

Basics of Public Speech

(Adapted from Reg Grant & John Reed, *Telling Stories to Touch the Heart: How to Use Stories to Communicate God's Truth*, Wheaton: Victor, 1990, 11-26)

I. How do I get over the fear of speaking in public?

Follow this step-by-step procedure:

- A. **DESIRE** to learn to speak publicly.
- B. Realize that you **ALREADY** are a speaker. You speak all the time!
In fact, you've been speaking for years!
- C. Practice **READING** to others --- especially someone who knows you well and will be both encouraging and honest with you. (Often times kids are the best ones to practice with.)
- D. Tell **STORIES** about yourself.
- E. Prepare your message **WELL**.
- F. Practice what you are going to say **20-30** times, each time progressively weaning yourself away from the text. After this you will have it memorized!
- G. Deliver the message from **MEMORY** to someone you know well (similar to "C" above).
- H. Deliver the message from **MEMORY** to your full audience.

II. How do I approach the podium and begin?

- A. Mark the right place in the Bible from which you will be reading or preaching.
- B. **CONFIDENTLY** walk up to the podium with your Bible close to your side.
- C. **OPEN** your book (if you have one).
- D. **LOOK** the audience in the eye and smile.
- E. **PAUSE**, then announce your text 2-3 times.
- F. **WAIT** until the rustling of pages stops (or nearly stops) as your cue that the audience has found the place.

- G. **HOLD** your Bible at chest level (so your head will not bob up and down when looking up and down as you read). Put your left hand under the spine and use your right hand to follow words down the page.
- H. Read the first sentence **SILENTLY**, look up, then speak it directly to your listeners --- especially if your first words are your introduction. (The idea is never to read words aloud while looking at the page.)
- I. In some cases, do not **LOOK** at your audience, such as when . . .
1. The text addresses God.
 2. You want your listeners to visualize (“see”) what you are describing.
 3. The content relates to evil (Don’t pick out a woman in the crowd and describe Jezebel!). Rather, in these cases describe the action above their heads to an imaginary window such as this one:

As you describe characters and scenes in your story, focus and gesture at various parts of the “window” (e.g., Philistines on the left, Israel on the right, David and Goliath in the centre). Don’t even bring your characters up on stage with you, for twisting back and forth to “play” them is distracting.

- J. When should you look at your audience? Look at them:
1. During the **INTRODUCTION**.
 2. When you want to **ASSOCIATE** them favorably with the group of people in the reading.
 3. During the **LONG** narrative sections when there isn’t much action.

II. **How do I end my presentation and get off the stage?**

- A. Slow the **PACE** of the last paragraph.
- B. **COAST** to a stop (don’t screech!).
- C. **CLOSE** the book (if you have one).
- D. **LOOK** at your audience as you pause for a brief moment.
- E. **CONFIDENTLY** return to your seat while carrying the book close to your side.