

General Commission on Ministry Competency Areas

Competency Areas

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BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

Be rooted and grounded in scripture and able to interpret and apply the scriptures in ways that are appropriate to original and contemporary contexts.

Outcomes

- Practice regular Bible study as a spiritual discipline;
- Read biblical texts from both testaments effectively for preaching and worship, interpreting them in light of the gospel and relating them to the life of faith today;
- Analyze biblical texts using current scholarly methods;
- Assess and use critical commentaries and other resources (for example, print and online “sermon helps” and lectionary studies);
- Describe in broad terms the historical development of the Bible, including the social, economic, and political contexts out of which biblical literature grew;
- Distinguish literary genres and theological “schools of thought” that appear in the Bible;
- Identify the role which the experience and culture of the reader plays in the interpretation of biblical texts.

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING

Be able to practice the principles of good administration, planning and implementing short- and long-range goals to enhance congregational life in collaboration with teams and committees.

Outcomes:

- Select an appropriate leadership style – adjusted according to the constituency and context – to maximize one’s personal potential;
- Develop a work plan that demonstrates an understanding of congregational/contextual dynamics;
- Identify how race, ethnicity, class, gender and orientation shape, define and influence leadership needs and expectations;
- Perform necessary and appropriate administrative tasks (e.g., organizational analysis, working with ledgers and budgets, giving direction to a team, hiring practices, computer skills and electronic communication);
- Practice self-care and time management based on a well-grounded theological understanding.

COMMUNICATION

Be an effective communicator and be able to facilitate effective communication within and on behalf of the church.

Outcomes:

- Use appropriate and effective communication styles and tools in order to inspire, inform, and invite participation in the life, mission, and purposes of the Church;
- Effectively use communication skills for public and small group conversations and speaking;
- Employ the appropriate pastoral role, given the circumstance – when to guide and/or when to participate in conversations or discussion;
- Select and use appropriate technology and media to convey the message and mission of the congregation;
- Utilize communication skills that promote effective, positive relations with staff, boards, agencies, congregation, and other relevant groups/communities;
- Distinguish between and clarify the formal (explicit) from the informal (tacit) roles, rules, rituals and relationships in any church structure with which you are working.

CROSS CULTURAL AND ANTI-RACISM EXPERIENCE

Be sensitive to the different manifestations of racism and prejudice in the culture and be committed to confronting and overcoming them.

Outcomes:

General guideline: Be sensitive to the different manifestations of racism and prejudice in the culture and be committed to confronting and overcoming them.

- Articulate images of a God who is manifest and present among members of every culture and race;
- Practice ministry, both within one’s own culture and the Church universal, informed by domestic and global responses to the needs of God’s people;

- Nurture faith in others, understanding and teaching that everyone's faith is contextual and influenced by such factors as, race, gender, class, and culture;
- Utilize scriptural resources, theology, tradition, and personal experience, to identify and oppose racism as both unchristian and ungodly;
- Model ministry that enhances the church and the world, by embracing and celebrating racial and cultural diversity;
- Help those with whom you do ministry to understand that racism is essentially systemic, but influences the attitudes and behavior of people of all races;
- Draw on the ministry of Jesus Christ, to present the opposition to racism and the embrace of every culture, as "welcoming the stranger."

ECUMENISM

Exhibit a commitment to working with other Christians and denominations and with other faiths in programs of common witness and service, and to articulating the vision of the ecumenical and global church as a starting place for mission.

Outcomes:

- Articulate why the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) highly values ecumenism, drawing on resources from our tradition;
- Articulate a theology of ecumenism, drawing on resources from scripture and tradition;
- Articulate a theology of Christians relating to non-Christian faiths, a theology that is respectful and truthful, a theology that reflects the candidate's own faith stance, all the while recognizing multiple ways in which such relationship can be construed;
- Use ecumenical resources and design ecumenical worship services;
- Describe and theologically reflect upon at least one significant ecumenical experience, be it a worship, a social justice activity, or a dialogical activity in which you took an active role;
- Describe and theologically reflect upon at least one significant interfaith experience, be it a worship service, a social justice activity, or an interfaith dialogue in which you took an active role.

EDUCATION AND LEADER DEVELOPMENT

Know the foundations of Christian education and the principles of leader development. Show competency in teaching children, youth, and adults, including lay leaders and staff.

Outcomes:

- Use analytical skills for assessing, evaluating and selecting curriculum and Christian education materials best suited for a ministry context;
- Practice respect for the ways culture, community and experience, inform and shape the teaching task;
- Participate in the dynamic educational process that involves both teaching and learning for the teacher and the learner;
- Utilize knowledge of the foundations for Christian education and principles for leader development when teaching children, youth and adults;

- Employ an understanding of the issues characteristic of each stage of human development and how those issues impact learning and shape various learning styles.

ETHICS

Be able to help parishioners think critically about the relationship of their faith to issues of justice, ethics and morality.

Outcomes:

- Adhere to The Ministerial Code of Ethics in the conduct of ministry, and model personal behavior consistent with the fundamental principles of Christian ethics;
- Lead in ways that call forth ethical conduct among individuals and groups within the church;
- Relate resources from scripture and tradition to specific ethical issues today;
- Preach and teach effectively about social and economic justice as core concerns of Christian faith;
- Address ethical issues raised by culturally-imbedded racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism;
- Describe the role personal/communal experience and cultural perspective play in ethical reasoning and be able to apply a variety of approaches.

EVANGELISM

Be able to motivate Congregational members to share their faith through word and action.

Outcomes:

- Articulate a theological and biblical basis for evangelism consistent with the faith perspectives and approaches of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
- Understand evangelism as it is linked to discipleship and faith development;
- Use various media and technologies in proclaiming the gospel in current contexts and social milieus;
- Show sensitivity to how cultural and generational differences call for a variety of evangelistic approaches;
- Implement evangelistic expressions that are informed by the pluralistic realities of contemporary life, being respectful of matters of race, culture, and interfaith relationships;
- Understand the church as an evangelical community in which people are invited to participate in and to themselves become good news for one another and the world;
- Understand the differences between evangelism and church growth strategies.

MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

Be able to understand and articulate the centrality of the call to mission given by Jesus Christ and the prophets. Be able to empower congregations to engage in mission from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.

Outcomes:

- Articulate an understanding of the world as a place of God's activity—witnessing and participating in God's mission of redemption, liberation, reconciliation, and renewal of creation in our immediate communities and in the world;
- Teach and practice in the Christian community what it means to be participants in and recipients of God's mission activity in the varied contexts of congregation, community and the world;
- Articulate a theology of mission which is consistent with both our immediate Christian community's context, as expressed in our Church's document "From our doorsteps. . . ," and our global mission philosophy as proposed by Global Ministries/DOM;
- Identify an array of practices of Christian mission in the immediate and global community and discover connections with theologies that undergird those practices;
- Exercise an understanding of the Disciples of Christ Division of Overseas Ministry's understanding of "critical presence" in its global work and the role of congregations to serve as "Global Mission Partners" in the mission of the church worldwide;
- Articulate the long history of Disciples mission practices and theologies that shaped, and continue to shape, Disciples of Christ ecumenical relationships, cross-cultural encounters, interfaith encounters and dialogues;
- Show an appreciation for and commitment to ministries and mission practices that nourish and sustain healthy local Christian and non-Christian communities, develop global mission partner congregations, promote justice, foster peace, seek reconciliation, and live in the expectation of the coming Reign of God.

PASTORAL CARE

Be able to engage other persons with empathy and assess situations and relationships with the compassion of Christ, with sensitivity to culture and context. Be able to convey the healing power of God to those who suffer.

Outcomes:

- Possess self-knowledge that permits pastoral care to be offered within the context of one's strengths and limitations and within the resources of the volunteer and professional communities of the church;
- Articulate an understanding of pastoral authority and its relevance to pastoral care;
- Offer care that is respectful of diversity and differences, including age, culture, disability, economic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social status and religious beliefs and practices;
- Provide effective pastoral care to those suffering grief and loss, with particular attention to the dynamics of death and dying;
- Reflect theologically on pastoral care situations, inviting the parties involved into that reflection as is fitting;
- Assess pastoral situations and make suitable referrals from the broad range of available services by developing a comprehensive list of, and relationships with (programs names and descriptions, personnel, locations, and contact data) referral resources (community, county, state and national) that are available given the locale where you are ministering;

- Employ a working knowledge of psychological and sociological disciplines, human development and spiritual growth.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Know the practice and theory of Christian preaching. Be able to proclaim the Word of God, share the Good News of Jesus Christ, and help Congregational members apply their faith to daily life.

Outcomes:

- Develop sermons that help congregations recognize and respond to God's presence and purpose as the divine as experienced in the stories of the faith;
- Use diverse homiletic possibilities relating appropriate form and styles of preaching to different situations;
- Employ an understanding of homiletic possibilities with respect to form and genre relating appropriate form and styles to different situations;
- Manifest a warm and engaging bodily presence in the pulpit;
- Be sensitive to the use and impact of words, employing language and idioms that are meaningful – and not offensive – to listeners;
- Engage a biblical text in ways that respect its historical and theological integrity and preach so as to help the listener celebrate the diversity of the faith of the biblical community.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Establish and maintain spiritual disciplines that lead to personal growth and help others develop a rich spiritual life.

Outcomes:

- Develop and draw from a broad awareness of the full range of spiritual practices, freely using practices which emerge from one's own tradition;
- Engage in a variety of spiritual practices, as a faithful response to God's calling and continued creation;
- Practice spiritual discipline(s) that engage one with the world;
- Use spiritual practices to deepen and maintain a vision for justice and compassion;
- Teach spiritual practices and advise about their use in pastoral care contexts both one-on-one or in groups;
- Identify individuals and groups with whom spiritual practices can be engaged in accountable relationships.

STEWARDSHIP

Be able to develop and encourage healthy stewards who recognize and share generously God's abundant gifts for all creation.

Outcomes:

- Practice the spiritual discipline of giving and serving;

- Identify and use pertinent biblical texts, Christian traditions, and spiritual practices to foster generosity and giving;
- Articulate a coherent theology of wealth, work, and care for creation, rooted in biblical themes of abundance, generosity, Sabbath rest, and economic justice;
- Teach and preach effectively about money;
- Teach and preach effectively about giving time, talent, and money to help accomplish the ministry and mission of the church;
- Describe how mission is accomplished and funded beyond the local congregation in the Regional and General expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This includes the ability to explain how Disciples Mission Fund works, the purposes of Reconciliation Offering and Week of Compassion Offering, and what the four special offerings (Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, Pentecost) support;
- Employ denominational and ecumenical resources for stewardship education and for helping a congregation conduct a stewardship campaign. This includes the ability to articulate the difference between stewardship and fundraising.

THEOLOGY

Be able to articulate a coherent view of God’s nature and activity in relation to the Christian tradition, to critically engage human situations from a perspective of faith, and to help persons recognize theological issues in their daily lives.

Outcomes

- Give a coherent description of the gospel and relate it to the life of Christian faith;
- Articulate foundational theological principles of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), particularly as reflected in the Preamble and first four paragraphs of The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
- Reflect theologically on contemporary issues related to the church’s pastoral practice and mission in the world;
- Read and critically evaluate theological texts in order to work with multiple theological approaches from a variety of cultural perspectives;
- Describe in general terms theological distinctions and similarities of the major Christian traditions -- Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant/Ecumenical, Protestant/Neo-Evangelical, and Pentecostal -- and be able to situate Disciples theology accordingly. This includes the ability to identify points of difference and agreement between Disciples and the other major branches of the Stone-Campbell movement;
- Describe the basic theological issues at stake in the modern ecumenical movement and in the major periods of church history outlined in the “Understanding Heritage” competency.

UNDERSTANDING OF HERITAGE

Have knowledge of and appreciation for the history and thought of Christianity and of the history, structure, practices, and ethos of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Outcomes:

- Describe the historical context and institutional expressions of Christianity in the first four centuries.
- Describe the general development of the Medieval Church in Europe (5th–15th centuries), especially with respect to the formation of monasticism and the relationship between the papacy and state.
- Compare and contrast major reform movements in sixteenth century Europe, both Protestant and Catholic.
- Describe major developments in early modern history of Christianity, including the rise and decline of Puritanism, the impact of the Enlightenment on the faith, and the rise and spread of Pietism-Methodism-Revivalism.
- Describe general developments of Christian movement in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, paying particular attention to the missions of the Stone-Campbell Movement.
- Articulate the general outline of the formation, development, and contributions of diverse communities of the Stone-Campbell Movement globally (not just the U.S. and Canada), paying particular attention to the founding principles of the movement.
- Tell the story of key women in the Stone-Campbell Movement and in the Christian tradition throughout the world.

WORSHIP

Know the purpose and elements of Christian worship. Have the ability to plan and lead meaningful worship by working with the worship team, musicians, and congregational members.

Outcomes:

- Articulate a theology of worship. The candidate will be able to answer the question, "What is worship?";
- Reflect theologically on the various rituals and elements of a worship service. The candidate will be able to answer the questions, "What are the significant elements and rituals of worship? Why do we do them? And what do they mean?";
- Recognize the structure of particular worship services and demonstrate the ability to plan worship services for varying occasions in the life of the church. This includes a demonstrated knowledge of an array of worship resources;
- Integrate the various dimensions and styles of worship (emotional, aesthetic, social) with the specific needs of the local ministry context;
- Demonstrate the ability to speak about the history of worship, styles, and elements within the Christian tradition and within the traditions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
- Be competent in performing the rituals of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) including presiding at the communion table, performing baptisms, presiding at weddings and funerals, etc . . . ;
- Exercise an understanding of how the church's worship offers a vision of Christian discipleship--how it relates to and is completed in life and work in "the world."