

# 2020 General Ordination Examination

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
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## Scale of General Criteria

Evaluators weigh GOE answers with the following in mind: *perception (and analysis)* of issues; *application* of resources; *demonstration* of knowledge; and *articulation* of views. These factors are implicit in all the two-level scales used for the entire GOE. Together with the two-level scales for each individual set, these factors give Evaluators clear criteria for deciding how well a paper addresses the questions. The two levels of these general criteria represent proficiency in the area being tested or a lack thereof, in accordance with Episcopal Church Canons III.15.2-4.

*Proficient:* The response gives evidence of a sound and perceptive understanding of the basic issues raised by the question(s) and how those issues relate to the canonical area being tested. Written presentation is clear and organized with apt use of source material.

*Not Proficient:* The response indicates largely erroneous, minimal or no understanding of essential issues in the area being tested or does not answer the question asked. Arguments that the paper offers may be flawed, ineffective or incoherent. Writing may be unclear, with little, inept or inappropriate use of sources.

## Set 1: The Holy Scriptures

### *Open Resources*

In a response totaling approximately 1,000 words, explore the significance of a theme found in both Genesis 32:22-32 (Jacob wrestling with God) and John 4:4-42 (Jesus and the Samaritan Woman).

In approximately 800 words, choose an important theme common to both passages and analyze it by:

- Offering an exegesis (a literary, historical and theological interpretation) of each passage within its biblical context in relation to the common theme;
- Describing the theme's significance within the wider canon of Scripture in reference to these two passages, citing at least one other scriptural passage in which this theme appears.

In approximately 200 words describe the various ways in which you might engage your chosen theme within a parochial or other ministry setting where the Church encounters the contemporary world.

### Scoring Rubric

**A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of all criteria.**

Analysis of Common Theme	The answer identifies an important theme common to both passages and clearly identifies how it is present in each passage.	The evidence provided for the presence of the important theme in each passage is insufficient or absent; or The theme is not clearly present in both passages; or The theme is present in only one of the two passages.
Exegesis	The discussion accurately places each passage within its biblical context; and The discussion incorporates all elements of exegesis, including literary, historical and theological interpretations for each passage.	The answer inaccurately situates each passage within its biblical context; or The interpretations of both passages do not take into sufficient account each element of exegesis: literary, historical and theological.
Broad Knowledge of Scripture	The response shows a solid comprehension of the chosen theme in the wider biblical context; and Cites at least one additional scriptural passage; and Demonstrates the chosen theme's significance in the additional passage(s).	The answer exhibits an incomplete or inaccurate understanding of Scripture; or Does not choose one or more scriptural passages; or Insufficiently describes how additional passage(s) relate(s) to the chosen theme.
Current Significance of Chosen Theme	The discussion offers a variety of ways in which the theme could be explored in parochial or other ministry settings; and Clearly names one particular setting for this discussion; and Clearly articulates an understanding of the Church in relation to the contemporary world.	The answer shows limited understanding of the ways in which the theme could be engaged in parochial or other ministry settings; or Lacks a concrete example of a ministry setting; or Does not demonstrate an understanding of where the Church encounters the contemporary world.

## Set 2: History of the Christian Church

## Open Resources

Holy Scripture or religious experience has sparked hymn writers' imaginations for centuries. So too has the historical context of the hymnodist. The following hymns appear in hymnals approved for use in The Episcopal Church:

- "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (*Hymnal 1982*, 474)
- "Camina, Pueblo de Dios" (*Wonder, Love, and Praise*, 739)
- "Lift Every Voice and Sing" (*Hymnal 1982*, 599)
- "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life" (*Hymnal 1982*, 609)
- "In Africa's Blessed Coastland, When Mother Church was Young" (*Lift Every Voice and Sing*, 48)
- "The First One Ever, Oh, Ever to Know" (*Hymnal 1982*, 673)

1. Choose one of the above hymns and treat its hymn text (not its music) in approximately 600 words by writing a response that:

- Places the hymn text (not its music) in its historical context (authorship, approximate date, location, occasion for the writing of the text, and issues the author sought to address when writing/publishing).
- Shows how the selected hymn expresses major religious themes distinctive to its era.

2. Explain in approximately 400 words why that hymn text is or is not relevant in the life of The Episcopal Church today.

### Scoring Rubric

**A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of all criteria.**

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Hymns	The response chooses and discusses a hymn from the given list.	The response does not treat a hymn from the given list;  and/or  Discusses it inaccurately or insufficiently.
Historical Context	The discussion places the hymn accurately and adequately in its historical context.	The response puts the hymn in an incorrect or inadequately detailed historical context.
Religious Thought and Social Circumstances	The answer explains how the hymn reflects the religious thought and social circumstances of the era in which it was written.	The answer inadequately discusses the ways the hymn reflects the religious thought and social circumstances of the era in which it was written;  or  Conveys inaccurate information about the social circumstances of that era.
Distinctive Religious	The discussion demonstrates	The response overlooks ways the

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Themes	ways the hymn expresses major religious themes distinctive to the era in which it was produced.	hymn expresses major religious themes distinctive to the era in which it was produced;  or  Inaccurately describes the era and themes.
A Case for Hymn's Relevancy Today	The argument is sufficient and is persuasive as to why the hymn chosen is or is not relevant in the Church today.	The argument lacks a clear or adequate rationale as to why the hymn chosen is or is not relevant in the Church today.

### Set 3: Christian Theology

#### *Open Resources*

A member of your congregation asks to meet with you. Your parishioner shares a diagnosis of Stage 4 lung cancer, despite being a non-smoker with no family history of cancer; and also shares that years ago a fiancé(e) died in an automobile accident. The parishioner asks, “Why is God punishing me? I know I am not perfect, but there are lots of terrible people in the world, and these things don’t happen to them.” You have a pastoral conversation and pray with your parishioner. Later, you meet with your Spiritual Director.

In a response of approximately 1,000 words, describe to your Spiritual Director your understanding of God that informed that pastoral conversation: how you believe God acts in this world and how your concept of God addresses issues of reward and punishment. Your response is to your Spiritual Director concerning your own understanding of God and not merely a recounting of your pastoral conversation with your parishioner.

- As part of your response, choose from the following options and describe why and how they reflect your understanding of God that you shared with your Spiritual Director:
  1. Choose either the Psalter or a particular liturgy from the Book of Common Prayer;  
  
and
  2. Choose either a Christian theologian or a work of art (for example a film, book, sculpture, poem, etc.).

#### Scoring Rubric

**A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of all criteria.**

Understanding of God	The response offers a carefully considered understanding and articulation of God that informed the pastoral conversation with the parishioner.	The understanding of God outlined does not connect to the pastoral conversation with the parishioner; or Is cursory; or Is focused on elements other than those of a pastoral nature; or The response mistakes or misunderstands that the task is to reframe the understanding in response to the Spiritual Director and not the parishioner.
Conception of How God Acts in the World	The discussion provides a theological conception of how God acts in the world that is consistent with the nature of God that undergirds the pastoral conversation.	The conception does not address how God is active in the world but describes God in relation to other contexts; or Is not consistent with the nature of God in relationship to humanity outlined in other areas of the response.
Sense of How God Acts with Regard to Rewards and Punishments	The discussion articulates an understanding of God with regard to human beings, addressing issues of rewards and punishments in this world.	The Response does not discuss rewards and punishments in this world; or Offers a description contradictory to the understanding of the nature and purpose of God outlined previously.
Supporting References	The discussion provides two effective references from the four choices and explains why they support and deepen the understanding of God described in other areas of the response.	The Response omits one or both references from the four choices; or The references do not effectively support or enrich the understanding of God as described.

## Set 4: The Practice of Ministry

### *Open Resources*

November 3, 2020 is Election Day in the United States. The Sunday prior is November 1, the Feast of All Saints. You are the rector of a congregation in a community that is made up of

people all along the political spectrum in terms of both involvement and affiliation. While there have not been open conflicts in the congregation around political issues, a climate of anxiety and political tension is weighing on people. You have discerned that your sermon on All Saints' Day needs to address this situation. The lessons for the day will be for All Saints, Year A (Revised Common Lectionary). Furthermore, a Baptism will be celebrated or the congregation will renew Baptismal Vows.

In approximately 1,000 words, briefly:

- Identify at least two crucial pastoral issues that you will address appropriately in your All Saints' sermon;
- Describe concisely the focus of your sermon on a critical point; and
- Elaborate on the pastoral and relational issues, lectionary texts, resources or examples that will support your focus. (1,000 words)

### Scoring Rubric

**A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of all criteria.**

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Awareness	The response identifies two crucial pastoral issues relevant to the situation.	The response identifies fewer than two crucial pastoral issues relevant to the situation.
Sermon Focus	The answer concisely and clearly states apt sermon focus on a critical point.	The answer vaguely or unintelligibly states sermon focus or sermon focus is unsuitable;  or  Sermon does not focus on a critical point.
Content	The response addresses and elaborates on the identified pastoral issues; and acknowledges how not just relevant but crucial All Saints and Baptism are to reconciling the climate of conflict;  and  Supports the response with apt examples/sources.	The response merely mentions rather than elaborates on the identified pastoral issues;  and/or  Ignores or only cursorily acknowledges the relevance and/or crucialness of All Saints and Baptism to the climate of conflict;  and/or  Does not support the response with apt examples/sources.

## Set 5: Christian Ethics and Moral Theology

### *Open Resources*

You serve a parish in a town that sits along a river. There is a proposal to build a chemical plant just upstream. The plant promises well-paying jobs for workers and tax revenue for schools and parks. It will also bring pollutants known to cause health risks for humans and the larger ecosystem. These pollutants are most likely to impact the low-income and unemployed residents who live closest to the proposed site. The community is divided about the desirability of allowing the plant to be built.

Write a letter to your congregation that will help them think about this situation in the context of Christian faith.

In your letter of approximately 1,000 words:

1. Choose one of the following ethical principles to guide your approach: justice, stewardship, liberation or common good.
2. Define this principle theologically with reference to a relevant biblical passage.
3. Based on this principle, analyze what is at stake in the debate for two stakeholder groups (for example, the chemical company, the less affected members of the town, the low-income or unemployed residents, families with children, the wider ecosystem).
4. Share with your congregation your own position on whether to support the building of the chemical plant. This position could take the form of “support,” “non-support,” or “support if certain criteria were met.” Explaining the moral reasoning of your position is more important than what position you take.

### Scoring Rubric

**A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of all criteria.**

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Defining the Ethical Principle	The response defines the ethical principle clearly and theologically;  and  Explains the relevance of the chosen biblical passage to the ethical principle.	The Explanation of the principle lacks clarity;  or  Does not define the principle from a theological perspective;  or  Does not refer to a biblical passage;  or  Does not show the relevance of the biblical passage to the ethical principle.
Analyzing the Various Perspectives	With reference to the ethical principle, the response impartially analyzes what is at stake for two of the stakeholder entities.	The response does not make use of the ethical principle in the analysis;  or  Does not show what is at stake for two of the various parties;

		or Shows partiality in the analysis.
Justifying an Ethical Position	The response identifies a warranted position based on theological analysis and justifies it theologically with a clear and well-supported argument.	The response does not state a clear position; or Does not justify the position theologically; or Identifies a position inconsistent with the theological analysis presented.

## Set 6: Christian Worship

### *Open Resources*

Your bishop has asked you to plan a service using “An Order for Celebrating the Holy Eucharist” for a diocesan daylong symposium on immigration.

1. In approximately 1,000 words (*not* including quotations of prayers, hymn texts or scriptural passages), construct and present an order of service following the outline (BCP, pp. 400-401) that includes and identifies at least two hymns from authorized hymnals of The Episcopal Church, naming the hymns’ numbers, hymnal names and hymns’ first lines.
2. Complete your answer with a brief overall theological reasoning for your worship service, including:
  - How each of the specific elements relates to the overall rationale;
  - How the service can address pastoral concerns of this very emotional topic of immigration;
  - How your liturgical choices fit with your rationale.

### Scoring Rubric

**A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of all criteria.**

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Order of Service	The response articulates a worship order that conforms to BCP outline on pp. 400-401.	The response does not offer a valid order of service that conforms to the BCP pp. 400-401 or instead assembles portions of hymns and prayers for use.
Hymns	The response includes and clearly identifies two hymns from authorized hymnals (i.e. specifies hymnal	The response provides fewer than two specific hymns; or



	<p>names, hymn numbers and hymns' first lines);</p> <p>and</p> <p>Clearly and convincingly explains how each hymn is relevant for a service relating to immigration.</p>	<p>Hymns are not from readily identified authorized hymnals of The Episcopal Church and are not clearly identified by numbers and first lines;</p> <p>or</p> <p>The response explaining how the hymns are relevant to the setting of a service relating to immigration is unconvincing or absent.</p>
Overall Rationale	<p>The commentary provides concise, clear and persuasive theological reasoning for the overall service;</p> <p>and</p> <p>Explains how the service can attend to pastoral concerns pertaining to immigration;</p> <p>and</p> <p>Offers a cogent explanation of the liturgical choices.</p>	<p>The commentary provides no theological rationale;</p> <p>or</p> <p>Contains illogical, jumbled or confused reasoning for choosing hymns for a service relating to immigration;</p> <p>or</p> <p>Ineptly articulates how the service can help address pastoral concerns for this emotional topic of immigration;</p> <p>or</p> <p>Does not explain all or most liturgical choices.</p>