signs or sometimes, I don't know, like I'll ask for help and then
159 all of a sudden a song on the radio will have the lyrics that I
160 need to hear, just stuff like that.

- 161 **Interviewer:** Is that a sign?
- 162 **Stephen:** I be- yeah, I believe sometimes it is. It happens too often to be
163 coincidence.
- 164 **Interviewer:** What about other signs? Have there been signs in the last
165 twelve months that you've recognised?
- 166 **Stephen:** Well, um – is that in reference to me?
- 167 **Interviewer:** Yeah.
- 168 **Stephen:** Um – I don't know. Like, sometimes I believe that God is
169 disappointed in the way we've been treating the earth, like that's
170 why there's like natural disasters. There've been more
171 disasters, like natural disasters, recorded in the past two
172 hundred years than in the previous thousand and, y'know, like
173 just trying to let us know that we're not living the life we should
174 be.
- 175 **Interviewer:** How long have you believed that to be so?
- 176 **Stephen:** Probably over the past two years, like max.
- 177 **Interviewer:** Is it because of any change in the way you are educated?
- 178 **Stephen:** Yeah, like just stuff on the News. I watch the News more, like
179 have more interest in what's going on in the world and – yeah,
180 as well as – I do Geography so I know like why natural disasters
181 occur, but the earth's changing pretty rapidly. We've changed
182 basically so more in the past hundred years than what's
183 happened in the previous million and that's gotta be pretty
184 disappointing in his eyes.
- 185 **Interviewer:** What about impact of your faith on your attitude towards
186 suffering?
- 187 **Stephen:** Um – I don't really believe anyone should be suffering in this
188 world. If everyone had faith and believed in sharing then
189 everyone in this world could have a house over their head. We
190 learned that in Geography last year. If the richest 361 people in
191 this world gave only 4 per cent of their wealth then everyone in
192 this world could have a house and be fed. When you look at like
193 Mother Teresa and people like that who were poor and give all
194 their money – It's like pretty disappointing in like how much
195 poverty there is in the world.
- 196 **Interviewer:** So if you could change things, what change would you want to
197 make?
- 198 **Stephen:** I dunno, just preach to the people who have money who can
199 spare it. Just everyone if you've got something you don't need
200 to give it to people who do.
- 201 **Interviewer:** And what about here at St Stephen's? If you could wave a
202 magic wand over St Stephen's what would change?

- 203 **Stephen:** Project Compassion. Like even I see people like walking around
204 drinking coke. There's drink fountains around. Although –
205 Although it's nice you could spare those – that money like that
206 could build up to fifty dollars a person I've seen. Over the time
207 of Lent that would help out so many people in third world
208 countries.
- 209 **Interviewer:** What about the impact your faith has had on your attitude
210 towards death?
- 211 **Stephen:** Um – that – that'd be like – I'm not scared to die – I don't wanna
212 die. I'm not scared of dying 'cause I know there's somewhere
213 to lead on from.
- 214 **Interviewer:** Okay. So your faith teaches you that there's life beyond this life.
215 What is your faith saying to you about life beyond this one?
- 216 **Stephen:** Um – I believe that there's like a heaven and hell, sort of as a
217 metaphor. I don't mean that there's actually two distinct places,
218 but, ah, heaven could be with our family or everyone or but – um
219 – I dunno, like this is straying off the Catholic belief, I also
220 believe in reincarnation, which is like other beliefs in the world. I
221 got a bit of a multi-belief.
- 222 **Interviewer:** What led you to believe in reincarnation?
- 223 **Stephen:** Um – I dunno. You gotta – This life isn't long enough for
224 everyone to do what they wanna do and evolve into the person
225 they should be. I think there's that many saints out there that
226 got to – I don't know – I don't think that they could've evolved
227 into that person in one life time. I think we've got to extend our
228 lives.
- 229 **Interviewer:** Okay. Could you talk a bit about how people evolve?
- 230 **Stephen:** Their consciousness as well.
- 231 **Interviewer:** Does God have a part to play in that?
- 232 **Stephen:** God has a part to do with it, I think. Like he puts us with who we
233 need to be with to evolve into who we need to become. He –
234 yeah, I think there's a reason that we are in like which family,
235 where we live.
- 236 **Interviewer:** If you wanted to look at that in terms of reincarnation, what
237 happens to Stephen after his death?
- 238 **Stephen:** Um – if he needs to learn something he'll be placed in a family
239 like that will teach him in the surroundings.
- 240 **Interviewer:** And move him further along?
- 241 **Stephen:** Yeah. Create – help to create the image, like the Christian
242 image.
- 243 **Interviewer:** Okay. So why Hell?

- 244 **Stephen:** I don't know. The peo - too many second chances. Just the
245 people that who have gone back repeatedly, done things they
246 shouldn't have like debating in their consciousness like – .
- 247 **Interviewer:** This is pretty deep stuff. When did you start thinking this way?
- 248 **Stephen:** As long as I can remember pretty much.
- 249 **Interviewer:** Do you know why you've been thinking this way?
- 250 **Stephen:** Not really. I've been interested in Buddhism. I – I wouldn't do it,
251 but like, I've read a lot of it, scriptures an' that. We've got an
252 actual book at home. It's only little one but like there's a lot of
253 similarities between that and the Christian belief.
- 254 **Interviewer:** In what ways does your faith give you a sense of purpose in
255 your life?
- 256 **Stephen:** Um – I'm not really sure.
- 257 **Interviewer:** Does your life have more meaning because of your faith?
- 258 **Stephen:** Yeah, I'd say so. Just I know how to live, just what will happen
259 through my life, even down to what I want to be as a profession,
260 I want to be like a mechanical engineer, but I want to design like
261 cleaner cars so that they don't pollute the world as much.
- 262 **Interviewer:** So you see your faith and your ideals being linked?
- 263 **Stephen:** Yep. Just my whole, my whole conscience like – yeah, they're
264 all, they're all linked my faith, my conscience.
- 265 **Interviewer:** Does your faith and conscience play a role in any other way in
266 your life?
- 267 **Stephen:** Um – not really, like just to live a good life and treat others how
268 you want to be treated and just respect them.
- 269 **Interviewer:** So what events in your life have led to changes in your
270 relationship with God? You spoke about your Dad and your Dad
271 taking you to Church. Do you want to talk more about that?
- 272 **Stephen:** There isn't really anything else 'cause – I dunno – I enjoy going
273 to Church, so nothing else has prompted me to go. I've always
274 been doing it.
- 275 **Interviewer:** What about your Mum?
- 276 **Stephen:** Um – she's baptised, but she's not a practicing Catholic,
277 although she does – I dunno, she lives the life of one, like just
278 treats others with respect, has morals and she's like a good role
279 model.
- 280 **Interviewer:** Do you have brothers or sisters?
- 281 **Stephen:** I've got two brothers and a sister. We all – like all three don't go
282 to Church as much as we used to, but my little brother Bill, he's
283 nine and goes to Church every week.

- 284 **Interviewer:** Are there things that people have said or done that you can
285 remember that have helped you in developing your relationship
286 with God?
- 287 **Stephen:** There's one that – I can't remember it, but it stuck in my head for
288 years. If I remember, I'll say it later. There's one sentence that
289 someone said to me years ago.
- 290 **Interviewer:** It might come back to you. In the last twelve months, do you
291 think your faith has grown stronger or weaker?
- 292 **Stephen:** Um – it's sort of plateaued, stayed the same.
- 293 **Interviewer:** Do you know why it's just sort of levelled out?
- 294 **Stephen:** Um – no real big significant events that have led it to become
295 greater or less.
- 296 **Interviewer:** What part does school play in all of this?
- 297 **Stephen:** Um – it teaches me more about like why people do certain
298 things but I don't believe it evolves my beliefs like significantly.
- 299 **Interviewer:** What about teachers you've had or staff members in the school?
300 Are there any who've had an influence on you?
- 301 **Stephen:** Names?
- 302 **Interviewer:** If you want to. You can make up a fictitious name if you want to.
- 303 **Stephen:** Miss Smith, I believe, had the same sort of thoughts that I had. I
304 had her in Year 10 and she was a really good RE teacher. A lot
305 of things she said I could relate to. She sort of spoke to us on
306 our level like belief.
- 307 **Interviewer:** If you had to find a word to describe her in terms of her faith,
308 could you think of a word?
- 309 **Stephen:** Um – inspiring.
- 310 **Interviewer:** What impact do you think your RE teachers have had on your
311 relationship with God?
- 312 **Stephen:** Um – Mr Jones has a fairly large, significant role. In Year 10,
313 although I had Miss Smith, I was still – my ideas hadn't
314 developed. And like last year, we had a few class debates
315 which evolved my thoughts. And – yeah, just like songs we
316 used to play like – we'd bring a CD in and play a song that
317 related to like God and just different people's aspects on the
318 world. RE's like there as well.
- 319 **Interviewer:** Could you talk a bit more about debating in class? Can you
320 think back to that in Year 11?
- 321 **Stephen:** A lot of their topics, like abortion and all of that, I disagreed with
322 a lot of the Catholic beliefs, but yeah, pretty much most of them.
323 I agreed with a lot of them and disagreed with a lot of them, but I
324 found that there was no middle ground with me.

325 **Interviewer:** Okay. What about the songs? Any song that jumps to your mind
326 straight away from last year?

327 **Stephen:** *Tears in Heaven*. Eric Clapton

328 **Interviewer:** What is there about that song that strikes you?

329 **Stephen:** Um - Curiosity of – if you would know one another in heaven,
330 like how he says, “Would you know my name? Would it be the
331 same?” It just sort of made me stop and think. I’ve heard the
332 song for years, but just haven’t like, like realised what it’s trying
333 to say.

334 **Interviewer:** Was there a situation in your class where that song was used?
335 Can you remember when it was played?

336 **Stephen:** Um – it was just a song that a student had brought in. It – like
337 we didn’t have an actual class discussion on that song.

338 **Interviewer:** So how did you get to start to think about the ideas?

339 **Stephen:** Of that song?

340 **Interviewer:** Yeah.

341 **Stephen:** It was one of the topics, like we had to choose a song that stuck
342 out to us the most and go home and talk about it and bring it
343 back the next day. Oh, not talk about it, write it down, our
344 beliefs, then talk about it the next day to the class which took off
345 a few discussions.

346 **Interviewer:** So that’s what you did. You went home, thought about it, wrote
347 down a few ideas, came back.

348 **Stephen:** But we didn’t use my words. Others that we used, like we used
349 a certain few.

350 **Interviewer:** Okay, but at least it got you thinking.

351 **Stephen:** Yeah.

352 **Interviewer:** We talked about your Dad as playing a significant part in your
353 faith. Can you remember things that he said to you that have
354 stayed with you?

355 **Stephen:** Um – there’d be too many to say. A lot of what he’s said has

356 **Interviewer:** How often do you see him?

357 **Stephen:** Because my parents are divorced, I see him probably twice
358 during the school week. I – I go down there for a long time, like
359 as soon as I go home from school til 9.00 on Wednesdays then
360 drive back to my Mum’s ’cause all my stuff’s there and every
361 second weekend.

362 **Interviewer:** So you’re very close to him.

363 **Stephen:** Yeah, especially over the past two years, I’ve got to know him a
364 lot better.

- 365 **Interviewer:** And what about your Mum?
- 366 **Stephen:** My Mum's my best mate. She – I've lived with her my whole life.
367 I can tell her anything that's going on in my life. We've got the
368 strongest connection between me and my Mum.
- 369 **Interviewer:** What about the difference in influence?
- 370 **Stephen:** Between my parents?
- 371 **Interviewer:** Yeah.
- 372 **Stephen:** My Mum's been my mate my whole life, whereas me and my
373 Dad have become mates pretty much over the past two years.
374 Like, he was my mate before that but he was like more of a
375 father figure, whereas my Mum's been both. I'm not like
376 bagging my Dad in any way but, um, just I knew my Mum more
377 like she knew me 'cause I like spent all my ups and downs with
378 her.
- 379 **Interviewer:** So can you pinpoint the change in you that's led to the change in
380 your relationship with your Dad?
- 381 **Stephen:** Um – how much advice he gave me with my cousin's accident,
382 so much good advice.
- 383 **Interviewer:** So when did the accident happen?
- 384 **Stephen:** Um – I think it was 2000 – 2001, January. It was the one in
385 Yallingup, the girl who broke her neck while diving into the
386 water. And I've – interests, we like both love cars. He's a
387 surfer, I'm a body boarder, so we both love the waves. Footy.
388 Just heaps of stuff. I've sorta grown into him. It's just all things
389 he likes I like.
- 390 **Interviewer:** And so you see the event that's changed you.
- 391 **Stephen:** Ah, not really. It wasn't like a significant event. I thought, Aw,
392 yeah, he's such a great man, I Yeah, just over the past two
393 years.
- 394 **Interviewer:** But it all started with your cousin's accident?
- 395 **Stephen:** Aw, not so much. That was one of the main things, but I was
396 sort of becoming more of a friend with him around that time. It
397 just did increase it.
- 398 **Interviewer:** Okay. Are there things that your Mother said to you that stayed
399 with you?
- 400 **Stephen:** Um – I'm not sure that I've thought about it because of her. I
401 dunno, like she's a really kind person who wouldn't offend
402 anyone deliberately, just like a really good role model and I try to
403 follow in her path.
- 404 **Interviewer:** Do you have an image of your Mum?
- 405 **Stephen:** Yeah, my –

406 **Interviewer:** When I said that did you see a photographic image of your
407 Mum?

408 **Stephen:** Nah, like, I dunno, just she's been a single for like – um –
409 thirteen years. She's just like developed herself – I've seen her
410 develop over that time. She's just become like such a like
411 significant part of my life. A really, really good person.

412 **Interviewer:** Do you say that to your Mum?

413 **Stephen:** Yeah. Not – not enough. Everyone who knows her like says
414 how like she's strong-willed, how charismatic she is.

415 **Interviewer:** It's very clear your parents have had a profound influence on
416 you. Thank you, Stephen. Your life's very rich.