

CLP Course Guide

The purpose of this document is to help offer a more well-rounded and intentional theological education for Huntingdon Presbytery's CLPs. We seek to achieve this purpose by providing greater guidance to instructors on the subject matter they are expected to cover in various courses. This guidance will ensure that critical concepts and areas of study are not neglected, that participants will be exposed to a wider variety of topics, and that an intentional course of education is provided giving greater clarity to what is being taught.

Many of the courses we offer lend themselves very easily to intentional organization. Other courses are better suited to a more flexible approach, allowing individual instructors greater freedom in bringing their perspectives to bear on the topic. Outlined below is a plan for the areas of study that would benefit from a more intentional approach. The courses are organized in a four (4) year cycle. Each year, the instructors are given the corresponding guidance for what subject matter we expect to be covered as they teach the course. These guidelines are intentionally broad to allow instructors to pursue the material in ways that align with their passions and interests. The suggestions given on possible topics are not meant to be exhaustive but to provide some ideas should instructors ask for guidance.

There are Instructional Tips provided at the end of this course guide. Resources are available to help in developing, teaching and evaluating a course.

<i>Course</i>	<i>Year 1 (2025)</i>	<i>Year 2 (2026)</i>	<i>Year 3 (2027)</i>	<i>Year 4 (2028)</i>
<i>New Testament</i>	Introduction	Gospels	Pauline Epistles	General Epistle
<i>Old Testament</i>	Introduction	Torah	Prophets	Writings
<i>Reformed Theology</i>	Revelation, Scripture, Doctrine of God	Creation, Providence, Doctrine of Man	Christology, Soteriology	Ecclesiology, Eschatology
<i>Creeds and Confessions</i>	Overview	Ecumenical Creeds	Reformation Era Creeds	Modern Era Creeds
<i>Church History</i>	The Early Church	The Medieval Church	The Reformation Era	The Modern Church
<i>Preaching</i>	Understanding the Call to Preach	Putting Together a Sermon	Finding Resources and Support	Never Stop Learning and Self-Care

New Testament

Year One: Basic introduction to the content, composition, development, and transmission of the texts. Essentially, this is a broad, introductory survey. Questions to consider are 1) What are we reading? 2) How did we get it in its present form? 3) What are some strategies for interpretation and application, especially in the context of regular sermon preparation?

Year Two: Gospels. This course will provide a deeper consideration of one or more gospels. The teacher may wish to focus on the composition, themes, and interpretation of one particular gospel, or provide an overview of all the gospels, or even focus on something more specific within a gospel (e.g. the Sermon on the Mount/Plain, Jesus' Parables, The "I Am" Statements)

Year Three: Pauline Epistles. This course will provide a deeper consideration of one or more of Paul's letters (accepted and disputed). This could be in the form of a general overview of all the letters and their contexts and themes, or a focus on one particular letter.

Year Four: General Epistles. This course is meant to cover everything else in the New Testament including Acts and Hebrews. Given the wide variation in authors, genres, and themes, it is probably best to focus on one specific book or letter (or perhaps series of letters as in the Johannian Epistles).

Old Testament

Year One: Basic introduction to the content, composition, development, and transmission of the texts. Essentially, this is a broad, introductory survey. Questions to consider are 1) What are we reading? 2) How did we get it in its present form? 3) What are some strategies for interpretation and application, especially in the context of regular sermon preparation?

Year Two: The Torah. The focus will be on the first five books of the Bible. This can be a general survey or a more detailed consideration of a specific book.

Year Three: The Prophets. This course will cover everything from the histories to the books related to specific prophets. The teacher is free to choose the specific area of focus.

Year Four: The Writings. This course will cover the “wisdom literature” (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, Song of Solomon) and the Psalms. The teacher is free to choose the specific area of focus

Reformed Theology

Year One: Doctrine of Revelation, Authority of Scripture, and Doctrine of God

Year Two: Creation, Providence, and Theological Anthropology (Doctrine of Humanity)

Year Three: Christology (Person and Work of Christ), Soteriology (Doctrine of Salvation)

Year Four: Ecclesiology and Eschatology

Creeds and Confessions

Year One: Overview. What is a confession? What confessions are in our Book of Confessions and where did they come from? What is the Reformed understanding of the authority of confessions? How can we use these confessions?

Year Two: The Ecumenical Creeds (Nicene and Apostles' Creeds). The focus of the course will be on the historical origin, theological context, and practical application of the Creeds.

Year Three: The Reformation Era (Scots Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, Second Helvetic Confession, and Westminster). The course can be a survey on these creeds or a deep dive into one of them.

Year Four: The Modern Era (Theological Declaration of Barmen, Confession of 1967, A Brief Statement of Faith, The Belhar Confession). The course can be a survey on these creeds or a deep dive into one of them.

Church History (elective)

Year One: The Early Church. This course will focus on some aspect of church history beginning with the 1st Century AD and through the 5th Century. Topics could include: Greco-Roman and Jewish cultural history; The development of Christian doctrine and theological controversies; The development of church structure; or even focus on particularly prominent figures and their contributions to the church.

Year Two: The Medieval Church. This course will focus on some aspect of church history, beginning with the 5th Century and continuing through the 15th Century. Topics could include: the church in the Dark Ages; The expansion of the church through Europe; The development of monasticism; The changing role of the church in society, especially the relationship between the church and various medieval states; The centralization and rise of the papacy; or the various challenges that laid the foundation for the Reformation.

Year Three: The Reformation. This course will focus on some aspect of church history related to the Protestant Reformation between the 15th and 18th Centuries. Topics could include: General overview of the causes and central issues of the Reformation; A focus on one geographic area and its experience of the Reformation or a comparison between them (e.g. Germany, Switzerland, France, the British Isles); A deep look into one or several prominent figures of the Reformation.

Year Four: The Modern Church. This course will focus on some aspect of church history from the 18th Century through the present day. Topics could include: A survey Presbyterianism's history in America; The challenges to the church presented by different intellectual, philosophical, and/or ideological movements; Modern theological debates and developments; The rise and growth of global missions; The changing cultural contexts and challenges facing the church.

Preaching

Year One: Called to Preach. Understanding the Call to Preach. Discovering your own reason and calling to preach. Teaching the purpose of preaching as a means of grace and proclamation of the Gospel. Teach basic Biblical exegesis by focusing on literary genres, historical background of the text, and cultural distinctions (focus on Gospel texts). Practicing doing exegetical work so we can see and understand different forms of sermons and the art of homiletics. Assign a preaching scripture for participants to prepare prior to class.

Year Two: Putting Together a Sermon. An instructor chooses a text appropriate for sermons that can follow the liturgical calendar. Give knowledge about the liturgical calendar. Practice making a sermon outline include main ideas, key points, illustrations, and application to the biblical passages. Preaching is also about a call to action to motivate the congregation to be active. Also, practice good delivery skills using clear articulation, annunciation, speaking speed, and eye contact. Passages of the instructor's choice should be given prior to the class, so participants can create a sermon before the class and get helpful critiques during the class.

Year Three: Find Resources and Find Support (with each other). Direct participants and give resources in finding sermon ideas through online sources and hardcopy texts. Also consider time set aside to focus on developing a sermon. This class and your colleagues are preaching community so do not forget to help one another and get feedback. Practice self-evaluation as well. Discuss challenges when putting together a sermon such as time constraints or dividing issues that may arise in our world today. Practice makes (close to) perfect so pick a biblical passage to discuss and make short sermons prior to attending class. It can be from the lectionary or outside the lectionary.

Year Four: Never Stop Learning and Self Care. Emphasize the importance of continuing a personal relationship with God, prayer, and bible study for effective preaching. Take time to enjoy what you like to do and pay attention to that time being a time to connect with God. Never assume a passage that you preached before will be the same next time you come across it. Prior to the class, get an old sermon and do it again use different resources or different commentaries. Participants can choose passages they have done through CLP classes or experience in the field. If they have not done anything, then participants can pick a familiar passage and find a new twist to it. Always find new ways to preach by using the ongoing continued resources that are being made.

Instructional Tips:

- CPM can provide you with the focus of your particular course for the past several years to give you some background on what has been covered and what has not been covered.
- After you have selected the topic(s) on which you will teach, decide HOW you will teach (visual aids, Websites, PowerPoint, etc.) and WHAT you want the participants to learn. Will you ask participants to read something before your class? Will you have activities in which they can practice their learning? Will you leave time for discussion? Will you break the group into smaller discussion groups? If Zoom is offered, how will you engage those joining online?
- You should consider writing some learning outcomes which can be assessed at the end of your class. CPM can provide assistance with this if needed, but [here](#) is a very simple guide to writing learning outcomes.
- Participants will be at various points on the yearly schedule provided. Some may be just beginning to take these classes while others have taken these classes for many years. Just something to think about as you prepare your class.
- Participants are only required to take 4 classes per year to maintain their certification. That means some will not have taken your particular class/topic for several years while others have taken it every year it has been offered.