

The Preaching Skills Module

Within our tradition the sermon has a long and honoured history. In most congregations it continues to have a very important place in the public worship of the community and in its teaching programme.

However, research indicates that preaching does not appear to be as effective as most preachers appear to believe. This may be because preaching is done poorly. It may be perceived as the fault of the congregation. Or it may seem to reflect a changed culture, which emphasises visual rather than the verbal communication, sound bites rather than sustained argument and dialogue rather than monologue. Whatever the causes, preaching is certainly not accomplishing what many churches still expect.

This module looks at some of the foundational skills in preaching, such as handling the text, preparing to preach and communicating effectively, but also offers fresh insights about the task of preaching, styles of preaching and some alternatives to preaching. It explores such questions as:

- How can we address the context where the church is on the margins of society and fewer people are interested in listening to its preaching?
- How do we handle the Bible faithfully?
- Do we need to train more of our members to preach, so that we are less reliant on a few specialists?
- Do we need to explore different ways of preaching that will communicate more effectively?
- How do we make connections between the Bible and life?
- How can we make our preaching more visual and interactive?
- How do we equip our churches to become learning communities?

A FOOTSTEPS PATHWAY COURSE

Developing Preaching Skills



Module Outline

Aims

The aims of this module are:

- To help participants to explore the relationship between their understanding of preaching and their own personal experience within different church contexts
- To help participants reflect on the place of preaching today
- To introduce participants to the various forms of preaching
- To reflect on the place that preaching has within acts of worship
- To develop participants' skills and confidence so they can preach more effectively.

Description

This module aims to equip those who preach by enabling them to develop a holistic approach to worship through the study of the particular role of the sermon. It will look at the different ways of using the Bible in preaching, how to construct a sermon, and the skills needed to communicate effectively. Various modes of preaching are explored and attention is given also to the use of various media. This module also reflects on the place of preaching in the contemporary church context and the place and needs of the congregation.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, participants should be able to demonstrate:

- The different ways in which the Bible can be used in preaching, describing the process of interpreting the Bible in its own context and applying its teaching to a contemporary context
- A knowledge of the purpose of preaching and its relationship to other aspects of local church life
- The ability to construct a sermon, identifying the different components in the effective preparation and delivery of sermons
- An ability to apply what has been learned through the practice of preaching
- An understanding of the needs of the congregation to learn and grow

Programme

Session 1	The Foundations of Preaching 1 The preacher – a central role? Who should preach? Calling and spirituality
Session 2	The Foundations of Preaching 2 The Bible – a central book From Word to life
Session 3	The Movement of Preaching Designing the sermon Developing the sermon
Session 4	The Art of Preaching Effective communication Engaging a congregation
Session 5	Evaluating Preaching Hearing others Hearing from others
Session 6	Alternative Preaching A feast for the senses The sermon as a dialogue
Session 7	Learning Together Becoming a learning community Where do we go from here?