

Talk Preparation

Weekly Cru Meeting

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Perspective

Public speaking can be one of the most challenging and exhilarating tasks. Speaking publicly for God is both an awesome privilege and responsibility. One has the opportunity to persuade, encourage, challenge and edify fellow believers as well as those who have yet to trust in Christ!

Cru weekly meetings serve many purposes. Our long tradition in Cru is to have the atmosphere and content be seeker sensitive. We are speaking, serving and ministering to a primarily Christian audience, but we want to be very sensitive to those who are non-believers in our presence. We never want to forget this. A simple misstatement can push someone away from Christ and his message of love for a long time.

A well crafted verbal presentation can communicate in a way that is much more effective than a hastily developed talk with the same basic content. Presentation has everything to do with what your audience hears!

Aristotle described a model of persuasive communication. He used 3 words: ***Ethos Pathos Logos***

1. ***Ethos*** is your personal credibility. It is who you are as a speaker. Your character, your position, your experience.
2. ***Pathos*** is your emotional identity with your audience and your message. It is the passion you bring to the topic.
3. ***Logos*** is the actual content and structure of your message. It is the specific things you are saying.

Each person responds differently. Men and women respond very differently to the same message. We must know our audience and speak to as broad an audience as possible.

You can not change your *Ethos* before you speak, but you can create *Pathos* with great illustrations, as well as solid *Logos* through your content.

The Process

- Please consider the following ideas as you prepare. This may be more information that you need. Our typical time frame is 20-25 minutes.

1. Pray and Listen to the God

The best way to start this process is to talk to the Lord about what He would have you say. It is much more important to have God's message than something "you" want to say. God uses each of us and our personality, so don't minimize your story or life message.

- Pray about your topic that you are going to present.
- Pray during the process (ask others to pray with you)
- Pray for your audience.
- Pray before you speak. - Ask others to join you.
- Pray during your message, consider praying near the beginning and at the end of your presentation (carefully consider your audience.)

2. **The Big Idea.** What is the big idea of what your want the Lord to say through you? This is the Central truth or Theme. You will want to solidify and distill this in a clear statement later, but start with your big idea. **Simple is Better.** Consider an idea that God has significantly used in your life or your life story message, or something that God has been teaching you. It can also be an issue that is a real need in the group you are speaking to or it may be a topic you have been assigned.

Consider some sure winning topics:

- Biblical Character Qualities
- Character study of a person in the Bible
- A short passage of Scripture
- A Hot Topic

3. **Research the Topic / Idea.** Read, Study, Dream. Put in the hard work. Don't short circuit the process.

- Read articles, books, sermons. Look on the web, resources of friends, Cru staff
- Study God's word, use a concordance, a dictionary of Biblical words or study Bible notes.
- Dream about illustrations to use, ideas to communicate, statements you want to use.

4. Write It Down.

- A. The most effective way to make sure that you say what you want to say, is to Write it Down. It's not the best to read it word for word, but a written format will help you develop a well crafted verbal presentation.
- B. Big idea. Write out your big idea. This is your central truth/idea, theme. It should be a short (10 words or less) declarative sentence that is a universal truth that all your points fit under. Make sure it is really what you want to say.
- C. Outline
1. Write out major points (3-4 are best).
 2. **Explain, Illustrate** and **Apply** each major point.
 - **Explain** the idea. Use definitions. This is where you can explain your idea from God's Word. Get you meaning out of the text. Don't put your meaning into the text.
 - **Illustrate** the idea, use stories, examples personal.
 - **Apply** the point; help your audience see how it can work in their lives. (Be careful not to be "too preachy.")
 3. Repeat you Big Idea after each Main Point.
 4. Consider using some Visual Aid. Often the right object will help your audience remember your idea for a long time. But, Be careful not to use so many objects, that it clutters your points. Also a Powerpoint presentation is helpful.
 5. Write out your Introduction. The first 3 minutes of your presentation will determine whether or not you will hold your audience's attention. It's OK to be a little dramatic. Our culture is Very media driven, so you might consider using a short video clip to grab the attention or your hearers.
 6. Write out your Conclusion. Make your final application. This can include something called a "Haymaker." It's the Best Illustration that explains, Illustrates and Applies what you are saying. It is also nice if it connects to the introduction. Then the beginning and the end act as book ends. Time spent on your Conclusion is Time Well spent.

Avoid just saying, "Well that about all I have." Or just repeating some of you main points.

7. If your message is your Life Story, it may not fit this outline as well as another topic, but you will do well to try to add some structure to what you are saying. (Ex. My Life Before Christ; Meeting Christ; My Life Since Knowing Christ.)

D. Simplify Your Message

- Read through your content. Cut out what isn't necessary.
- Simpler is better
- Consider Re-Naming your main Points so that they are easier to Remember. (All start with the same Letter; All have a similar word; The main points form an Acrostic – All the first letters form a word)
- **20-25 minutes** is the best time frame. Our 1 hour meetings have lots to include. You will hold you audience's attention if you keep it shorter.

E. Watch Your Language!!

- Consider carefully the words that you use. It is best to avoid references to specific churches or denominations.
- Think of those in your audience who are new or first timers. Please avoid using: non-Christian; saved; sinner; repentance; redemption
- Avoid Insider Jokes and Comments; Think of the first timer!

5. Practice

Consider reading your Talk out loud. Check how long it takes. Find a peer who will listen to your talk. At least have them read it and make 5 honest suggestions.

6. **Ready - GO** – Print your talk in a larger font; USE the Microphone

7. TRUST GOD with Your Talk!!

Remember it is God who is your Audience!!

The Lord is the one you are Serving!!

Thanks for working hard at Preparing your Talk!!