



Seminary Student Process & Exam Book

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Contents

Seminary Student Process Outline

This portion of the document outlines the before, during, and ending of the seminary student process, details of being under care of Classis, and all other details involved in being in the seminary student process.

Junior Year

Beginning Theology Exam
Biblical Introduction and Exegesis Exam

Other Requirements: Greek/Hebrew Transcript, Preaching

Middler Year

Views of Ministry and Leadership Exam

Other Requirements: Christian Education Bible Study, Church History Assignment, Preaching

Senior Year

Church Government & Standards Exam
Sacraments & Worship Exam
Senior Theology & Senior Spiritual Formation Exam (final)

Other Requirement: RCA World Mission Assignment, Credo, Preaching*

Seminary Student Process

STEP 1 – COMING UNDER CARE

- 1) Applicant must complete Form I (www.candidate-care.org, found under Forms and Procedures > Program Forms). The completed form should be given to the Clerk of the church's consistory and the applicant will then meet with the consistory.
- 2) If the consistory of the church decides to recommend the applicant, they will complete Form II and submit it, along with Form I, to the Chair of the SC/CP Team.
- 3) The SC/CP Team will review the forms and then set a date with the applicant for an interview.
- 4) The SC/CP Team will decide if the applicant will come "under care" and they will be given the opportunity to introduce themselves to the full classis body at the next session of classis.

Coming "under care" of the classis means two things, 1) that the SC/CP Team and Classis pledge to support and encourage you in your development in becoming a Minister of Word and sacrament in the Reformed Church in America, and 2) that you will engage in a series of exams each year as you complete classes as a way to gauge your growth as a candidate for ministry.

- 5) The student/classis will need to complete Form V. The Stated Clerk will then petition for a Certificate of Fitness for Ministry with the appropriate seminary. This petition must be received 24 months (minimum) prior to the completion of theological training. This means the applicant will be "under care" for at least 24 months before ordination.
- 6) As a student "under care" of the classis, they will be under the supervision of the SC/CP Team and will be expected to keep this team informed of progress towards graduation and ongoing discernment of call, and participate in the exam process each year.
- 7) If a student leaves the church from which they received their consistory recommendation, the church will need to provide a letter providing information related to that departure and that they have withdrawn their recommendation. This prompts the SC/CP Team to remove the student from their care.

STEP 2 – INFORMATION ON EXAMINATIONS

- 1) In fulfillment of the requirements of the Book of Church Order, the SC/CP Team will make sure that the student exhibits the following in their time "under care,"
 - a. "Appropriate character and call to the ministry of Word and sacrament;
 - b. Comprehension of Scripture and to the history theology and church order of the Reformed Church in America;

- c. Requisite skills in interpretation and proclamation of Scripture, including sufficient Greek and Hebrew to understand nuances of the biblical text;
 - d. Competence for ministry;
 - e. Commitment to the unity of the church, the ministry of all Christians, and the proclamation of the gospel.” (Book of Church Order, 1.II.11.6)
- 2) Some exams are in oral format. They will generally be 45 minutes in length and an examiner will be assigned by the SC/CP Team. During the exam, the floor may be opened up to questions from those in attendance.
 - 3) Questions for the exams will be given to the examiner and the student ahead of time. If you have questions about the exam, you are allowed to contact your examiner ahead of the exam for clarification.
 - 4) The Senior Theology and Spiritual Formation Exam is the final exam for a seminary student.

STEP 3 – SENIOR THEOLOGY, GRADUATION, AND ORDINATION

- 1) When the student completes and passes the Senior Theology and Spiritual Formation exam with the classis’ approval, the candidate for ministry will read the Declaration for Licensed Candidates and be give the License to Preach. This license is good for a period of five years and can be renewed or revoked by the classis.
- 2) The licensed candidate for ministry remains under the supervision of classis.
- 3) The licensed candidate for ministry can be ordained by classis only after the candidate has received a form of invitation to ministry the meets the requirements listed in the Book of Church Order (1.II.13.4).
- 4) All arrangements for the service of ordination, including the scheduling and order of service are to be arranged by classis with assistance of the candidate.

Financial Assistance

The SC/CP Team may have money in their budget to allow students to apply for grants. If there is funding available, grant applications will be sent out in the spring, and if funds are granted, they will be sent directly to the institution where they are a student. Please send all inquiries to the Chair of SC/CP Team.

Provisional License to Preach

A Provisional License to Preach will be given to each student after they are examined each year. This grants students under care access to the pulpit. The Provisional License given in the student’s senior year, allows them to be extended the promise of a call.

Steps to come "under care"

Step 1: Complete Form I and meet with consistory where church membership is held.

Step 2: If church consistory affirms applicant's calling, the consistory will complete Form II and turn both (Forms I & II) into the chair of the SC/CP Team.

Step 3: The SC/CP Team will review forms and set-up and interview with the applicant.

Step 4: If approved by the SC/CP Team, the applicant will be taken under care by the team and then introduced at a session of classis.

Step 5: The applicant and classis will complete Form V and the classis clerk will send all information into the appropriate seminary.

Exam Checklist

Junior Year	Kind of Requirement	Completed?	
Beginning Theology	Exam		
Biblical Intro & Exegesis	Exam		
Greek or Hebrew	Transcript		
Preaching	4 times, 3 evals each		
Middler Year			
Views of Min. & Leadership	Exam		
Christian Education	Student led Bible study		
Church History	Assignments (2)		
Preaching	4 times, 3 evals each		
Senior Year			
Church Government & Stand.	Exam		
Sacraments & Worship	Exam		
RCA World Mission	Assignment		
Senior Theology & Spirit. Form.	Final Exam		
Credo	Assignment		
Preaching	4 times, 3 evals each		

Notes:

Other Requirements Defined

Greek or Hebrew

The Student Care and Commissioned Pastor Team will need to see one transcript from either a Greek or Hebrew course at seminary to fulfill this requirement. We understand that these classes may be taken your Junior or Middler year. They can be turned in at the completion of either of those years.

Preaching

You will be required by Classis to preach at least four times per year in Seminary (a total of 12 times). Each time you preach, three evaluation forms will need to be distributed to those in attendance. Those forms will need to be sent to the Chair of the Team in a timely manner.

Christian Education Bible Study

At the same meeting where exams are given, the student will lead a Bible study (based on the lectionary). It will be 15-20 minutes in length with time for discussion at the end.

Church History Assignment

The student will be required to write a 2-page reflection paper about how church history informs and will influence their ministry. They will also be required to turn in an assignment from class for the team to review.

RCA World Mission Assignment

The student will be required to write a 3-page paper about the past, present and future of RCA Mission.

***Credo**

Credo requirements will be given to you by the Seminary. You will need to turn in your completed Credo to the Chair of the Student Care and Commissioned Pastor Team 30 days before your Senior Theology Exam.

Beginning Theology

The purpose of this exam is to gain a feel for where each student is theologically at the beginning of their seminary education.

Revelation

- 1) What is the difference between general revelation and special revelation?
- 2) What is your view of scripture?
- 3) What does inspiration mean?
- 4) The Bible is often called the "Word of God." What does that mean?
- 5) In the Reformed Church, the Bible is our only rule for faith and conduct. What does that mean?
- 6) Are all parts of the Bible equally authoritative?

The Doctrine of God

- 7) What do we mean by attributes of God?
- 8) What are some of these attributes? Where would you find an example of these attributes in both the Old and New Testaments?
- 9) Christians believe in a triune God. Why is this important?
- 10) Can you *really* know God?
- 11) What do we mean when we speak of a personal God?
- 12) What is the providence of God? How do you resolve the tension between the human responsibility and the sovereignty of God?

Anthropology

- 13) What is meant by the image of God?
- 14) What is the origin of sin?
- 15) What are the effects of sin on the image of God, especially in the light of the phrase in Ephesians 2 that we "*are dead in trespasses and sins*?"

Christology

- 16) Why do we call ourselves Christians rather than by some other name?
- 17) Explain the phrase, "Two natures, one person."
- 18) We call Jesus our prophet, priest and king. How do these names help us understand His mission?
- 19) How did the cross change things between God and humanity?

Pneumatology

- 20) Who is the Holy Spirit?
- 21) What are the gifts of the Spirit?
- 22) What role does the Holy Spirit play in salvation?
- 23) What is the significance of Luke's account of Pentecost in Acts 2?
- 24) When does the Holy Spirit come into the life of a believer?
- 25) What is faith?
- 26) What does it mean to be justified?
- 27) Is justification by faith alone or by faith and works?
- 28) What does it mean to be born again? How does this happen?
- 29) What is sanctification, and how does it relate to justification in the Reformed tradition?
- 30) What is Pelagianism, and why is it such a danger?

Ecclesiology

- 31) What is the church? How can a person identify a church?
- 32) What is the relationship of the church to Israel in the old covenant?
- 33) What is the purpose of the church?
- 34) What is the meaning of discipleship?

Eschatology

- 35) What is the second coming of Christ?
- 36) What is heaven? Hell?
- 37) What happens when a believer dies? A non-believer?
- 38) The New Testament teaches us to hope for the "resurrection of the dead." What is this?

Biblical Introduction and Exegesis

Students should be able to demonstrate a familiarity with and a working knowledge of the scriptures.

Old Testament

- 1) What are the important themes in Genesis 1-11?
- 2) What are the similarities and differences between the two creation stories? Is one better or 'more right' than the other?
- 3) How does the flood story in Genesis 6-9 show evidence of divine grace even as it relates to a tale of judgment?
- 4) Explain the significance of the altar, the Tabernacle, and the Temple in the history of Israel.
- 5) What is the significance of the offices of prophet, priest and king?
- 6) What was the exodus, and why was it important?
- 7) What are some of the unique elements of teaching that Deuteronomy gives as it presses the covenant documents and instructions of Exodus and Leviticus into a new shape for a new generation?
- 8) What parallels can be drawn between the Exodus from Egypt and the entrance of Israel into Canaan? What implications might these comparisons hold for the Israelite self-perception and identity?
- 9) Trace and explain the covenant renewal ceremonies from Deuteronomy through the end of Joshua.
- 10) Discuss the main themes of the following books:
 - a. Leviticus
 - b. I/II Samuel & I/II Kings
 - c. The Psalms
 - d. Proverbs
 - e. Isaiah
 - f. Daniel
- 11) What truths are we taught about God in the book of Judges? What truths about humanity are we taught in this book?
- 12) What is classified as wisdom literature in the Old Testament and how are these books useful?
- 13) Identify some of the differing types of Psalms, giving specific examples, and explain how these might be used today.
- 14) Is there a psalm that you hold dear? What is it, and why?
- 15) Explain the general message of Isaiah with reference to Israel's present and future?

New Testament

- 16) Highlight a few of the differences and similarities between the Gospels. What are some characteristics of each Gospel?
- 17) What does the word "synoptic" mean? Explain the "synoptic problem." What is the best solution?
- 18) What is a parable? How might you help others understand parables?

- 19) Give a general outline of Jesus' life and ministry.
- 20) What are some Biblical passages that express the significance and meaning of the death of Christ?
- 21) During the Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appear next to Jesus. How does Jesus' ministry complete the ministry of these two Old Testament figures?
- 22) What are some of the struggles and successes of the early Church as read in Acts?
- 23) Briefly describe the life and ministry of Paul.
- 24) What are the important themes of the book of Romans? How does this letter fulfill important Old Testament themes?
- 25) What books are included in the General Epistles? Why are they called "General" or "Catholic"?
- 26) Why did Martin Luther call James an "epistle of straw?" Do you agree with him? Do Paul and James disagree about the relationship between faith and works?
- 27) Explain II Timothy 3:16.
- 28) What is the value of the book of Revelation? What advice would you give to someone who wanted to study it?
- 29) Be able to explain the main theme and general outline for each New Testament book.

Both Testaments

- 30) What is the relationship between the Old and New Testament? Are we to value one over the other?
- 31) Explain the Old Testament concept of the covenant. How does this covenant theme continue into the New Testament?
- 32) What are some of the major themes that run throughout the Bible, and give references to support your points.
- 33) How did Jesus and the New Testament writers view and use the Old Testament?

Exegetical Understanding

- 34) What major theme in the Bible is the most important to you? Why?
- 35) What are the benefits of knowing the history, background, authorship, and dating of the various books?
- 36) What is our view on the authority of scripture?
- 37) A new Christian wants to begin reading the Bible but doesn't know where to begin. What would you recommend and why?

Practical Application

- 38) A new Christian wants to begin reading the Bible but doesn't know where to begin. What would you recommend and why?
- 39) A young woman is thinking about getting an abortion and would like to read some biblical passages to help her make her decision. What would you recommend and why?
- 40) A person has sinned and comes to you wanting to be assured from scripture that his/her sins can be and have been forgiven. What would you recommend?
- 41) A person in your church is struggling with the assurance of salvation. After all, this person tells you that he/she is continuing to commit the same sins repeatedly despite a sincere desire not to do so. He/she points repeatedly to Jesus' saying in Matthew that "the door is narrow" to heaven. What would you say to this person?
- 42) How would you advise a person who is struggling to find meaning in a time of suffering? Is it God's judgement of his/her sins?
- 43) Is it legitimate to preach Christ from an Old Testament passage like Genesis 3 or Isaiah 7?

Views of Ministry and Leadership

Students should be able to reflect on and articulate a working knowledge of their views of ministry and leadership and their ideology behind the implementation of both.

Views of Ministry

- 1) Give me your definition of a pastor (not your textbook's).
- 2) What is an effective method to set goals within a church?
- 3) What spiritual gifts has God given you? How do you know? How will you use them to minister to your congregation? How will their presence affect your ministry?
- 4) How will you handle those areas of ministry for which you are not gifted?
- 5) Read Acts 20:28 and explain the following:
 - a. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock
 - b. Be shepherds of the church of God
- 6) Do you see yourself as a shepherd? If so, why?
- 7) Do you see yourself as a leader? If so, why?
- 8) Discuss role as counselor, teacher, equipper, enabler and encourager.
- 9) What are some principles in problem solving that are biblically sound?
- 10) How will you respond to people who attack you? How will you seek spiritual protection from such attacks?
- 11) What is the purpose of the church?
- 12) How must a church meet the needs of the world in which she exists?
- 13) How will you approach these tough areas of ministry:
 - a. When you bury your first young person?
 - b. When you cannot answer a person's question about why she/he has cancer?
 - c. When the consistory is not interested in your vision of the church?
 - d. When a consistory member has ripped you apart?
 - e. When a married couple who is headed for divorce has rejected your counsel?
 - f. When you've worked 80 hours that week and there is still more that must be done?
- 14) How will you set goals for the ministry you lead?
- 15) As president of the consistory, how do you view the power and authority that is part of that role?
- 16) How will you evaluate your strengths?
- 17) How will you evaluate your weaknesses? What will you do about them?
- 18) How will you remain fresh?
- 19) What excites you most about ministry?
- 20) What scares you the most about ministry?
- 21) What scriptures give you the mandate to communicate the Gospel and to be Christ's witnesses to those who do not yet have a relationship with God?

- 22) How would you empower and mobilize a congregation to communicate the Gospel in a natural and non-threatening way to those outside of the church?
- 23) Describe the importance of prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit in the communication of the Good News.
- 24) Why is it do important to contextualize the message as we communicate the Gospel in a diverse world?
- 25) How are you doing the work of an evangelist?

RCA Standards & Government Exam

Students should be able to demonstrate a familiarity with the contents of all RCA creeds and confessions. They should also be able to articulate their plans for the use of these documents in their ministry.

General Questions

- 1) What are the standards?
- 2) Have you read the ecumenical creeds?
- 3) What are the ecumenical creeds?
- 4) What is the difference between the creeds and the standards?
- 5) How are we to understand these documents in relationship to scripture?
- 6) Are these documents inspired by God? Explain.
- 7) What is the value of having the ecumenical creeds? What is the value of having the standards?

The Ecumenical Creeds

The Apostles' Creed

- 8) What is the historical background to this creed?
- 9) How is this creed Trinitarian in nature?
- 10) Why is this creed considered Christocentric?
- 11) What is the value of the Apostles' Creed?

The Nicene Creed

- 12) What was the controversy surrounding the writing of the creed?
- 13) Whose teaching is rejected in this creed?
- 14) What is the nature of Christ as expressed in this creed?
- 15) How does this creed differ from the Apostles' Creed?
- 16) What is the value of the Nicene Creed?

The Athanasian Creed

- 17) What are the two central themes in this creed?
- 18) Why was this creed written?
- 19) In light of this creed, how is God both Trinity and unity?
- 20) What is the nature of Christ as defined in this creed?
- 21) What is the value of the Athanasian Creed?

The Heidelberg Catechism

- 22) Who wrote the Heidelberg Catechism?
- 23) What is the historical background to the Heidelberg Catechism?
- 24) How is the Heidelberg Catechism divided (three different ways)?
- 25) What is the general content of the Heidelberg Catechism?
- 26) What does the Heidelberg Catechism say about humanity and sin?
- 27) What does the Heidelberg Catechism say about the Apostles' Creed?
- 28) What does the Heidelberg Catechism say about the sacraments?
- 29) What does the Heidelberg catechism say about the Ten Commandments? What does the Heidelberg Catechism say about the Lord's Prayer?
- 30) Was the Heidelberg Catechism meant to be a teaching tool? How can it be used to this end?
- 31) Do you feel there is value in memorizing part or all of the Heidelberg Catechism?
- 32) Is the Heidelberg recognized by denominations other than the RCA and the CRC?
- 33) What are the strengths of the Heidelberg Catechism?
- 34) What are the weaknesses of the Heidelberg Catechism?
- 35) What is one question and answer in the Heidelberg Catechism that has meant a great deal to you?

The Belgic Confession

- 36) From what historic context did the Belgic Confession arise?
- 37) Who is Giudo DeBres? What do you know of his life?
- 38) How was the Belgic Confession composed (structured)?
- 39) Why was the Belgic Confession written?
- 40) What are some of the primary concerns of the Belgic Confession?
- 41) What does the Belgic Confession say about the Bible?
- 42) What does the Belgic Confession say about the Trinity?
- 43) What does the Belgic Confession say about the person of Christ?
- 44) What does the Belgic Confession say about humanity and sin?
- 45) What does the Belgic Confession say about the church?
- 46) What does the Belgic Confession say about the sacraments?
- 47) According to the Belgic Confession, what are the errors of the Pelagians, the Anabaptists, and the Epicureans?
- 48) How do you feel with the sections of the Belgic Confessions which are grounded in a specific historical context (i.e. Article 36)?
- 49) How might you use the Belgic Confession in a congregational setting?

Canons of Dort

- 50) From what historical context did the Canons arise?
- 51) Who was James Harmerzoon (Arminius)?
- 52) What happened at the Synod of Dordrecht?
- 53) What is the structure of the canons of Dort?
- 54) What are the Five Heads of Doctrine?
- 55) Why is this document considered to be highly polemical?
- 56) What is Dort's position on human free will?
- 57) What is Dort's position on election?
- 58) What is Dort's position on the person of Christ?
- 59) What is Dort's position on humanity and sin?
- 60) What is Dort's position on the perseverance of the saints?
- 61) Do any of the errors addressed at Dort still exist in the church today?
- 62) As you look at the positions of the two parties in this conflict, how far apart do they appear to be in their beliefs?
- 63) What use can you make of this document in the life of the church?
- 64) Grace is justice. Do you agree or not? Why?

Practical Integration into Ministry

- 65) What is the pastoral value of having the ecumenical creeds?
- 66) What is the pastoral value of having the standards?
- 67) Of the three standards, which one is the most significant to you and why?
- 68) What do you say to a person who sees the standards as extra biblical?
- 69) Under what circumstances do you think the RCA would adopt additional standards?
- 70) Would it be possible for the RCA to drop one of the standards? Could there be any reason to do this?
- 71) How will you use each of the standards in a pastoral setting?
- 72) A person in your church says, "All we need is the Bible. These confessions and creeds are man's attempt to put God in a box." How do you respond?
- 73) What does it mean to preach the points of the Heidelberg Catechism? How do you do this? How often must you do this? Do you hold to the standards?
- 74) Do you believe you can disagree with some parts of the standards and still accept them as Reformed statements of faith?

Book of Church Order

General Questions

- 75) What is included in the constitution of the RCA?
- 76) What is the primary benefit of having a BCO?
- 77) What type of Church Government does the RCA subscribe to?
- 78) What are major strengths of the Presbyterian form of church government? Weaknesses?
- 79) What are the offices of the RCA?
- 80) What are the government units of the RCA? Describe each.
- 81) What are the doctrinal standards to be used in the RCA according to the BCO?
- 82) The BCO has three chapters and an appendix. What are the three chapters?
- 83) Who is the head of the church?
- 84) How does parity work in the RCA?
- 85) Does the RCA's document of government get amended often?

Consistory

- 86) What authority does the minister of the Word have in the local church?
- 87) How are the doctrinal standards to be used? Who evaluates this?
- 88) How would you implement this constitutional requirement?
- 89) What is the implication and usage of Article 5: Section 4? How, and when would you use it? What expectations would you have in the use of this section?
- 90) What are some requirements a person must meet to serve on a consistory?
- 91) What are some of the methods used to elect elders and deacons?
- 92) In the event of the church's dissolution, when properties are at stake to whom do they belong? How will they be disposed? Who is involved in this process?
- 93) What are the categories of church membership?
- 94) What is the process by which a member can be removed from the membership rolls of the church?
- 95) May an elder administer the sacraments? Explain.
- 96) A member of the Presbyterian church transferred to your church. This person was an elder in their previous church and is now becoming an elder of your church. Is installation necessary? Ordination?
- 97) How old must you be to become an elder?
- 98) What is a union church?
- 99) What are the general responsibilities of an elder?
- 100) What are the general responsibilities of a deacon?
- 101) What are the general responsibilities of a minister of the word?

Classis

- 102) Define the word (concept of) "Classis."
- 103) What are the consistorial inquiries? What is their purpose?
- 104) Is the Classis an assembly or a judicatory?
- 105) How is quorum for Classis determined?
- 106) Who is responsible for pastoral care and supervision? How is this carried out?
- 107) What are the primary responsibilities of the Classis?
- 108) When a candidate has received and accepted a call or has been assigned to a ministry, what are the three requirements which that ministry must meet before this person can be ordained?
- 109) What is a dispensation and how is it acquired?
- 110) What is the balance of authority between the local church and the Classis?

Regional and General Synod

- 111) How does a minister or elder become a delegate to General Synod?
- 112) What is a corresponding delegate? How many are there?
- 113) Describe the process of an overture to General Synod which originates in a consistory and ends up being formally adopted.
- 114) What are some of the responsibilities of General Synod?
- 115) Who serves on the Board of Directors of the RCA? How many people are on the Board?
- 116) How many Regional Synods are there in the RCA?

Disciplinary and Judicial Procedures

- 117) What is the primary purpose of church discipline?
- 118) Who can serve as council on a hearing on a charge before an RCA judicatory?
- 119) Can a minister's ordination be revoked?
- 120) What are some of the forms of discipline in the RCA?
- 121) Does the BCO provide for a process of excommunication? How does this work?
- 122) What is the difference between an appeal and a complaint?

Practical Integration

- 123) A woman student candidate is to be examined for licensure. A Classis minister objects to this. What recourse is available to this minister?
- 124) A minister wants to leave a church, the consistory will not relieve him or her, does the BCO provide for this situation? How?
- 125) What are some of the limitations of the BCO pertaining to the following: Baptism, Lord's supper, use of hymns, use of the Heidelberg Catechism?

- 126) If, in the Classis exam, the candidate does not hold to certain doctrinal standards of the RCA, what is to be done?
- 127) A member or pastor is involved in extramarital relationships. What would you do in terms of the BCO?
- 128) What is the church's financial responsibility to the denomination?
- 129) How do you review elders and deacons in relationship to yourself as the pastor?
- 130) What are the lines of authority between Classis and the local church?
- 131) How binding are the decisions of Classis to the local church?
- 132) In what kinds of situations can the Classis step into the local church situation?

Sacraments & Worship Exam

Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of RCA Sacraments and their applications.

General Questions

- 1) What is a sacrament?
- 2) How many sacraments do we have? What are they?
- 3) How are the sacraments a means of grace?
- 4) What impact does a sacrament have on the life of a believer?
- 5) Where do the sacraments derive their authority?
- 6) Who are the rightful participants in the sacraments?
- 7) What is the relationship between word and sacrament?
- 8) How are the senses related to the sacraments?
- 9) What is the importance of the sacraments in relationship to salvation?
- 10) How is a sacrament a sign and a seal?
- 11) Why does the RCA believe the sacraments should be administered in the presence of the congregation?
- 12) Why do we have two instead of seven sacraments?

The Sacrament of Baptism

Biblical Understanding

- 13) What is the biblical support for this sacrament?
- 14) What is the biblical support for infant baptism?
- 15) Is baptism an explicit command?
- 16) Where has Christ given a command to use this sacrament?
- 17) How does infant baptism relate to infant circumcision in the Old Testament?
- 18) Why do we baptize in the name of the Triune God? What biblical support can we give for this?
- 19) What biblical support is there for the various modes of baptism?

Theological integration

- 20) What is the meaning of baptism?
- 21) What are the various modes of baptism?
- 22) Who are candidates for baptism?
- 23) What does water signify in baptism? Does this imagery change with the various modes?
- 24) Does baptism differ from communion in its sign and seal? If so, how?
- 25) What is the relationship of faith to baptism? How does this relate to infant baptism?
- 26) How did the baptism of John differ from the baptism instituted by Christ?
- 27) Does the method/mode of baptism matter?

- 28) What mode(s) does the RCA encourage?
- 29) What mode do you find most meaningful?
- 30) What are the differences between Lutheran, Catholic, and Reformed views of baptism?
- 31) Does the RCA believe in a baptismal regeneration?
- 32) How does our liturgy deal with this doctrine?
- 33) How does baptism relate to the biblical concept of covenant?

Practical Application

- 34) What part does the congregation have in the sacrament of baptism?
- 35) How soon after birth should a child be baptized?
- 36) If a couple from the community, not members of the church, came to you requesting baptism for their child how would you respond?
- 37) A family in your church wants you to perform a private baptism service in their home (family only) how will you respond?
- 38) A church member wants to be baptized (for the first time) by immersion, how will you handle this?
- 39) A person from the Baptist Church completes your new members' class and now wants to be baptized again after entering the membership of your church. What will you say and do?
- 40) A family wants to join your church but they don't believe in infant baptism, instead they want their children to be "dedicated". What is the difference between infant baptism and dedication? How would you counsel them? Would you dedicate their children? Is this permitted in the RCA? Do we encourage this practice?
- 41) You are receiving a family by letter of transfer. The parents were baptized as Presbyterians. Is their baptism acceptable as they become members of your church? The same situation occurs with a couple who were baptized Mormons? Is their baptism acceptable?

The Lord's Supper

Biblical Understanding

- 42) What is the Passover of the Jews?
- 43) How does the Passover relate to the Lord's Supper?
- 44) What Old Testament rite(s) does the supper replace?
- 45) Does Jesus call His followers to partake of the supper? Where?
- 46) What biblical images help you understand the Lord's Supper?
- 47) How does John's (the gospel) teaching on this sacrament differ or add to that of the other gospels?
- 48) What warnings does the apostle Paul give concerning this sacrament?

Theological Interaction

- 49) What are the elements used in the Lord's Supper and what do they signify?
- 50) In what way is the sacrament of the Lord's Supper a feast of remembrance, communion, and hope?
- 51) What are the various views of the Lord's Supper (be sure to include terms such as: transubstantiation, and consubstantiation)?
- 52) How is Christ present in the Lord's Supper?
- 53) What place does "faith" have in the celebration of the Lord's Supper?
- 54) Do the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ?
- 55) What did Jesus mean when He said, "Eat my body, and drink my blood"?
- 56) What is the place of the Holy Spirit in the Lord's Supper?
- 57) Which name do you prefer: The Lord's Supper or Holy Communion?
- 58) Where do we get the term Eucharist?
- 59) What happens in the life of a believer during communion?
- 60) Why is the Christian church "under obligation" to exclude non-believers from the Lord's Supper?
- 61) What's the difference between the Catholic and the Lutheran views of the Lord's Supper as compared to the Reformed?

Practical Application

- 62) A member of your church says, "I can't take part in communion. I'm not worthy". How will you respond?
- 63) What benefits do we derive from the Supper?
- 64) What are the requirements upon the church regarding the Lord's Supper according to the BCO?
- 65) A couple asks you to serve communion during their wedding ceremony (to them alone) how will you respond?
- 66) How does discipline relate to this sacrament? Who is responsible for this discipline?
- 67) Are children welcome to participate in the supper? Explain.
- 68) Will you invite those of other church traditions to share with you in the Lord's Supper? How will you do this?

Worship

- 69) What is a biblical definition of worship?
- 70) What role does the Holy Spirit play in worship?
- 71) What do you consider to be the key elements of worship?
- 72) As the preacher, what do you do to personally prepare for worship?
- 73) What hymn book or books do you appreciate and why?
- 74) Do you see value in singing hymns and choruses in the worship service? How might you incorporate both?

- 75) What are some benefits of having a tradition of liturgy to draw from?
- 76) What are some hindrances of having a tradition of worship to draw from?
- 77) Must you always read from the liturgy at Communion, a Baptism, a wedding or at a funeral?
- 78) What is the difference between a traditional worship, seeker sensitive worship, and evangelistic worship?
- 79) What form of worship do you prefer (i.e. contemporary, traditional, High Church, other)?
- 80) How would you determine what form of worship is appropriate for a congregation?
- 81) How would you go about changing the form of worship if necessary?
- 82) How will you help the congregation grieve the loss of the old form of worship and welcome and value the new form?
- 83) In your opinion, what makes a worship service disjointed?
- 84) How do you intend to keep worship fresh and meaningful?
- 85) Do you favor lay participation in worship services? How about the use of drama? Sacred dance? Multi-media? Why or Why not?

Senior Theology & Spiritual Formation Exam

Students should be able to reflect and articulate their personal relationship with their Trinitarian God, and their way of nurturing and maintaining it.

Revelation

Biblical Understanding

- 1) What is a Reformed understanding of Scripture?

Practical Application

- 2) How should one evaluate the word of contemporary prophets?

Pneumatology (Doctrine of the Holy Spirit)

Biblical Understanding

- 3) Who is the Holy Spirit?
- 4) What is the Holy Spirit's ministry?
- 5) Does the Holy Spirit exist in the Old Testament? Give examples.
- 6) What does "grieving the Holy Spirit" mean?
- 7) What are the fruits of the Spirit?
- 8) What are the gifts of the Spirit?
- 9) The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity. What biblical evidence can you give for this?
- 10) What was the role of the Holy Spirit in the early church? Give examples.

Theological Interaction

- 11) When did the Holy Spirit come?
- 12) Does the Holy Spirit work outside the church in believers? Explain.
- 13) When does the Holy Spirit come into the life of a believer?
- 14) What does it mean to walk/live in the Spirit?
- 15) The Spirit is the third person in the Trinity. Define this theologically.
- 16) Explain the relationship between justification and sanctification and why is one without the other impossible?

Practical Application

- 17) What has the Holy Spirit been doing in your life this past year?
- 18) What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the church today?
- 19) What "grieves" the Holy Spirit today?

- 20) A member of your church tells you that you should teach on the need to be “baptized in the Holy Spirit” as a secondary experience to being filled with the Spirit. How do you respond?
- 21) What are your spiritual gifts? How will these help you in ministry?
- 22) What have been some positive effects of the charismatic movement on the church? What are some negative effects?

Ecclesiology (Doctrine of the Church)

Biblical Understanding

- 23) What is the church?
- 24) What does it mean to say “the church is the body of Christ”?
- 25) What does it mean to say “the church is the bride of Christ”?
- 26) What is the “Great Commission”? How does this relate to the church?

Theological Interaction

- 27) What is “The Communion of the Saints”?
- 28) What are the marks of the true church according to Reformed theology?
- 29) What is the difference between “The Kingdom of God” and “the Church”?
- 30) Take one attribute of the church - define it and relate it to today’s world (Apostolic, Universal, Holy).
- 31) Who are the members of the church?
- 32) What is the relationship of the church to Israel in the old covenant?
- 33) What is Calvin’s Doctrine of the Catholicity and the unity of the church?
- 34) What is the power of the church?

Practical Reflection

- 35) What are the roles of the pastor in the church?
- 36) Explain how the church can be both an organism and an organization.
- 37) What is the place of spiritual gifts in the life of the church?
- 38) What do you say to the Christian who believes they don’t need to be part of the church?
- 39) What challenges face the church in the 21st century?
- 40) What are some keys to church growth?

Eschatology (The Doctrine of Last Things)

Biblical Understanding

- 41) Explain final judgement.
- 42) What will our resurrection be like?
- 43) What kind of bodies will we have, if any? Explain considering a specific text.

- 44) What does the Bible give as signs of the end times?
- 45) Will Christ's return (second coming) be literal and physical? Explain.
- 46) Is the rapture a biblical doctrine? Explain.

Theological Interaction

- 47) What is eschatology?
- 48) What is realized eschatology?
- 49) What does Reformed theology believe with respect to the end of history?
- 50) Explain the different millennial systems. Which one do you hold to?
- 51) What will happen to Satan at the final judgement?
- 52) When will Christ return? Could he return today?

Practical Application

- 53) Are we living in the end of times?
- 54) An adult in your Sunday School class asks you, "How can a good and loving God send a kind (non-Christian) person to hell?" How would you respond?
- 55) What is the pastoral importance of Paul's teaching on the second coming?
- 56) A youth in your church loses her mother (a believer) in an automobile accident. She asks you where her mom is now. What will you say? She also asks you if she will ever see her mom again. How do you respond?

Theological Terms (give a brief definition of each)

- 57) Theology
- 58) Systematic Theology
- 59) Dogmatic Theology
- 60) Biblical Theology
- 61) Apologetics
- 62) Exegetical Method
- 63) Polemics
- 64) Divine Attributes
- 65) Covenant
- 66) Conservative/Liberal
- 67) Common Grace
- 68) Election
- 69) Predestination
- 70) Regeneration
- 71) Conversion
- 72) Faith

- 73) Justification
- 74) Sanctification
- 75) Adoption
- 76) Perseverance

Spiritual Formation

- 77) How would you define spiritual formation?
- 78) Can spiritual formation develop in an unhealthy way? If so, how?
- 79) In Matthew 14:13 and 23, and other N.T. instances, we find the Lord Jesus withdrawing either alone or with His disciples. What message or example do you glean from this? Why did he do this? Will you do the same?
- 80) Who will be your pastor? Your spouse's pastor? Your family's pastor?
- 81) To whom will you go and talk when the burden of ministry begins to tax the relationships with the ones you love?
- 82) What are some spiritual disciplines that you regularly use to keep spiritually fresh and growing?
- 83) Servanthood - Christ calls us to both serve Him and to serve within His kingdom. What things have you done in this area that have been meaningful or have taught you significant spiritual truths?
- 84) Holy Spirit - In what way is the Holy Spirit active in your life? What spiritual gifts has the Holy Spirit has given you? What areas of ministry do these gifts best prepare you for service?
- 85) Good reputation - How do you plan to develop and maintain a good reputation in your life and ministry?
- 86) Priorities - What priorities has Christ led you to establish in your personal life? In your life as a pastor?
- 87) What are boundaries for you? What are some of the boundaries that you have established for your family? Your counseling? Your time? Your finances? Your physical health?
- 88) Discipleship - Have you been, or are you being discipled by anyone? What benefits do you see in personal discipleship? Will you regularly be discipling someone else in their faith?
- 89) In what way has your personal relationship with God changed since you wrote your Junior Spiritual Formation paper for us?
- 90) How does your personal relationship with God affect your ministry?
 - a. How does that relationship strengthen your ministry?
 - b. How does it nurture your ministry?
 - c. Does that relationship inspire your ministry? How?
- 91) How is your relationship with God growing?
- 92) How do others help you in your personal relationship with the Trinity? (Mentors, friends, family, etc.)
- 93) What hindrances in your ministry or personal life do you foresee will interfere with the development of your relationship with God? For example, time restraints, hardships in family and/or the lives of our parishioners, burnout? What can you do to appropriately address these hindrances?

94) What difference has Jesus made in your life?

95) Have you experienced the Holy Spirit using you to help bring a person to faith in Jesus Christ?