

Guidelines for Developing and Presenting a Message

You will have eight to ten minutes to deliver your message. **Begin by praying for God's guidance.**

Follow these guidelines develop your message on paper.

1. Select your Scripture from the Revised Common Lectionary using the current year and the day closest to your birthday. Choose one of the three or four selections listed.
2. Outline your message using an opening statement (the "hook"), the body of the message that includes the Scripture passage, and the closing statement (either a challenge or a wrap-up statement).
3. You may use outside resources as well as other Bible references to build the message, but limit the number you use. Your message should concentrate on your primary Scripture.
4. When moving from one part of the message to the next, make the transitions as smooth as possible. You can lose your audience by not tying the parts together with good transitions.
5. Don't repeat unless you want to make a specific point. Then preface the repetition with "Let me repeat that."
6. Limit the details. Too many details can bore the audience.
7. Use humor only if you are comfortable doing so. It is not a necessary part of a message.

Editing Tips:

1. Eliminate repeated phrases or descriptive words or phrases.
2. Minimize detail.
3. Cut entire sentences or paragraphs if they do not add to the overall meaning.

Once written or typed, proofread the text several times, then print and proofread again. Practice the message by reading it aloud several times. You can speak to a mirror to view your facial and body language. Deliver the message to a friend, if possible, for his or her comments and evaluation.

Speaker's Tips:

1. Respect the time you are allotted. Read your message aloud to be sure it is within the allotted time frame. If you find your message is too long, go back to the editing tips and rework.
2. Maintain eye contact with your audience. The better the eye contact, the easier it will be for the audience to relate to you.
3. Don't be afraid to stop for a few seconds to regroup if you find it necessary. It is better to do that than to lose your train of thought and the audience with it.