

Internet Resources

Mid Council Ministries of the Office of the General Assembly provides a variety of online video and print-format training materials for presbytery committees/commissions, inquirers and candidates, and sessions on a variety of topics. While these resources are updated periodically to take account of changes in the constitutional and General Assembly adopted requirements and recommendations, information in the current editions of the *Book of Order* and this *Advisory Handbook* or the companion *Handbook on Standard Ordination Examinations* should always take precedence. Release dates for resources are provided so that you will know if the handbooks provide more recent information.

Online training opportunities

Online video presentations may be accessed directly by clicking on their titles in digital versions of this *Advisory Handbook*, or by going to <http://oga.pcusa.org/ministries/prep4min/online-trainings/>.

Process of Preparing for Ministry:

[*“Cycles of Discernment.”*](#) The process leading to ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church can sometimes seem a bewildering and endless sequence of disconnected tasks. This YouTube video will give you insight into essential rhythms of discernment and preparation that not only bring order to this process but underlie the life of ministry itself. (Updated December 2012)

[*“Journey into Ministry”*](#) covers the process that may lead to ordination to the ministry of word and sacrament or to alternate forms of ministry within the church. It introduces each stage of the formal preparation for ministry procedure with the PC(USA) and the specific purposes of each stage. (Released Fall 2010)

[*“A Critical Decision: The Transition from Inquiry to Candidacy”*](#) explores the different purposes of the inquiry and candidacy phases of the preparation for ministry process with the Presbyterian Church and will suggest issues that need to be explored by inquirers, their sessions and their presbytery committee when considering whether to recommend an inquirer be enrolled as a candidate. (Released January 2011)

[*“Alternative Assessment of Competency”*](#) reviews both the range of options available to provide special accommodations within the standard examination process and the possibilities and means for approving alternative means of demonstrating ministry competency in fulfillment of Book of Order requirements. (Updated December 2012)

Examination Preparation Tools:

[*“Taking Online Ordination Exams”*](#) is a YouTube video that demonstrates how to

access the examinations website and to navigate through an online exam from beginning to end. It also addresses some special considerations related to different operating system and browser configurations, and the use of mobile or tablet computing devices. (Updated July 2013)

[“*Formatting Online Ords*”](#) is a YouTube video that introduces a special practice area on the examinations website where those registered for exams can try out the system before the testing date. It reviews the basic word processing functions of the exam system, things to consider when deciding whether to work only in the system or to use a word processor in conjunction with it, and formatting style for online exams as compared with academic papers, and the use of non-Roman Alphabets such as Korean, Greek or Hebrew. (Updated January 2013)

[“*Tips for Writing the Ords*”](#) is a YouTube Video that presents a step-by-step method for analyzing the kinds of questions that appear in the senior ordination examinations in the areas of Theological Competence, Worship and Sacraments, Church Polity and Bible Exegesis. This method follows the same system used by the PCCEC to train the readers who evaluate the exams. (Updated December 2012)

[“*Practicing the Tips*”](#) provides access to practice exercises related to principles presented in the “*Tips for Writing the Ords*” video. This resource is an interactive review of how to analyze all the forms of questions found in each examination area. Users can select which exam area they wish to work on. (Released Spring 2010)

[“*Understanding the Structure of the Ords*”](#) is a companion video to “*Tips for Writing the Ords.*” This training provides a brief overview of the organization and all the types of questions that appear in each subject area of the senior ordination exams. ***This resource covers the changes in the structure of the senior ordination exams that were made in conjunction with quarterly administration.*** The video includes a “table of contents” — feature that allows the viewer to skip to discussion of particular subject areas or specific sections within the respective exam areas. (Updated April 2014)

[“*Understanding the Bible Content Examination*”](#) provides a review of the role of the BCE in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s preparation for ministry process and some suggestions on the best ways to prepare for taking the test — ways that will not only assist you in fulfilling this requirement but also strengthen your ministry for years to come. (Released December 2010)

Downloadable print resources

Handbook on Standard Ordination Examinations

The “Handbook on Standard Ordination Examinations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” is designed to serve as a resource for inquirers/candidates, presbytery committees, and ministers of other denominations who may be taking the PC(USA)’s

ordination exams.

The Exams Handbook contains basic information about the ordination exams — the purpose of the five examinations, how to register for exams, dates of administration, testing sites for the Bible Content Exam, fees, etc. It also offers helpful materials for those preparing to take the ordination examinations, such as instructions for the exams, tips on preparing for and writing exams, resources to be used, an outline of the evaluation standards, and the process for appealing the final evaluation of an exam.

The handbook has been extensively revised in conjunction with the move to offering senior exams on a quarterly basis and the changes to the time limits for the exams. To be sure you have the latest release, look for “May 2015/2.2” on the front cover.

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/handbook-ordination-examinations/>

Dare to be One

A collection of twelve testimonies demonstrating the unique and common aspects of the call to ministry. This resource aims to inspire and challenge especially young racial ethnic leaders to consider the call to ministry. (Released in 2001)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/dare-be-one/>

Discerning Your Call and Gifts for Ministry

A resource addressed specifically to seminarians, inquirers and candidates to help them discern their gifts and their call. Also useful to sessions and presbytery committees. Written by the late Roy M. Fairchild. (Released May 2009)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/discerning-your-call-and-your-gifts-ministry-word-/>

Educator Certification Handbook

A resource that explains the process of certification, including requirements, along with a step-by-step explanation of how to proceed. (2015 edition)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/educator-certification-handbook/>

Gifted by the Flame

A brochure for individuals who are called to work within the professional church arena, but are not called to be ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Includes brief descriptions for church educator, work in national and international mission, and in governing bodies and other agencies. (PDS #72218-99-003; released 2003)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/gifted-flame/>

What it means to be a center accredited by the Ministry Development Council

Commitments established by the Accreditation Committee of the Ministry Development Council for centers providing vocational assessment and psychological evaluations for persons considering calls to ministry or currently serving as teaching elders. (Released May 2008)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/what-it-means-be-center-accredited-ministry-develo/>

Self-Inventory Questions for Clarification

A grouping of questions for vocational reflection for inquirers and candidates. It can be used as a self-inventory with session liaison or Committee on Preparation for Ministry liaison. (Undated, prior to 2000)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/self-inventory-questions-clarification/>

Spiritual Development of Inquirers and Candidates

An outline of spiritual development areas for inquirers and candidates. (Released 1996)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/spiritual-development-inquirers-and-candidates/>

The Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel

This website provides information or persons interested in military chaplaincy service regarding required qualifications and endorsement procedures.

<http://pccmp.org/contemplating-ministry/>

Touched by the Flame

A brochure that can be used as a study and reflective instrument for people considering their vocation in the light of ministry of the Word and Sacrament, a typical church, and the marks of success contribute to make this a resource that will challenge and validate those individuals who are, or should be, considering this profession. (Released 2002)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/touched-flame/>

Considering Your Call and Vocation

Explores the definitions of Christian vocation and calling and shares with the reader one's own sense of call along with the similarities and differences in other calls to gain a better understanding of church vocation. (Released 1992)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/considering-call-vocation/>

Primary Qualities for Professional Ministry

Identifies six crucial qualities for persons in ministry, elaborates on the elements of each quality and identifies ways to develop and strengthen each quality. (Released 1992)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/primary-qualities-professional-ministry/>

The Call of Jeremiah: A Bible Study

Examine a biblical call passage, consider the personal struggles and the empowering of one called by God and relate the passage to one's own sense of call. (Released 1992)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/call-jeremiah-bible-study/>

Presbyteries have developed and shared the following resources:

Recommended Duties of Session Liaison Person

Provides for the appointment of an elder (or a group of persons including at least one elder) to act as liaison with the inquirer/candidate and the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry and to participate with the inquirer/candidate and the presbytery's committee as they explore and evaluate his or her progress in the preparation for ministry. From the Pittsburgh Presbytery (Undated, prior to 2011)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/recommended-duties-session-liaison-person/>

Developmental Chart of Inquirers & Candidates

Discusses different areas of development in the areas of education, spiritual development, interpersonal relationships, personal growth and professional development at different stages in the preparation for ministry process from admission to inquiry to the final interview before ordination. From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta (1992)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/developmental-chart-inquirers-and-candidates/>