

PREPARING A TALK TENT TOP TIPS

1. **Pray.** Remember this is a spiritual exercise, not just an intellectual one. Read the passage and think it over. Ask, 'Lord, what are you saying to me here?' If we're not challenged or encouraged by God's word, it's unlikely we'll challenge or encourage others with it...



2. **Prepare properly!** You may have heard speakers stand up and say, 'I haven't had time to prepare well so let's hope I open my mouth and God gives me something to say.' That's not a great example! God is faithful, but if you haven't got time to prepare, don't do it!! Ask someone else to do it. Prepare your talk by speaking it OUT LOUD!

3. **Make the main Bible thing your main thing.** God's word has the power to save and to change lives. Teach it! Fun is really important but it adds to and doesn't replace teaching the Bible clearly! Hit the target - Nathan's challenge to David in 2 Samuel 12 about a rich man taking a poor man's lamb is not about looking after animals (don't laugh - I've heard it!). Don't move to the ideas stage before getting it clear what you're talking about.

4. **Only have 1 simple main thing to say.** What is the truth the passage is teaching us? People won't take much away even if you talk for 40 minutes! So choose your 1 thing and push it in different ways. This makes thinking of creative ideas much easier. If you know your key point is 'God made a good world', anything which shows the goodness of creation is good - a natural history documentary, eating chocolate...! Imagine a talk as a 4x100m relay. Your first bit takes you 100m, your last 100m brings together all you've done before and takes you to the finish. But all the other 200m take you towards the finish. Don't do the shot put!

5. **Be varied** but don't distract from your main thing. Steal ideas if necessary. Take every chance to hit point home e.g. for a *God loves us* talk, give people *Love Hearts*™. If you often do strange things, being ordinary becomes creative.



6. **Illustrations work.** Avoid the criticism of being dull. Tell stories - tell Bible stories, tell your own stories if they're heading towards the finish line. Use visuals. Use objects e.g. What's in the box? Share testimonies. Aim high. Why can't you bring in a real boat or a real snake instead of a picture of one? Make memories.

7. **Move people towards response.** People aren't preparing for a Bible quiz. Help people meet Jesus. Answer the question, 'So what?' All the time, move people towards action. How does this encourage/challenge you today? Tonight? At home? At school? At church? When you pray?

8. **Watch your time.** If you've prepared well, you can be concise. Time your talk, keeping it short and to the point. A good rule of thumb is that young people can pay attention for 1 minute for each year of their age. Still, you need to be an excellent speaker to hold a 14-year-old's attention for 14 minutes. Aim for 5-8 minutes before doing something else, and come back to your talk later. If your last bit is the most important and challenging bit, make sure they're not bored before they get there. If people look at the clock, you've lost them. Stop talking when you have finished!



9. **If you're not sure, get help.** Ask a church leader or another leader, a Christian parent or read a commentary or Study Bible. I will normally reply by return of email!

10. **Practise!** You will get better. I am very happy to practise with you, or to come into your group to watch you speak and give feedback.