



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Unit Outline

*VTTS001 Exploring Theology from a UCA
Perspective*

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equipping Leadership *for* Mission



Greetings, and thanks for registering to be part of the **Exploring Theology from a UCA perspective** Unit. In this Unit Outline you will find details about the Unit, a suggested weekly study program (if attempting the Unit over a semester), the assessment and other helpful information.

This Unit has been developed to be a time of discipleship-forming and faith-expanding learning.



This Unit is an indispensable resource for individuals and church study groups who want to learn more about their faith within a Uniting Church context.

The Unit is also foundational for Lay Preachers, Worship Leaders, Mission Workers, and people engaged in other forms of Christian Leadership. The Unit will integrate the study of theology with the study of scripture.

We encourage you to approach your studies with a positive attitude and a willingness to be open to learning. Remember, don't be daunted by what lies ahead, as there will be help along the way.

Thanks again for committing this time to your journey of understanding.

We pray it will be a time of learning, with some challenge, and a time of deepening faith in God.

MODES OF LEARNING

Your Presbytery may offer different modes of learning:

- Individual
- Face-to-face groups
- Online groups
- A mixture of all or some of the above

Talk with the person who looks after education in your Presbytery and find out how what learning modes are available.

HOURS OF ENGAGEMENT FOR FULL UNIT: 66 hours (11 Topics x 5 to 6 hours; + an optional project-based Topic) – not including Biblical reading. Generally, it is expected it would take someone 5-6 months to work through the Unit. While it can be completed in less time, this is not recommended. The study of theology is best undertaken in a mindful and reflective manner, where participants continually seek to connect their study to their faith, their ministry and the world around them.

EXPECTATIONS OF ADULT LEARNERS:

- Participants will have computer abilities in research, assignment writing, and electronic submission **OR** will work alongside someone who can assist them with these tasks.
- Participants will take responsibility for their own learning – ask questions when uncertain or are unsure about what is required of them. Manage their time well/efficiently. Read the learning and assessment Task questions carefully. Read the Unit Outline carefully to ensure they are familiar with all requirements for the Unit. Seek assistance from their Presbytery, peers, identified local mentors/tutors.

NOTE: These materials were originally put together to provide an ongoing resource for those studying Lay Preaching, particularly in remote areas. As such, there are more links and readings than someone would be expected to engage with as they work through the Unit the first time. Make sure you keep within recommended time limits – allowing some give and take for your own ways and needs for studying – while still engaging with the material in a way that gives you the depth and breadth you need. Remember, if you download all the material, you can come back to it later. 😊

INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES FOR EXPLORING THEOLOGY:

This Unit introduces you to the task of Theology, with a particular focus on the Uniting Church perspective.

Theology challenges us to explore vital questions in life.

"Why are we here?"

"What do we live for?"

"How can we talk about our experience of God?"

"Where is God when it is hurting?"

Theology is '**God-talk**'. When we talk about God we are engaged in Theology.

This Unit acts as a foundation for understanding the church's faithful thinking and our own call to give "... an account of the hope that is in you." (1 Peter 3.15)

The Unit is closely integrated with the study of scripture, and historical and contemporary scholarship.

This Unit in Theology is an invitation to participants to deepen their response to and faith in God as Trinity.

OUTCOMES and COMPETENCIES

At the completion of this Unit, Participants should be able to:

1. Evaluate and clearly express their understanding of God and the church in the light of *scripture, our received tradition, reason, and experience* of life, with particular reference to the [Basis of Union](#) and key documents and decisions of the UCA;
2. Articulate, discuss and explain their developing understanding of the key doctrines of the Christian faith, and their application in contemporary contexts;
3. Explore and critically analyse some key questions and issues in the Christian faith and the ways in which the UCA responds, using critical thinking models such as the Wesleyan Quadrilateral and Hermeneutical Spiral;
4. Explore and examine the diversity of understandings within the Christian faith;

5. Demonstrate a growing capacity to articulate your own theological understandings in relation to UCA's perspectives.

CONTENT:

What is Theology and how is it used by individuals and in the church, particularly the Uniting Church in Australia

The meaning of revelation and the authority of Scripture

The Trinity

The Holy Spirit

Creation and Eco-Theology

God's Providence and Evil

Humanity and Sin

Salvation

The Church

Mission

Hope

Theology Now and into the Future (optional project-based Topic)

METHOD

Depending on the **mode** (eg. face-to-face, online, blended) in which the Unit is offered, participants will be exposed to these types of learning experiences:

- Seminar, Workshop, and Webinar times will be focused on developing knowledge and skills.
- Video and online resources will be used to supplement information gathering.
- Key ideas will be discussed in class and in small group tutorials.
- Key ideas will be presented online and discussed through forums and Webinars.
- Ideas and interpretations will be discussed and debated in the learning community.
- Groups will construct some working definitions to better be able to articulate faith and talk about God.
- Unit Participants will be encouraged to read the set text and become familiar with a broad range of other texts.
- Unit Participants will have an opportunity to work with a range of resources and people in applied exercises.
- Unit Participants will be expected to personally reflect on and respond to the Unit materials.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENTS

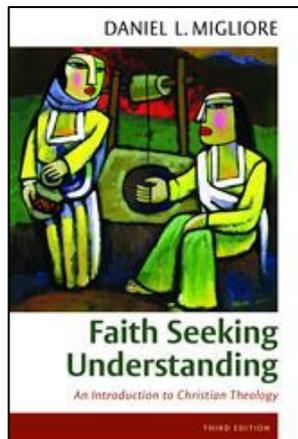
- A. Spiritual Reflection
- B. Response to a specific question
- C. Creative or Digital Presentation (alternative assessment)
- D. Short essay (alternative assessment)

The Unit allows participants to engage in MULTIPLE LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT:

1. The person, or group, who wishes to dip into all, or part, of this Unit to create or supplement Bible studies/group studies, etc. You are encouraged to use the materials, including assessment questions, in creative ways that provide opportunities for faith and discipleship growth.
2. The person wishing to study, update, or refresh their understanding but not seeking formal accreditation – perhaps a Lay Preacher looking for some continuing education. To deepen your learning experience, you are encouraged to work through the activities, readings, and reflections in the Topics, and to complete all the Task A activities.
3. The person wishing to explore the Unit for their own learning, or to meet the academic requirements for the Specified Ministry of Lay Preacher - i.e. the person seeking formal accreditation. You will need to work through the activities, readings, and reflections in the Topics, **and** to complete all Task A and Task B activities.
4. **Your Presbytery** may choose Task C and Task D as alternative assessment pieces to Task A and/or Task B. Please ensure you are clear which assessment Tasks your Presbytery expects you to complete, particularly if you are undertaking the Unit for accreditation purposes.

Unit Materials

- 1) The key text for this Unit is Daniel Migliore's "***Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology***" (3rd Edition) Eerdman's publishing 2014.



Copies can be purchased online – try www.booko.com.au to find current sellers and prices, or check at Christian bookstores. The text can also be purchased as an Kindle e-book for download from Amazon.com.au. If using Kindle, please follow headings to access your readings.

Migliore forms the basis of the Unit and you will work through most of the chapters in this book. Each Topic has a relevant chapter from Migliore and it is important that you read this chapter.

- ❖ **Other readings** for the Unit are also provided. **There are two types of readings for each Topic – one type are theological readings and the other comes from a more spiritual viewpoint.**
- ❖ Migliore has a great glossary of theological terms at the end of his book – be sure to make use of this. You are encouraged to begin developing your own glossary as you discover new words and terms.

Please note that some Unit participants may be using the following texts:

Jonathon R Wilson, "***A Primer for Christian Doctrine***", Michigan, Eerdman's Publishing, 2005.

Tyron Inbody, "***The Faith of the Christian Church: An Introduction to Theology***" Michigan, Eerdman's Publishing, 2005.

Contact your Unit facilitator for information on which books you need to access.