

Preparing for training with St Padarn's

Congratulations on being sponsored to train for ministry by the bishop! We are delighted to be sharing this journey with you over the next few years. The most important thing is to read the *Help I've been recommended for training at the St Padarn's Institute* leaflet and to put dates in your diary for the coming year. However, if you would like to do some further preparation and thinking, here are some suggestions.

Read the Formation for Licensed Ministry Handbook

Most of the information you need will be there, especially how all the parts of training work and what will be expected of you. Read it carefully.

Think about your priorities

What will you need to give up in order to free up the time you will need to devote to training?

Take time to reflect and pray

It is normal to feel anxious about starting anything new. But there is no need to feel worried or anxious about starting to train for ministry. The tutors and candidates are very friendly and supportive. We are a normal group of people who enjoy each other's company and even a joke or two. Come along and be yourself and be prepared to make good, lifelong friends.

If you would like to do some preparatory reading before September, then here are some suggestions. To be honest though we would also encourage you to take the time before training to relax and enjoy being with your family and friends and to think carefully about your priorities and what you might need to give up in order to make the most out of this period of training and still find time for the important relationships in your life.

Pray

This time of training is about setting up good practices of prayer that will sustain your ministry.

Invest in your relationships and yourself

Entering a period of formation for ministry can put strain on our relationships and transition is always draining and stressful. Do all you can to avoid 'arriving' at St Padarn's stressed and exhausted. Remember that your family and close friends will also be adjusting as you move into a ministerial role. Be gentle with them!

Read the Bible

It is essential you come to know the Bible well. We suggest that you aim to read the whole Bible systematically in our first two years with us. Why not start now? If you are looking for suggestions, reading (or re-reading) these four books will be a great start:

- ✓ The Gospel of Mark
- ✓ The Epistle to the Galatians
- ✓ The Book of Genesis
- ✓ The Book of Isaiah

Mark's Gospel can be read in an evening, as can Galatians. Genesis will take several evenings (stop after chapter 11 on the first evening) and Isaiah will take about a week (natural breaks come after Chapter 39 and Chapter 55).

You will want to read in an up-to-date translation of the Bible. There are also many versions on audiobook.

Suggested Reading

To stimulate your thinking about the bible in an accessible way, try: Jeremy Duff, *Peter's Preaching: The Message of Mark's Gospel* (BRF, 2015) or Paula Gooder's *Phoebe* (Hodder and Stoughton, 2018). Or in Welsh either *Dehongli Bywyd Iesu* or *Dehongli Bywyd Paul* by Elfed ap Nefydd Roberts, a series of meditations published by Cyhoeddiadau'r Gair.

To give you a good overview of the whole 'package' of ministerial formation and theological education: Steven Croft and Roger Walton, *Learning for Ministry* (Church House Publishing, 2005)

If you are not confident in your academic ability and/or lack experience of academic study, then a good tool for thinking about all sorts of study skills is: Stella Cottrell, *The Study Skills Handbook* (3rd Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Tips

- We will be giving you lots of information. You will not remember everything. If anything is unclear, ask! If something is really important, we will keep reminding you.
- Put all the key dates in your diary.
- Early on we will let you know who your tutor is. Get to know them well and feel free to talk to them about anything that is unclear or worrying you.
- If you are struggling with your confidence, read up a little on impostor syndrome. <https://redditblog.com/2015/11/25/impostor-syndrome-youre-not-the-only-one-who-feels-like-a-fraud/>
It seems that these feelings are common.... Even your tutors feel them, believe it or not!
- Be open and curious... you can learn something from every experience. You will all arrive with a huge variety of experience and a lot of your learning will happen as you share your knowledge and experiences with each other as much as what you will learn in any classroom.
- And similarly, be prepared to be surprised. You are starting out on a journey and with God, we don't always know where journeys will end!

We are very much looking forward to sharing this journey with you.

Pob bendith,

Manon

Manon Ceridwen James (Parch Ddr)

