

Bible Teaching Methods: Lesson 8
Do's and Don'ts of Public Speaking in Delivering the Lesson

The importance of packaging the Bible lesson

A 1963 research report concluded that “...delivery is almost twice as important to teaching effectiveness as is the content of the lesson.” (Bredfeldt and Richards, p. 222) More lies communicated with passion are believed than the truth told in a monotone.

Proper delivery

- engages initial interest
- motivates learners
- stimulates imagination so that the hearer's mind can see what the speaker sees
- reinforces the speaker's ideas
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Proper structuring of the message

- Outline the body of the lesson with intro and conclusion to show progression and development to the class
- Consider using rhetorical questions to show a transition from one major element of the lesson to the next. Physical motion or movement may also indicate transition.
- Summarize and call for any questions
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“Donuts” of speaking/teaching

DO NOT

- Draw attention to yourself
 - by making excuses for tardiness, voice, energy level (normally do not make apologies)
 - by non-groomed or unseemly appearance
 - by personal fetishes and habits
 - by nervous embolalia like “uh, ah, you know...” (Toastmasters have “ah counters”)
- try to mimic a noted speaker
- embarrass, bully, or blame your class
- ignore the body language of your class

- use wrong words and phrasings
 - use jargon or technical language w/o easy definitions
Beware when class members flatter you with remarks like, “you’re smarter than Einstein” because only 10 people could understand Einstein, or “your teaching is like the peace of God” (it surpasses all understanding!)
 - use too many dependent clauses; rather, use short, connected sentences with the important stuff up front (Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, p. 259)
 - use passive voice when you can use more vivid active voice
“the robber was shot by me” vs. “I shot the robber”
 - ramble in your message or speak without purpose/direction
- get glued to your notes or stuck behind a box
- use coarse or indelicate illustrations
- teach more material when you can teach less with a bigger focus
- stop too late rather than too soon
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Oral Delivery

Gestures

Face

- Eye Contact to connect personally and to gauge feedback
- The face is your emotions’ telegraph

Body: freedom and natural energy is the key

- Ensure classroom arrangement removes artificial barriers and promotes close proximity
- Move freely; practice beforehand with a mirror to experiment with intensity and expressiveness

Voice

- Diaphragm support to project your voice (even with electronic amplification)
- Voice modulation is “...the punctuation marks in your preaching.” (B&R, p. 223).
Phrasing and change in speed, pitch, and tone help order and package the segments of the message like punctuation on a page.
(See this website for a handy guide offering the nuts and bolts of oral communication:
http://www.dotcomtucson.com/public_speaking/public_speaking.html)

Show personality

- Transparency: how truth works in your life

- Warmth, friendliness and humor: laughter is a measure of group health and of the humanity of the teacher

Packaging devices

Choice of words and approaches

“The difference between the almost-right word and the right word is ...the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning.” (Mark Twain in B&D, p. 222)

- Use common, spoken language vs technical language and big words
- Graphic vs common or conceptual
- Questions vs assertions
- Conversations (then) vs descriptions (trying to look back)
- Proverbial vs didactic
“every cloud has a silver lining” vs “there was a happy ending after all the trouble”
- Antithesis to sharpen your arrows on the way to the target
- Figures of speech, like similes and metaphors
- Statements repeated immediately for emphasis, or interjectory formulas like Charles Stanley’s, “Listen now!”
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Visual Aids

Increase retention three-fold

Frees the speaker from his notes while keeping structure in the lesson

Detailed material should be offered in a hand-out or transparency