

# Porterbrook Learning

**Prospectus**

# Introduction

Porterbrook Learning is a basic theological training course suitable for all Christians. It is designed to be accessible and does not require any previous training or experience; yet it remains compelling and challenging even for the theologically trained. The curriculum is made up of 24 modules divided into 4 'streams': Bible and Doctrine, Character, Church and World. The way these modules are taught depends on whether students are part of a Local Group or a Learning Site.

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“It’s helped us narrow the gap between what we say we believe and how we live. Compared to a year ago, I can see how I’ve come to view the world differently, to ask how every aspect of my life fits into God’s mission to save people.” **Lucy Mitchell, Sheffield**

“It’s been fantastic. It’s helped me to really understand what the gospel is. It’s not just unbelievers who need to hear it. It’s just as much for Christians! It’s helped me understand that the Gospel can be brought to bear on every aspect of my life as a man, as a father, as a husband, as a church leader, and then also to share that with people that I lead.” **Steve Robinson, Liverpool**

# To apply

Students can apply online at [www.porterbrooklearning.org](http://www.porterbrooklearning.org) or by contacting the administrator on 0114 267 6704 or emailing [info@porterbrooklearning.org](mailto:info@porterbrooklearning.org)

# For more information

## **Administrator**

Laura Critoph

0114 267 6704

Porterbrook Network, 215 Sharrow Vale Road, Sheffield, S11 8ZB

[info@porterbrooklearning.org](mailto:info@porterbrooklearning.org)

# Learning Sites

Learning Sites function as Porterbrook schools providing the full 24 module programme over two years. At this pace, it usually takes about 5 hours of study per week to fully engage with the material.

There are Learning Sites all over the world, and each one is different. Most Learning Sites teach the curriculum as a distance learning course using the Online Student Area to facilitate discussion and communication. Learning Sites also hold monthly or quarterly seminar days. All this means that you can join in even if you have a full-time job or live a long way away.

At the seminar days there will be visiting speakers, opportunities to recap the material you've been studying, and presentation of assignments in small groups. Learning Sites bring together believers from all walks of life so they are great places to learn from others. We believe that the best way to learn is to study in community, so get a team together from your church and be encouraged, challenged, and equipped for mission together.

To find your nearest Learning Site, visit [porterbrooknetwork.org/learningsites](http://porterbrooknetwork.org/learningsites).

# Local Groups

Local Groups are churches or small groups who go through Porterbrook Learning modules together. Local Groups are a great option for churches looking for low-maintenance in-house training.

Local Groups can pick any number of modules to study together depending on the needs of the church. For example a team might choose to study 'Engaging with the Urban Poor' together while they consider planting a church in a deprived area of their city. Or a church might use the 'Bible & Doctrine' stream to equip their leaders for good biblical exposition. Some Local Groups will be churches running an evening class once a week, other Local Groups will be four friends sharing a meal and reading and discussing together. Some Local Groups are studying almost the entire curriculum, while others have chosen to just focus on one or two specific modules because of the season they are in and the particular issues they are facing.

For a comprehensive course in biblical training, we would recommend beginning with modules from the foundation year and choosing a good spread from the different streams. You might want to pick four modules to begin with: one from each stream.

# Porterbrook Learning Curriculum

The Porterbrook Learning curriculum consists of 24 modules which span four 'streams': Character, Bible & Doctrine, Church and World.

If you join a learning site you will study all 24 of these over two years. Learning sites usually break the curriculum down into three terms per year, so you would study four modules per term: one from each stream. The syllabus below is an example of the curriculum most Learning Sites follow.

If you are forming a local group you can order as many copies of as many modules as you like. The majority of modules from all of the streams and from both foundation year and advanced year are available. Have a look through the syllabus over the next few pages and work out which modules you want to order.

There are sample units available to download off our website. Please visit [porterbrooknetwork.org/samples](http://porterbrooknetwork.org/samples)

## Foundation Year

Character	Bible & Doctrine	Church	World
Gospel Living	Understanding God's Story	Missional Community Life	Apologetics
Gospel Relationships	The Holy Spirit	Keeping it Missional	Evangelism
Gospel Change	Union with Christ	Church History in Missional Perspective	Culture

## Advanced Year

Character	Bible & Doctrine	Church	World
Living the Cross and Resurrection	The Bible in Missional Perspective	Missional Church and Church Planting	Engaging with Context
Pastoral Care Part 1	Bible Teaching in Missional Perspective	Gospel-centred Leadership	Engaging with the Urban Poor
Pastoral Care Part 2	Bible Truth in Missional Perspective	Beyond the Church Plant	Engaging with the City

# Character modules

## **Gospel Living**

Starting from the position that all life is for the Glory of God, this module looks at what it means to live a life for his glory. It means loving God and loving others, shaped by the cross and looking to the future glory that we will share with Jesus. Having laid this foundation the module then examines how this impacts daily issues such as decisions, friendship and possessions.

## **Gospel Relationships**

In this module you will look at everyday situations and issues from anger and conflict to marriage and singleness. Each time the module examines how the gospel that you've been looking at in 'Gospel Living' shapes and impacts our response to these situations and issues. It looks at how the heart shapes our behaviour and actions and so engages with each issue at that level, by asking the question 'why?'. This will enable you to see and learn how the gospel impacts the very heart of any issue.

## **Gospel Change**

Bridging the gap between what we are and what we ought to be is one of God's great interests and it ought to be ours as well. We need to change. Therefore it is critical that we understand how change takes place in our own lives and in the lives of those around us. This module looks at how the Gospel helps us to change. You will look at issues such as repentance, faith, the head and heart and how the Bible, prayer and community relate to Gospel change.

## **Living the Cross and Resurrection**

We often talk about the centrality of the cross. But what does it really mean to live with the cross as central? Does it impact the whole of our lives? And where does the Resurrection fit into this?

This module looks at the two key aspects of the Christian faith – the Cross and Resurrection. It looks at how these two elements shape how the whole of life is lived – suffering and glory, the power to be weak. In this module you will look at how the Resurrection tells us so much about life and finally you will look at how the hope of the Cross and Resurrection give us the opportunity to be truly adventurous...

## **Pastoral Care**

These modules look at how Christians can and should be involved in pastoral care. Western society has so professionalised counseling that many feel inadequate to care for others when they are facing 'deeper' issues. This module examines the responsibilities Christians have to each other in pastoral care and how the Christian Community is integral to this process. You will work through other secular models of counseling and compare them to a Biblical understanding of the problem and change.

Building on the first part of this module, Part Two looks at the Biblical process of change. It then analyses particular pastoral issues such as depression, addictive behaviour, self-esteem, fear of others and anger and shows how to apply the Biblical process of change to each of them.

# **Bible & Doctrine Modules**

## **Understanding God's Story**

This module will help you get a handle on the basics of understanding and teaching from the text of the Bible itself and seeing how the Bible as a whole fits together. The module starts by working through the what and why questions of exposition. It then shows you how to bridge the gap between what the text meant then and what it means now. The module then asks the question that applies specifically to the living word of God – what is the text trying to do? Having laid down these basics the module moves on to looking at Biblical Theology – how the story of the Bible fits together.

## **The Holy Spirit**

Coming Soon!

## **Union with Christ**

Coming Soon!

## **The Bible in Missional Perspective**

This module takes a look at how we know what we know about God and how that revelation fits together in the Biblical narrative. You will examine how the 'end' of the story in the book of Revelation reveals to us what the whole story is about. Flowing from that you will then be taken to the revelation we find in Jesus 'the man'. The rest of the module is taken up with the story from beginning to end, culminating in the continuing story that we live today as God's people.

## **Bible Teaching in Missional Perspective**

This module works through principles of giving a talk, leading a Bible study and communicating through storytelling. In this module you will look at the principles of giving a talk. The first three units of this module look at 3 core aspects of giving a talk - making it clear, making it real and making it felt. You will look at 3 good examples of these aspects – John Stott, Tim Keller and C. J. Mahaney. The module then examines how to prepare for and lead an interactive Bible Study. Finally you will work through the idea of 'storytelling', how to prepare and teach the Bible through storytelling. This module is rounded off by looking at the importance of community in the learning process.

## **Bible Truth in Missional Perspective**

This module works through key aspects of Biblical doctrine. But rather than looking at them in a theological vacuum you will work through them in relation to the areas of life that they most heavily impact. For instance in looking at the doctrine of the Trinity you will examine how it relates to the fragmentation we experience in the world.

# Church modules

## **Missional Community Life**

This module starts by arguing that we are in a 'missionary' context. It then goes on to explain what it means for us to be a people on mission, or 'missional', and the difference between this and traditional approaches to small groups. Having set this basis for life, the module looks at the practical outliving of this mindset – how to engage the culture around, living normal life infused with the gospel, understanding the 'rhythms' of life around us and how the gospel shapes those rhythms. The module rounds off by looking at how this missional life impacts everyday activities like hospitality and the stewardship of time and money.

## **Keeping it Missional**

It's all about Mission. And this module looks at how everyday activities of the church can be kept all about mission.

In this module you will look at how to keep the following all about mission: Sunday gatherings and prayer meetings, Bible studies, preaching, visiting, pastoral care and even business meetings.

## **Church History in Missional Perspective**

This module looks at the history of the church over the past 2000 years. Henry Ford once famously asserted that, 'History is bunk'. While such negativity reveals much about the ambitions of the great industrialist, it offers little insight into the nature and purpose of historical study. The gospel teaches us that God has revealed not only his character, but also his will and purpose for his creation. History must be understood as his-story.

## **Missional Church & Church Planting**

This module looks at the issue of church planting, examining the relationship between the church and mission.

The module starts by examining what exactly the church is. Building on this foundation you will then look at how mission is part of the DNA of the church. Having discovered the 'why' of church planting the module will then take you through the 'how' of church planting, looking at different models, methods and practice.

## **Gospel-Centred Leadership**

Leadership – every church needs it, but it often looks so different from church to church. This module takes a look at what the Bible does and doesn't say about leadership. Building on the examples of leadership in the Bible this module works through what it means to be a leader in God's church. You will look at the all-important aspect of being a servant, and how this impacts many of the ways we often approach leadership. You will look at the importance of being an example to others and also engage with important questions of decision making and authority.

## **Beyond the Church Plant**

Churches are increasingly looking to plant churches. But are we looking to plant churches that will plant churches? When does a church stop being a planted church and become a planter?

This module looks at how to make a planted church a planting church. With practical guidance and Biblical principles this module takes you through how to build reproduction into your church – reproducing spirituality, churches, leaders and structures.

# World modules

## **Apologetics**

Traditionally Christians have used apologetics to attempt to show that the Christian faith is rational. This approach is based on a mistaken assumption that people's rejection of Christianity stems from a rational argument. The Bible begs to differ. The problem is not rational, but the human heart. The heart needs something more than arguments to change it.

## **Evangelism**

This module looks at the issue of the impact of God's people upon the world and the responsibility of God's people for the world. Working from the premise that the 'gospel' is the whole counsel of God, the first unit works through the full message that we seek to proclaim. Building upon that the module looks at who we are to be as messengers before moving on to practical issues of building relationships and proclaiming this message. Key to this module is also the life that we live as we proclaim. You will be taken through the importance of the Christian community to evangelism, especially in light of 1 Peter 3:15.

## **Culture**

Coming soon!

## **Engaging with Context**

There is a lot of talk at the moment about 'contextualisation'. This module looks at the question of engaging with the world around us in more detail. Building from the Biblical understanding of culture since the fall we will look at the key question - What does it mean to 'contextualise'?. We will apply this question to popular culture, the

'city', as well as to rural and urban contexts. Finally this module examines if and how to work with other groups that differ from us on fundamental issues for a common cause.

## **Engaging with the Urban Poor**

God chooses the poor, the broken, the messy, the marginalised. And he does so to demonstrate that salvation is all of his grace. The Evangelical church in the west is not known for its strong engagement with the marginalised. This module seeks to address that issue. Looking at the trend in the UK and the USA you will examine who exactly the 'marginalised' are, what it is we need to do and how Gospel Community is integral to this. You will learn how to evangelise the heart, how to engage with the story that you hear and relate the Gospel Story to it. You will learn how we can be communities where the marginalised find a home.

## **Engaging with the City**

Social Involvement can be a difficult ground to tread. How much involvement should we have trying to change things on earth? Will it not detract from evangelism? What does it mean to be a good citizen? This module looks at what the Bible has to say about the city and caring for others (social involvement). It also examines the relationship between this involvement and evangelism. Looking at the practical side, in this module you will go through how to engage socially and what this means for political, economic and cultural renewal.

# Porterbrook Learning

Theology for mission

## **Porterbrook Learning**

215 Sharrow Vale Road, Sheffield, S11 8ZB

**t:** 0114 267 6704 **e:** [info@porterbrooklearning.org](mailto:info@porterbrooklearning.org)

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