

**Religious Meaning Making**

*Partially adapted from Amato, 1990; Levin, Markides, & Ray, 1996; Pargament, Smith, Koenig, & Perez, 1998; Putney & Middleton, 1961*

Religion is an important source of coping, meaning, and resilience in many people’s lives. Yet, it has been historically understudied in the field of psychology. We originally included several measures of religiosity and spirituality to explore how to best assess these constructs. A domain-level factor analysis of all meaning making items produced an 11-item measure. Further analysis indicated this could be trimmed to 8 items with no loss of psychometric quality. This global measure of religiosity assesses the extent to which individuals engage in religious and spiritual practices as a way to improve their well-being, cope with adversity, and find meaning in their lives. It includes two items adapted from the RCOPE scale (Pargament, Smith, Koenig, & Perez, 1998; items 2 and 3 below), a single item from Amato’s helping scale (1990; item 1 below), three items adapted from the Dimensions of Religious Ideologies scale (Putney & Middleton, 1961; items 4, 5 and 6 below), one item assessing Private Religious Practices (adapted from Levin, Markides, & Ray, 1996; item 7 below), and a new item assessing participation in organized religion (item 8 below).

**Development and validation of measure in pilot study and main sample:** To establish reliability and validity for new and adapted items, we conducted a pilot study with 104 participants from the same community as the main sample, recruited through a local email classifieds list and word-of-mouth. In the main sample of over 2500 participants, we conducted domain-level factor analyses for all meaning making strengths. Internal consistencies (coefficient alphas) for the pilot and main samples are 0.88 and 0.87, respectively (for the 8-item version). Validity was established in the main sample with moderate to strong correlations with other measures of meaning making strengths, such as Purpose ( $r = .44$ ), Meaning Making – Morals ( $r = .43$ ), in addition to outcome measures of well-being, such as the Awe Index ( $r = .71$ ) and Post-Traumatic Growth ( $r = .51$ ).

**Scoring:** Response categories vary by item. The total score is a sum of all the items. We used z-scores of the scale score in our analyses. Higher scores indicate higher levels of religious meaning making.

**Partially adapted from:** Amato, P. R. (1990). Personality and social network involvement as predictors of helping behavior in everyday life. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 53, 31-43.  
Levin, J. S., Markides, K. S., & Ray, L. A. (1996). Religious Attendance and Psychological Well-Being in Mexican Americans: A Panel Analysis of Three-Generations Data. *The Gerontologist*, 36(4), 454-463.  
Pargament, K. I., Smith, B. W., Koenig, H. G., & Perez, L. (1998). Patterns of positive and negative religious coping with major life stressors. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 37, 711-725.  
Putney, S. & Middleton, R. (1961). Dimensions and correlates of religious ideologies. *Social Forces*, 39(4), 285-290.

**Life Paths version:** Hamby, S., Grych, J., & Banyard, V. L. (2015). *Life Paths measurement packet: Finalized scales*. Sewanee, TN: Life Paths Research Program. <http://www.lifepathsresearch.org/strengths-measures/>

1. Have you ever prayed for the well-being of others?
  - Yes ..... 1
  - No ..... 0
2. When dealing with a problem, I look for spiritual support from religious leaders.
  - Mostly true about me ..... 4
  - Somewhat true about me ..... 3
  - A little true about me ..... 2
  - Not true about me ..... 1
3. When dealing with a problem, I ask others to pray for me.
  - Mostly true about me ..... 4
  - Somewhat true about me ..... 3
  - A little true about me ..... 2
  - Not true about me ..... 1
4. My faith or spiritual beliefs affect my views on other things.
  - Mostly true about me ..... 4
  - Somewhat true about me ..... 3
  - A little true about me ..... 2
  - Not true about me ..... 1

5. My faith or spiritual beliefs are very important in my life.
- Mostly true about me ..... 4
  - Somewhat true about me ..... 3
  - A little true about me ..... 2
  - Not true about me ..... 1
6. I often think about my faith or spiritual beliefs.
- Mostly true about me ..... 4
  - Somewhat true about me ..... 3
  - A little true about me ..... 2
  - Not true about me ..... 1
7. How often do you pray privately in places other than at church or at synagogue?
- Several times a day ..... 7
  - Once a day ..... 6
  - A few times a week ..... 5
  - Once a week ..... 4
  - A few times a month ..... 3
  - Once a month or less..... 2
  - Never ..... 1
8. How often do you attend religious services and other activities at a place of worship, such as weekly dinners?
- Several times a day ..... 7
  - Once a day ..... 6
  - A few times a week ..... 5
  - Once a week ..... 4
  - A few times a month ..... 3
  - Once a month or less ..... 2
  - Never ..... 1