

Study Guides for Presbytery Exams

The following study guides indicate issues and topics about which candidates for transfer, licensure, and ordination will likely be asked in their respective exams. These guides are general and suggestive in nature, not exhaustive; written and oral exams may include questions not indicated by the issues and topics suggested below.

Overview

1. Refresh yourself on each area of knowledge, as applicable.
2. Read the Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms (PCA edition).
3. Read the Book of Church Order.
4. Familiarize yourself with PCA and Presbytery of Mississippi Valley position papers.

Views

1. Inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture
2. Westminster Standards and subscription
3. Continuing revelation and extraordinary gifts (tongues, miracles, healing)
4. Creation and days of Genesis 1
5. Historicity of Adam and Eve
6. Covenant of works
7. Justification (including New Perspective on Paul)
8. Antinomianism and theonomy
9. Sanctification
10. Human sexuality and marriage
11. Christian liberty
12. Christian education
13. Sabbath
14. Worship
15. Baptism
16. Lord's Supper
17. Church (including definition, mission, government, and PCA polity)
18. Women and church offices

Bible

1. Know the central themes and basic background information of each book
2. Be ready to offer a general outline of each book of the Bible
3. Be able to explain the canonical context and significance of any part of Scripture
4. Know the biblical narrative and history, including important episodes, objects, and characters
5. Be prepared to locate key passages to teach and defend the church's doctrine
6. Be ready to use Scripture to address practical pastoral issues (spiritual, moral, social, etc.)

Theology

1. Be able to explain from Scripture each major point of Reformed theology, including
 - a. General and special revelation
 - b. Inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture
 - c. Trinity and God's attributes and works
 - d. Humanity as created and fallen
 - e. Covenant theology
 - f. Christology: incarnation, states and offices, and atoning work
 - g. Salvation: saving grace, *ordo salutis* (jointly and individually), etc.
 - h. Church: definition, government
 - j. Eschatology: personal and general
2. Be prepared to defend Reformed theology from common errors and objections

Church Government

Note: candidates are permitted to use the BCO on the written church government exam, but not in the oral exam before the committee or presbytery.

1. Know and be ready to defend the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism from Scripture
2. Be prepared to demonstrate a working knowledge of the PCA's polity

Sacraments

1. Be able to explain from Scripture the PCA's sacramental theology and practice, including
 - a. Definition and identity of the sacraments and their elements
 - b. How the sacraments function as signs and seals and operate as means of grace
 - c. The proper administration of each sacrament
 - d. Proper recipients of each sacrament
 - e. How the sacraments agree and differ with each other
2. Be ready to explain and defend your views and practices on:
 - a. Covenant baptism
 - b. Re-baptizing
 - c. Fencing the table
 - d. Paedo-communion

Church History

1. Be conversant on the following developments in church history:
 - a. Growth of the early Church
 - b. Trinitarian and Christological controversies
 - c. Ecumenical councils
 - c. Interpretation of Scripture
 - d. Shifting relations with the Roman Empire
 - e. Monasticism
 - f. Rise of the Papacy
 - g. Rise and spread of Islam
 - h. Medieval reform movements
 - i. Lutheran, Reformed, and Radical strands of Protestantism
 - j. Course of the reformation in various Protestant countries
 - k. Counter-reformation

1. American church history and Presbyterian history

m. Founding of the PCA

2. Be able to identify key historical figures by name, major contribution(s), and century of activity.
3. Be prepared to discuss major theological issues, trends, and developments in each major era
4. Be familiar with other Christian traditions past and present and how they differ from our own