



# Help! I've just been accepted on the St Padarn's Theology for Life Programme

(BTh Hons in Theology for Discipleship, Ministry and Mission) 21-22

Dear friends,

We are very much looking forward to you starting your course with us in September.

For some of you, the transition to being a student on our BTh will be easy. You may already have a degree in one of the arts or humanities for example. Or you may already be reading a lot of theology in your spare time. For most of our students however, studying theology is very new, and may even feel very daunting and scary. If this is you, don't worry! You will be in the same boat as most of our students.

## **What can I do to prepare?**

Sometimes students want to get ahead with their reading, however we would much rather you spent the summer relaxing (if you can) and enjoying yourself. Juggling part time study and a normal life is hard. The most important thing you can do to prepare is to look at your diary and make sure you have times where you can set aside time to study, free from distractions.

However, if you do want to read, the following books will give you some insight both into the level of the course and the kinds of questions you will be looking at:

- The Reflective Disciple by Roger Walton (published by SCM Press) until recently was a course textbook, and it makes helpful connections between discipleship, reflection and theology.
- Peter's Preaching: The message of Mark's Gospel by Jeremy Duff, the principal, explores in depth the kinds of questions with which we approach the Bible in order to understand it better for our lives. It is published by the Bible Reading Fellowship.
- Phoebe by Paula Gooder and published by Hodder and Stoughton is a novel about Phoebe, a co-worker of the Apostle Paul's and a deacon. This also gives a unique insight into the world of the New Testament and will help you orient yourself to the way we will be looking at the Bible together. It is also on audiobook. As a novel, it is easily the kind of reading you might want to take away with you on holiday.

## Study Skills

The book we recommend on study skills are:

- Stella Cottrell's The Study Skills Handbook published by Palgrave.

We will be putting together materials and sessions on study skills throughout the year, please look out for them!

When it comes to writing essays, another book we recommend is First Class Essays: The 24hour Roadmap Method: (Study Skills Book: Essay Writing for University) by Martin Horton Eddison. This book even has its own FaceBook page! It is only available on kindle. Our one caveat would be that this book recommends you don't write in the first person whereas we think it is perfectly acceptable. Otherwise, this book has excellent advice throughout.

You might find it helpful to watch this study skills session too as it gives lots of tips on every aspect of studying theology: <https://youtu.be/Kq227Pfk6VI>

## Moodle

The one thing we would ask though is that you set yourself up to be able to engage with your learning online. Getting on to Moodle (our virtual learning platform) at least once a week is really important and setting yourself up with a St Padarn's email address is a vital part of the course **as this is how we will communicate with you.** This isn't because we are being awkward! There are reasons such as the GDPR

legislation which means that we can't use your personal email address in any group lists. **However please do set up you email to forward on to a personal email address as soon as possible or check your St Padarn's email address on a very regular basis, possibly every day.**

Try and spend this time before the course building your confidence on using Moodle and other online resources.

### **Being Assessed**

We would also ask that you take some time to reflect before starting the course on how you feel about being assessed. There are specific criteria for each level, and we mark according to those. Sometimes you will receive very few comments but may seem surprised that the mark isn't higher, this could be that the work was solid but didn't quite hit the higher targets according to the criteria. Or you may receive a really good mark with lots of comments on how to improve which may seem surprising. This could be because the marker felt that you work could be even better!

Try not to let critical comments get you down, they are there to help your learning. If there are relatively few comments it is probably because your work is good. Marking is not a comment on you as a person and even on your intelligence! In fact, we all have different intelligences, gifts and abilities and most of these aren't assessed by assignments. Remember that marking is an art and not a science and the marker is only seeing one aspect of your learning from a module. The important thing is for you to enjoy your learning and help it to grow in your faith and discipleship.

### **Finally**

...remember, there's no such thing as a stupid question! Please ask if you need help with anything, your tutor and all the staff at St Padarn's are here to help. However, remember that we put all the information we think you need on Moodle and in the course information so we would encourage you to make sure you read all this carefully.

And if you feel nervous about the course, don't worry, you are not alone. It is common to feel what's called 'impostor syndrome' which is the feeling that everyone else belongs and we don't, or that everyone else is capable and confident and we're not. If this is you, watch this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQUxL4Jm1Lo>