

Priscilla Programme

The Priscilla Programme is open to any woman who would like to better understand God's word and God's ways, for her own spiritual growth and to serve others. It is designed for women who are involved in a local church and would like to be better equipped to serve in ministries such as Sunday schools, youth groups, pastoral visiting, or leading Bible studies to care for others more biblically, and to be better able to give reasons for their faith. It is not intended as training for women in full-time or paid ministry roles.

No previous experience or training is required, merely a willingness to learn. There are no formal assessments, though students will be expected to participate in the weekly seminars and occasionally present their work in these small groups.

Module descriptions

Bible 1: Old Testament

What is the Bible? How should we read and understand it? Why does the Old Testament matter and what is it about?

This module will introduce students to the major themes and genres of the Bible, concentrating mainly on the Old Testament. It will give students a grasp of the timeline of the Bible, and an understanding of why the Old Testament is important for Christians. The seminars will introduce principles of exegesis and begin to help students understand how to teach others.

The lectures give an overview of the contents and narrative of the Old Testament, as well as an introduction to the different genres of the Old Testament books, and a Christological perspective for interpretation. The seminars focus on exegesis, with half the term spent in Exodus and the other half in Psalms.

Doctrine

What do Christians believe and why? How can we bring together everything the Bible has to say on a subject? How do we go about answering difficult questions about what God is like and who Jesus is?

This module will outline the main areas of Reformed theology: God, Christ, humanity, salvation, the church, and the future. In the seminars we work through the Apostles' Creed, discussing what each section means and why it matters in the contemporary.

Evangelism and Apologetics

How can we explain our faith to other people? Is Christianity a reasonable thing to believe? What can we say about difficult questions?

This module will help students think about what the gospel message is and how to communicate it. There is practical wisdom for everyday evangelism in the lectures and practice in explaining the gospel in the seminars.

The second half of term focusses on apologetics, that is, understanding the reasonable basis for the Christian faith. We consider different apologetic approaches: classical, evidence-based and presuppositionalist, and what it means to have a Christian worldview. There are lectures on key apologetics issues: Bible, suffering, other religions, science, and sex. In the seminars we take different scenarios which challenge our faith and discuss how to respond.

Church History

How has God built his church around the world over the past 2000 years and what lessons can we learn from that today?

This module will help students to set the contemporary church in context and to see how we can learn important lessons from Christians of the past. There will be a particular focus on the role of women in church history. In the lectures, there is an overview of church history beginning with the New Testament and ending by considering the contemporary church and possibilities for the future. In the seminars, students are asked to read a series of texts from primary sources ready for discussion. These include sermons, hymns, liturgy, biography and autobiography, as well as doctrinal and pastoral texts. You will discover how much wisdom and relevance there is to be gained from the brothers and sisters who went before us!

Bible 2: New Testament

In this module we study the New Testament gospels, letters and the book of Revelation. In the lectures there is an overview of the New Testament, with introductions to the different genres and authors. The New Testament is set in the light of the Old Testament, and students who take both these modules should see how closely they fit together.

In the seminars there is a focus on exegesis and students will have the opportunity to present their work on passages from Luke's gospel and Colossians.

Ethics and Pastoral Care

How do we look after the people God has brought into our churches and our lives? What help and support can we offer those facing difficult situations? How can we spur everyone on to love and good deeds?

This module will introduce some principles of biblical ethics and pastoral care as well as looking at specific issues such as sex and sexuality, grief, parenting, and mental ill-health.

The lectures begin with a discussion of different approaches to Christian ethics, including worked examples. The seminars in the first half of term apply these approaches to a series of contemporary situations. In the second half of term the focus is on pastoral care, with particular attention given to the kinds of issues most commonly faced by women. This includes lectures on pastoral care of children and young people. The seminars here are based on pastoral scenarios, with students discussing biblical and practical considerations.