

OFFICER TRAINING EXAM STUDY SHEETS



The *Book of Church Order (BCO)* 24-1 requires that all nominees for church office be examined in knowledge of Bible content and the system of doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the Constitution of the PCA. Below is some information that PCA officers should know to help them serve well in the office. There are three broad areas: 1) Bible, 2) theology, and 3) church government.

Bible

- There are 66 books in the Bible: 39 in the OT and 27 in the NT.
- The OT is often divided into 5 major sections: 1) the Pentateuch (5 books), 2) the historical books (12 books), 3) the wisdom literature (5 books), 4) the Major Prophets (5 books), and 5) the Minor Prophets (12 books).
- The Ten Commandments are listed in two places: Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. Jesus gives the summary of the law (i.e., "the Greatest Commandment") in Matthew 22 and Mark 12.
- The Ten Commandments are as follows (paraphrased and based on the Protestant tradition):
 1. You shall have no other gods before me.
 2. You shall not make any graven images.
 3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
 4. You shall remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.
 5. You shall honor your father and mother.
 6. You shall not murder.
 7. You shall not commit adultery.
 8. You shall not steal.
 9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
 10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.
- There are 7 major covenants in the OT:
 1. Covenant of Works/Life (Gen 2)
 2. Covenant of Grace (Gen 3)
 3. Covenant with Noah (Gen 9)
 4. Covenant with Abraham (Gen 17)
 5. Covenant with Moses (Ex 20)
 6. Covenant with David (2 Sam 7)
 7. The New Covenant (Jer 31)

Key Bible passages:

- God's deliverance of Israel through the Red Sea – Ex 14
- The elders of Israel saw God and ate and drank with him – Ex 24
- God instructed Moses to appoint 70 elders to help him lead the people – Num 11
- God reveals Himself in nature and through His word. Ps 19 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God. The law of the Lord is perfect."
- After his sin with Bathsheba, David prayed the psalm of repentance recorded in Ps 51
- The Prophet Ezekiel saw the vision of the valley filled with dry bones, which is a picture of the regenerating work of God's Spirit through His word – Eze 37
- The concept of justification by faith is found in the OT in the words of Habakkuk in Hab 2:4. Paul quotes this verse in Rom 1:17, which is a key verse that led to the Reformation.
- The Sermon on the Mount is found in Mt 5-7.
- The Great Commission is recorded in Mt 28:19.

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- Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection" in Jn 11.
- Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" in Jn 14.
- The record of the early church appointing 7 deacons to serve the people is found in Acts 6.
- One of the great verses for the assurance of God's love is Rom 8:38-39
³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ESV)
- Paul taught on the necessity of the doctrine of the Resurrection in 1 Cor 15.
- Paul lists the fruit of the Holy Spirit in Gal 5.
- Paul describes the armor of God in Eph 6.
- A text that draws a connection between circumcision and baptism is Col 2:11-12.
- The biblical qualifications for elders and deacons are given in 1 Tim 3 and Tit 1 (elders only).
- James mentions that someone who is seriously ill can ask the elders to pray over and anoint him/her in James 5.
- John 3:16 states:
"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (ESV)

Theology

Below are some key theological points, which are taken from the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) and the Westminster Shorter Catechism (WSC).

What is man's chief end? (WSC 1)

Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.

"What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?" (WSC 2)

The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.

"What do the Scriptures principally teach?" (WSC 3)

The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

How would you explain the inerrancy of Scripture? (WCF 1.8)

The original manuscripts of the OT and NT, being immediately inspired by God, were wholly true and without error in what they teach.

Who is "the supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined"? (WCF 1.10)

The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined ... can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto eternal life; and others foreordained to everlasting death." (WCF 3.3)

"How does God execute his decrees?" (WSC 8)

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God executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

"What is sin?" (WSC 14)

Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

"What is justification?" (WSC 33)

Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

"What is sanctification?" (WSC 35)

Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

"What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?" (WSC 23)

Christ, as our Redeemer, executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

A believer can be certainly assured that he/she is in a state of grace based on 3 things? (WCF 18.2)

- 1) the promises of God made to those who have professed faith in Jesus Christ
- 2) the evidence of the work of the Spirit in his/her life (e.g., the fruit of the Spirit)
- 3) the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with his/her spirit that he/she is a child of God.

"What is baptism?" (WSC 94)

Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, does signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

"To whom is baptism to be administered?" (WSC 95)

Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.

"What is the Lord's Supper?" (WSC 96)

The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worth receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.

When a person dies: (WCF 32.1)

- 1) the soul of a believer is made perfect in holiness and received into the highest heavens, where he/she beholds the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of his/her body.
- 2) the soul of an unbeliever is cast into hell, where he/she remains in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day.

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Government

Below are some basic principles of church government taken from the *PCA Book of Church Order* (BCO).

- Jesus Christ is the King and Head of the Church. (BCO Preface)
- “All church power . . . is only ministerial and declarative since the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice.” (BCO Preface)
- The Constitution of the PCA consists of 1) the Westminster Confession of Faith, together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and 2) the Book of Church Order. (BCO Preface)

- The BCO is divided into 4 major sections:
 - 1) the Preface,
 - 2) the Form of Government (FOG),
 - 3) the Rules of Discipline (ROD),
 - 4) the Directory for Worship (DFW). Only chapters 56-58 of the DFW have constitutional authority.
- The visible church consists of all those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, together with their children (BCO 1-3).
- Christ has given His church elders and deacons as permanent officers. The single office of elder is divided into two orders: 1) teaching elder, and 2) ruling elder (BCO 7-2).
- The courts of the church are (BCO 10-2, 11-4)
 - 1) the Session (jurisdiction over a single church),
 - 2) the Presbytery (all ministers [teaching elders], Sessions, and churches within a prescribed district),
 - 3) General Assembly (matters as concern the whole Church).
- BCO 25 gives details about congregational meetings and the ownership of church property.
- The goal of church discipline is three-fold (BCO 27-3)
 - 1) the glory of God
 - 2) the purity of the Church
 - 3) the keeping and reclaiming of disobedient sinners.
- The following censures may be given by the Church as a part of godly discipline (BCO 30-1)
 - 1) admonition
The formal reproof of an offender by a church court, warning him of his guilt and danger, and exhorting him to be more circumspect and watchful in the future.

 - 2) suspension from the sacraments
The temporary exclusion from receiving the sacraments, particularly the Lord's Supper. There is no definite time period set; the person is readmitted when there is genuine repentance.

 - 3) excommunication
The excision of an offender from the communion of the church.

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4) suspension from office

The exclusion of an officer from his office.

The exclusion can be for a definite time period in the case of an officer who is repentant, but whose temporary removal would be for the credit of religion, the honor of Christ, and the good of the reclaimed sinner.

In the case of an unrepentant sinner, the exclusion will be indefinite until he exhibits signs of repentance or a greater censure is given.

5) deposition from office

The removal of an officer from his office. This censure may or may not be accompanied with the infliction of other censure.