

Diaconal Foundations Assessment Study Guide

The Diaconal Foundations Assessment is an examination administered by the Leadership Development Team. This study guide is designed to help you prepare for this assessment.

The Diaconal Foundations Assessment covers four focal areas: English Bible, PEARUSA Standards, Anglican polity, and the practical theology of diaconal ministry. The first component, English Bible, is a closed book, closed Bible examination. The remaining three areas may be completed using a Bible and other available resources. In fact, the best answers show interaction with Scripture, theology (especially the doctrinal standards of PEARUSA), history, and practice. All four components are to be completed individually without assistance from anyone else.

A score of 85% is required to pass the examination. Individuals scoring below 85% may be permitted to retake the examination at a later date by proposing in writing a program of study for improvement to the Leadership Development Team. In any case, individuals scoring between 65% and 85% must wait at least three months before retaking the examination. Individuals scoring below 65% may not retake the examination for a period of one year.

Questions and topics for review are listed below for each of the four focal areas.

I. English Bible

A. Whole Bible

1. How many books are in the Bible? How many in the Old Testament? In the New Testament?
2. Have you read the entire Bible?

B. Old Testament: General

1. Name the general divisions of the Old Testament and the books in each.
2. Give a general outline of Old Testament history, including key dates when known. (This should be roughly 20 bullet points.)

C. Old Testament: Key People. Be prepared to provide the book and chapter for the following key figures, and to discuss briefly the life and significance of each:

Adam	Moses	Rehoboam
Noah	Deborah	Elijah
Abraham	Ruth	Hezekiah
Isaac	Joshua	Josiah
Jacob	David	Nehemiah
Joseph	Solomon	Cyrus

D. Old Testament: Key Passages. Be prepared to provide the book and chapter for the following key passages where relevant, and to discuss briefly the significance of each:

Creation	Fall of Samaria
Cultural Mandate	Exile of Judah
Eden	Call of Isaiah
Fall	Sign of Immanuel
Noahic Covenant	"Pierced for our transgressions"
Abrahamic Covenant	"New Covenant"
Ten Commandments (2 places)	"A Watchman"
The Shema	Valley of Dry Bones
Dedication of the Temple	"I will pour out my Spirit"
Division of the Kingdom	Return from Exile

E. New Testament: General

1. Name the general divisions of the New Testament and the books in each.
2. Name the Prison Epistles, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Catholic Epistles.
3. What are the distinctive features of each of the four gospels?

F. New Testament: Key People. Be prepared to provide the book and chapter for the following key figures where relevant, and to discuss briefly the life and significance of each:

Herod the Great	Peter
Herod Antipas	Cornelius
Mary	Barnabas
Pontius Pilate	Stephen
Pharisees	Paul
Sadducees	Timothy
The Apostles (name them)	James
Nicodemus	

G. New Testament: Key Passages. Be prepared to provide a book and chapter reference for the following key passages or concepts where relevant, and to discuss briefly the significance of each:

Shepherds at Nativity	The Good Samaritan
Magi	Caesarea Philippi
Baptism of Jesus	Transfiguration
Temptation of Jesus	Mary & Martha
Sermon on the Mount	Correcting a brother
The Lord's Prayer	Summary of the law (two)
"Take my yoke"	The Comforter
Kingdom parables	"You must be born again"
Prodigal Son	Woman at the well

Way, truth & life
Loaves & fishes
The Vine
Good Shepherd
Triumphal Entry
Last Supper
Death of Christ (event)
Resurrection of Christ (event)
Ascension of Christ
Great Commission
Pentecost
Conversion of Paul
Jerusalem Council
Philippian jailer
Spiritual Gifts
Resurrection of believers
Biblical discipline
Fruit of the Spirit

Predestination
Marriage & divorce
Suffering
Christian liberty
Heaven & hell
Return of Christ
Civil government
Armor of God
Mind of Christ
Infant baptism
Pressing toward the mark
Fought the good fight
Not forsaking assembling
Problems with the tongue
Living stones
Forsaken first love
You are lukewarm

II. The Standards of PEARUSA

A. *The Jerusalem Declaration*

1. In what sense is the Bible authoritative? How would you settle a conflict between Scripture and church tradition?
2. Describe your approach to the interpretation of Scripture. How many original meanings may a passage have? How many legitimate applications may a passage have? In answering this question, you are encouraged to interact with the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.¹
3. What role do reason and tradition play in your interpretation of Scripture? Is the Bible true with regard to science? Are some portions of the Bible no longer relevant due to changes in culture?
4. Why use liturgy in worship? Doesn't liturgy quench the Holy Spirit? What is your understanding of liturgical flexibility in PEARUSA, particularly in view of Article II of the Solemn Declaration, and Articles 20 and 34 in the Articles of Religion? What are the boundaries for such flexibility? (See Article 34.)
5. How does use of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) foster congregational participation in worship? How does the BCP promote unity in the body of Christ? How does the BCP foster Gospel-centered worship? How does worship in the Prayer Book tradition teach the spiritual disciplines?
6. What differences do you see, if any, between the following concepts: the baptism of the Spirit, the filling of the Spirit, and the anointing of the Spirit? Should we expect a healthy Christian believer to have the gift of tongues? What role should prophecy play in the worship and life of the church? How would you settle a conflict between a contemporary prophetic word and a passage of Scripture?
7. Be prepared to discuss the historical context for the Nicene and Athanasian creeds. What would be lost if we were to discard one of the three Ecumenical Creeds?

B. *The Articles of Religion*

¹ (Christian believers from many traditions wrestling with questions regarding biblical authority drafted the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy in 1977. This document is not a formal component of PEARUSA standards. It is, however, a useful tool for articulating a thoughtful, nuanced understanding of biblical authority and therefore is commended to you as a resource for the above questions. If you cannot obtain a copy of that Statement, we would be glad to help you.)

1. How is the Holy Spirit equal to the Father? In what ways is Jesus subordinate to the Father? Is the Holy Spirit a person?
2. What would you say to a person who believed that Jesus was God's first creation? What would you say to a person who believed that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are simply different ways that the one God manifests himself to his creatures?
3. Where is Jesus now? Does Jesus have flesh and blood now? During his earthly ministry, was Jesus fully God? Was he fully human?
4. Should we include the Gospel of Thomas in the canon of Scripture? Why or why not? Should we include First Esdras in the canon? Why or why not? Should we include Third Esdras in the canon? Why or why not?
5. Some contemporary teachers believe that preaching is simply a "commercial" in the worship program, and as such it ought to be entertaining and brief. How does this view square with the Anglican doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture?
6. What would you say to someone who argued that belief in purgatory is necessary for salvation?
7. Do you believe that Abraham, Moses and King David have inherited eternal life? If so, how were they brought into a right relationship with Almighty God?
8. Discuss your understanding of the role of the Old Testament law in the Christian life.
9. Who was Pelagius and what is Pelagianism? Are infants born with a clean slate, or do they inherit a sin nature? Is it correct to say that, apart from Christ, people are in bondage to sin? Do Christian believers retain a sin nature after salvation? Will Christian believers retain a sin nature after the second coming of Christ?
10. Do human beings possess free will? Can a person repent of sin and have faith in Christ apart from the grace of God? Are unbelievers able to do good at all?
11. What is justification by grace through faith? If justification is by grace, then how can faith, a human act, have anything to do with it? Describe carefully the relation between works and justification, doing justice to both Paul and James.
12. When we are saved, what are we saved from?
13. Why is the idea of voluntary good works—beyond what is required by God's law—nonsensical to Anglican Christians?

14. Is it possible to achieve total sanctification in this life, and as such, remain sinless until death?
15. Does God predestine those whom he saves? If so, on what basis? What are the pastoral uses of the doctrine of election? In what sense can misuse of the doctrine of election be like throwing pearls before swine?
16. Are there limits (self-imposed or externally imposed) on the sovereignty of God? Is God "open" or is he immutable?
17. What would you say to someone who believed that all religions are equally valid ways of becoming right with God?
18. What are the marks of the visible church? What is the difference between the visible and invisible church?
19. Is there room for prayers to Mary or other saints in Anglicanism? Why or why not? What about the use of icons in worship?
20. Should PEARUSA encourage its congregations to develop cell groups in which laypersons preach and celebrate the Lord's Supper? Why or why not?
21. What is a sacrament? How many sacraments are there? How are the sacraments means of grace? For whom are they means of grace? For whom are they a means of condemnation?
22. Can a sacrament administered by a faithless priest nevertheless be a means of grace? Why or why not?
23. In general, how does Anglican sacramental theology differ from what baptistic Christians believe? Do you believe that the sacraments are a means of grace, or only symbolic?
24. What does baptism signify? How is baptism a means of grace? Does baptism guarantee salvation? Are baptized infants regenerate?
25. Why should infants be baptized? Should persons baptized as infants who later come to mature faith as adults be rebaptized? Why or why not?
26. What does the Lord's Supper represent? How is it a means of grace? Does partaking of the Lord's supper guarantee salvation?
27. In what way are the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ?
28. Why do the Articles of Religion forbid the elevation and adoration of the elements in the Lord's Supper?

29. Can the Lord's Supper be understood to be a sacrifice in any way? Why or why not?
30. Should Anglicans reserve the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? Why or why not?

III. Anglican Polity

A. Government

1. Who is the head of the church? How does this person exercise his authority?
2. In what way should churches be connected? Do you believe that connectionalism is necessarily taught by Acts 15?
3. Do you believe that the episcopal form of church government, with bishops, priests and deacons, is biblical? If so, defend your position.
4. What are the qualifications and duties of bishops?
5. What are the qualifications and duties of presbyters?
6. What are the qualifications and duties of deacons?
7. What are the responsibilities of a vestry? Can a rector be fired by the vestry? Can a rector's salary be increased or decreased by the vestry?
8. What are the responsibilities of a senior warden?
9. Does an assistant rector sit on the vestry? Does an assistant rector have voting rights on the vestry? Can an assistant rector serve as senior warden?
10. Give a biblical defense for the ordination of women to the diaconate.
11. On what basis does PEARUSA require its presbyters and bishops to be men?

B. Discipline

1. Present a biblical rationale and guidelines for the practice of church discipline.
2. What is the purpose of church discipline? What is the goal?
3. Does PEARUSA have the right and authority to excommunicate persons? If so, under what circumstances might this occur?

IV. Practical Theology of Diaconal Ministry

A. Gospel Ministry

1. What is the Gospel? If an inquirer were to ask you how to trust in Christ for salvation, what would you say?
2. It is said that there are two thieves who try to steal the Gospel from us: legalism and license. Do you agree? Distinguish between law-keeping and legalism. Distinguish between freedom in Christ and licentiousness.

B. Service Ministry

1. Is a ministry of service a secondary vocation? Why or why not?
2. What does the Bible teach regarding hospitality? What is the difference between hospitality and "entertaining friends?"

C. Jubilee Ministry

1. What hope does the Bible give for people in prison? (i.e. are there biblical precedents for the release of captives?) Do all prisoners in Scripture go free?
2. What hope does the Bible give for persons living in poverty? Is wealth promised to all Christian believers? Is wealth promised to all Christian believers *in this life*? Who should be the church's first priority in giving to the poor?
3. What hope does the Bible give for persons who are ill? Is health promised to all Christian believers? Should we anoint with oil in praying for the sick? Why or why not?
4. What hope does the Bible give for persons suffering injustice? Do Christians bear any responsibility to work for justice among unbelievers?