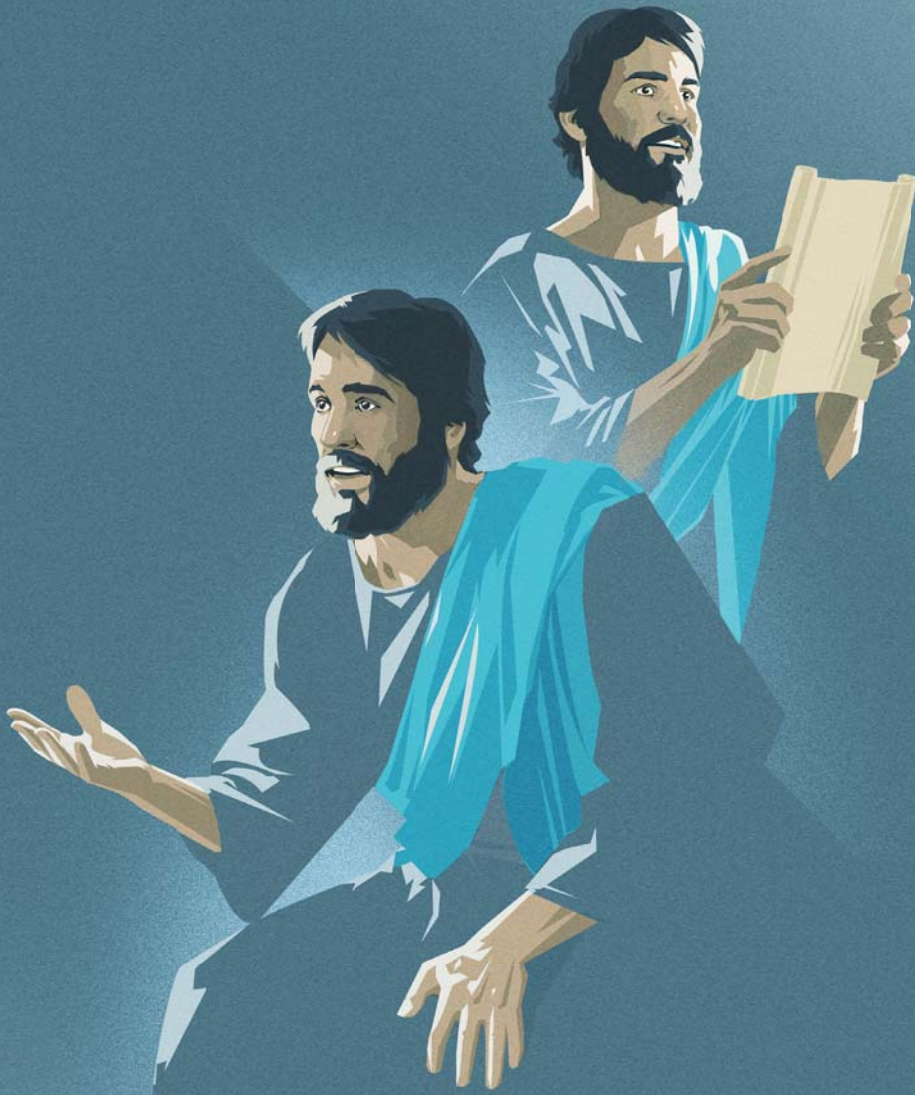




APPLY YOURSELF TO
READING AND TEACHING



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—1 TIMOTHY 4:13

NAME

CONGREGATION

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A Letter From the Governing Body

“You should be teachers.” (Heb. 5:12) Imagine! Jehovah—the finest Teacher in the universe—invites us to teach others about him! Any assignment to teach the truth about Jehovah—in the family, in the congregation, or in the field ministry—is a precious privilege and a weighty responsibility. How can we succeed?

The answer is found in the words that the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: “Continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching.” Paul added: “By doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.” (1 Tim. 4:13, 16) You have a lifesaving message to share. So it is vital to work at improving your reading and teaching. This brochure is designed to help you do that. Consider a few of its features.



A cited scripture on each page that is either a Bible principle related to the study point or an example of the study point being applied



Practical tips that relate to the main point being discussed

IN THE MINISTRY: Suggestions that apply specifically to the field ministry. Most of the other points in the brochure can apply both to the field ministry and to teaching from the platform.

Jehovah is the “Grand Instructor.” (Isa. 30:20) While this brochure will help you to sharpen your skills as a reader and a teacher, never forget that Jehovah is the Source of our message and that he draws people. (John 6:44) Therefore, pray often for holy spirit. Make liberal use of God’s Word. Draw attention to Jehovah, never to yourself. Endeavor to build in your listeners’ hearts a deep love for him.

You have been invited to teach the most important message ever given to humans. We are confident that as you depend “on the strength that God supplies,” you will succeed.—1 Pet. 4:11.

Your fellow teachers,

Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses

1

Effective Introduction



Acts 17:22

SUMMARY: Your introduction should arouse interest, identify your subject, and show why your listeners should be interested in it.

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Arouse interest.** Select a question, statement, real-life experience, or news item that will be of interest to your listeners.



In advance, give careful thought to the interests and concerns of your listeners and adapt your introduction accordingly.

- **Identify your subject.** Make sure that your introduction makes the subject and purpose of your presentation clear to your listeners.

- **Show why the subject is important.** Adapt what you say to the practical needs of your listeners. They should clearly understand how the subject can help them personally.



While preparing a discourse, ask yourself, 'What situations are brothers and sisters in my congregation facing?' Then tailor your introduction to their needs.

IN THE MINISTRY: To determine what a person might be interested in, observe his or her activities or surroundings. Begin a conversation by asking a question or making a brief comment about those things.

Conversational Manner

2

SUMMARY: Speak in a natural, sincere way that conveys how you feel about the topic and your listeners.



2 Corinthians 2:17

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Prepare prayerfully and carefully.** Pray for help to concentrate, not on yourself, but on your message. Fix in your mind the main points you need to convey. Express thoughts in your own words; do not simply recite expressions word for word as they appear in print.



If you plan to read from the Bible or another publication, get to know the passage well so that your reading will be fluent. If people are quoted, read their words with feeling, without being overly dramatic.

- **Speak from the heart.** Think about why your listeners need to hear the message. Focus on them. Then your posture, gestures, and facial expressions will convey warm sincerity and friendliness.



Do not confuse naturalness with casualness. Maintain the dignity of your message by using clear speech and proper grammar.

- **Look at your listeners.** Maintain eye contact where it is not offensive to do so. When you give a discourse, look at one individual in the audience at a time, rather than looking at or scanning over the entire group.

3

Use of Questions



Matthew 16:13-16

SUMMARY: Ask tactful questions to arouse and maintain interest, to reason with your listeners, and to emphasize important points.

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Arouse and maintain interest.** Ask rhetorical questions that stimulate a mental response or curiosity.
- **Reason on a subject.** Help your listeners to follow the logic of an argument by posing a series of questions that lead to a reasonable conclusion.
- **Emphasize important points.** Ask an intriguing question to introduce a key thought. Use review questions after discussing an important point or when concluding your presentation.



After reading a scripture, use questions to emphasize the key idea of the verse(s) you just read.

IN THE MINISTRY: Ask your listener to express his viewpoint on a topic. Listen attentively to his response. Use discernment to determine when and how to ask tactful questions.

Scriptures Properly Introduced

4

SUMMARY: Prepare the minds of your listeners before you read a scripture.



Matthew 22:41-45

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Determine why you are reading the scripture.** Introduce each scripture in a way that draws your listeners' attention to the key point you are making with the verse.



Take the context into account. Attribute quotations to the correct speaker and Bible books to the correct writer.

- **Cite the Bible as an authority.** When you are speaking to people who believe in God, draw attention to the Bible as God's Word, thus crediting it as the highest source of wisdom.

- **Arouse interest in the scripture.** Ask a question that the scripture will answer, pose a problem that the scripture will help solve, or state a principle that the Scriptural account will illustrate.



Take into account what your listeners already know about the subject and the scripture. Introduce even a familiar text in an appealing way, and help your listeners to take a fresh look at it.

5

Accurate Reading



1 Timothy 4:13

SUMMARY: Read aloud exactly what is on the page.

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Prepare well.** Determine why the passage was written. Practice reading word groupings, not just individual words. Beware of inserting, skipping over, or substituting words. Observe all punctuation marks.
 - 💡 Ask a friend to monitor your reading and to point out any words that you read inaccurately.
- **Pronounce each word correctly.** If you do not know how to pronounce a word, look it up in a dictionary, listen to an audio recording of the publication, or ask a good reader for help.
- **Speak clearly.** Enunciate carefully, holding your head high and opening your mouth wide. Make an effort to pronounce each syllable.
 - 💡 Do not enunciate so precisely that your reading becomes unnatural.

Scripture Application Made Clear

6

SUMMARY: Do not simply read a scripture and then move on to the next point. Make sure that your listeners see clearly the connection between the scripture you read and the point you are making.



John 10:33-36

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Isolate key words.** After reading a scripture, highlight the words that relate directly to your main point. You may do this by repeating those words or by asking a question that invites your listeners to identify the key words.



If you use different words to restate the idea of the scripture, be sure that your listeners can still plainly see how the words in the Bible itself connect to your main point.

- **Emphasize the point.** If you introduced the scripture with a clear reason for reading it, explain how the key words of the scripture relate to that reason.



As you discuss the scripture, keep your Bible open. This helps your listeners to connect your words to the verse you just read.

- **Make your application simple.** Avoid commenting on irrelevant details that do not contribute to the main point. Based on what your listeners already know about the topic, decide how many facts are necessary to make the point of application clear and understandable.

7

Accurate and Convincing



Luke 1:3

SUMMARY: Use trustworthy evidence to help your listeners arrive at the correct conclusion.

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Consult reliable sources.** Base your comments on God’s Word, reading directly from it when possible. If you refer to a scientific fact, a news report, an experience, or other supporting evidence, check in advance that your source is trustworthy and up-to-date.

- **Use sources properly.** Apply scriptures in harmony with their context, the Bible’s overall message, and the publications of “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matt. 24:45) Use secular sources in accord with the original context and the intent of the writer.



Do not overstate or exaggerate facts and figures. Be careful that “some people” does not become “the majority of people,” “in some cases” does not become “always,” and “possibly” does not become “probably.”

- **Reason on the evidence.** After reading a scripture or citing a source, ask tactful questions or illustrate the point to help your listeners draw their own conclusion.

IN THE MINISTRY: As you prepare to preach, anticipate questions that you might be asked, and research possible responses. If your listener poses a question and you do not know the answer, offer to research the topic and return later.

Illustrations That Teach



SUMMARY: Enhance your teaching with simple illustrations that appeal to your listeners and teach important points.



Matthew 13:34, 35

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Choose simple illustrations.** Like Jesus, use little things to explain big things, and easy things to explain difficult things. Do not add needless details that complicate the illustration. Make sure that the features of your illustration really apply to the lesson you are teaching so that your listeners are not distracted by mismatched elements.



Be observant. Look at the world around you, study Christian publications, and listen to skilled teachers. As you do so, take note of illustrations you can use to enhance your teaching. Save these illustrations in a file.

- **Keep your listeners in mind.** Select illustrations that involve activities and interests of your listeners. Be careful that your illustrations will neither embarrass nor offend them.

- **Teach the main point.** Focus on illustrating main points, not minor details. Ensure that your listener will remember not merely the illustration but also the point of instruction.

9

Appropriate Use of Visual Aids



Genesis 15:5

SUMMARY: Use visual aids to make important points of instruction more vivid.

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Select visual aids that enhance your teaching.** Use pictures, diagrams, maps, time lines, or other visual aids to highlight *important* points, not minor details. Help your listeners to remember not just the visual aid but the point of instruction.
- **Make sure that your listeners can see the visual aid.**



Well before your presentation, ensure that any visual aids you plan to use are ready.

IN THE MINISTRY: Direct a listener's attention to artwork in a publication, and ask him to comment on what he sees. Ask additional questions, as needed, to emphasize key ideas. When playing a video, turn the screen to face your listener. Generally, it is not necessary to talk while the video is playing.

Modulation

SUMMARY: Convey ideas clearly and stir emotion by varying your volume, pitch, and pace.



Proverbs 8:4, 7

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Vary your volume.** Increase your volume to highlight main points and to motivate your listeners. Do the same when reading Scriptural judgments. Decrease your volume to build anticipation or to convey fear or anxiety.



Do not increase your volume so often that your listeners feel scolded. Avoid drawing attention to yourself by being overly dramatic.

- **Vary your pitch.** If appropriate in your language, raise your pitch to express enthusiasm or to indicate size or distance. Lower your pitch to express sorrow or anxiety.

- **Vary your pace.** Speak more rapidly to convey excitement. Speak more slowly when stating important points.



To avoid startling your listeners, do not change pace abruptly. Do not speak so rapidly that your diction suffers.

11

Enthusiasm



Romans 12:11

SUMMARY: Stimulate and motivate your listeners by speaking with zeal.

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Get your heart involved.** As you prepare to deliver your presentation, think deeply about the importance of your message. Get to know your material so well that you can express yourself from the heart.
- **Think about your listeners.** Meditate on how the information you will read or teach will benefit others. Consider ways to present that information in a way that will deepen your listeners' appreciation for it.
- **Breathe life into your delivery.** Speak with zeal. Use natural gestures and sincere facial expressions to reflect your feelings.



Take care not to distract your listeners by using the same gesture repeatedly as a mannerism. Make your gestures meaningful. Express enthusiasm primarily when teaching main points and motivating your listeners to take action. Do not tire your listeners by projecting a high level of enthusiasm throughout your presentation.

Warmth and Empathy

SUMMARY: Speak with genuine emotion, and show your listeners you care.



1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Think about your listeners.** Prepare your heart by reminding yourself of the problems they face. Try to imagine how they feel.

- **Choose your words carefully.** Seek to refresh, comfort, and invigorate your listeners. Avoid expressions that could needlessly offend them, and do not speak disparagingly of unbelievers or their sincerely held beliefs.

- **Show your interest.** With a kind tone of voice and appropriate gestures, show your listeners that you really care. Be mindful of your facial expressions; smile often.



Do not force or exaggerate emotions. While reading, express the feelings indicated in the passage, but do not draw undue attention to yourself. Since emphasizing consonants can result in a cold, clipped delivery, draw out vowels to warm up the tone of your voice.

13

Practical Value Made Clear



Proverbs 3:21

SUMMARY: Help your listeners to understand how your subject affects their lives, and show them what to do with what they learn.

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Think about your listeners.** Meditate on why your listeners need to hear the information you are sharing, and consider what aspect of the topic will be particularly helpful to them.

- **Throughout your presentation, show your listeners what to do.** Right from the start, each listener should realize, ‘This involves me.’ As you develop each main point, show how to apply it. Avoid speaking in generalities.



Discuss the application of Bible principles lovingly and empathetically. Rather than burdening others with guilt, strengthen their love and faith, confident that their heart will motivate them to do the right thing.

IN THE MINISTRY: When preparing to preach, give thought to what is in the news and to topics that may interest people in your territory. Adapt your comments to address what is most practical then and there. Ask tactful questions that draw out a person’s concerns and interests. Then listen to the response, and adapt your teaching accordingly.

Main Points Made to Stand Out

14

SUMMARY: Help your audience to follow along with your talk, and make clear how each main point relates to your objective and theme.



Hebrews 8:1

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Have an objective.** Consider whether your talk is intended to inform, convince, or motivate your audience, and then develop it accordingly. Make sure all main points help you to achieve your objective.



Ask yourself: 'What questions or objections might my audience have about this topic? In what logical order would they raise those questions or objections?' Then arrange your points in the same order so that your audience can follow along with, understand, and accept the information.

- **Emphasize the theme of your talk.** Refer to the theme throughout your discourse by repeating the key words of the theme or by using synonyms.

- **Make your main points clear and simple.** Select only main points that relate to your theme and that you can teach effectively in the allotted time. Limit the number of main points, clearly state each main point, pause between them, and lead smoothly from one main point to the next.



You might state the main points in your introduction to help the audience follow along or restate them in your conclusion to help the audience remember them.

15

Expressed With Conviction



1 Thessalonians 1:5

SUMMARY: Show that you firmly believe in the truth and the importance of what you are saying.

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Prepare thoroughly.** Study the material until you understand how the Scriptural arguments can lead to one logical conclusion. Try to express the main points of your presentation in a few simple words. Concentrate on its value to your listeners. Pray for holy spirit.



Practice your presentation aloud to become fully acquainted with your material and to improve your delivery.

- **Use words that convey conviction.** Rather than repeating the exact wording of published material, use your own words. Choose language that shows you are certain of what you are saying.

- **Express yourself earnestly and sincerely.** Speak with sufficient volume. Where it is not offensive to do so, maintain eye contact with your listeners.



Do not confuse expressing conviction with being tactless, opinionated, or pushy. Even when speaking earnestly, appeal to your listeners in a loving manner.

Upbuilding and Positive

SUMMARY: Focus on things that improve a situation and that inspire confidence.



Job 16:5

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Cultivate a positive view of your listeners.** Assume that your fellow believers want to please Jehovah. Even if you must give counsel, first sincerely commend whenever possible.



Let love, not irritation, motivate what you say. Smile warmly to build a rapport with your listeners.

- **Limit negative material.** Include negative aspects of a topic only to the extent that they serve a useful purpose. The overall tone of your presentation should be positive.
- **Make good use of God's Word.** Draw attention to what Jehovah has done, is doing, and will do for humankind. Impart hope and courage to your listeners.

IN THE MINISTRY: Consider each person as a potential fellow believer.

17

Understandable to Others



1 Corinthians 14:9

SUMMARY: Help your listeners to grasp the meaning of your message.

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Study your material thoroughly.** Understand the topic clearly so that you can explain it simply and in your own words.

- **Use short sentences and simple phrases.** Although longer sentences are acceptable, convey key points using concise phrases and sentences.



Eliminate unnecessary details that may confuse and overwhelm your listeners. Favor plain language over complicated speech.

- **Explain unfamiliar terms.** Minimize the use of expressions that are unfamiliar to your listeners. If you must refer to an unfamiliar term, Bible character, or ancient measurement or custom, provide an explanation.

Informative to Your Audience

18

SUMMARY: Stimulate the thinking of your listeners, leaving them with the feeling that they learned something worthwhile.



1 Corinthians 9:19-23

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Consider what your listeners already know.** Rather than simply repeating what they have heard before, help them to look at the topic from a fresh perspective.



Cover familiar points more quickly, but slow down when presenting new ideas.

- **Research and meditate.** When possible, include less-familiar facts or current events to illustrate key ideas. Think deeply about your material and the connection between the material and the facts you intend to cite.



As you examine the material, stimulate your own thinking by asking yourself such questions as *'what, why, when, where, who, and how.'* Enliven your teaching by raising and answering some of those questions throughout your presentation.

- **Show the usefulness of your message.** Explain how Scriptural points can help your listeners in their daily lives. Discuss specific situations, attitudes, and actions that are relevant to your listeners.

19

Effort to Reach the Heart



Proverbs 3:1

SUMMARY: Help your listeners to appreciate what they learn and to act on it.

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Help your listeners to make a self-examination.** Ask rhetorical questions to help people in your audience examine their own feelings.
- **Appeal to good motives.** Urge your listeners to analyze *why* they perform good works. Help them to build the finest motives—love for Jehovah, for fellow humans, and for Bible teachings. Reason with your listeners; do not lecture them. Rather than shaming them, leave them encouraged at the end of your presentation, motivated to do their best.
- **Direct attention to Jehovah.** Highlight how Bible teachings, principles, and commands reflect God’s qualities and his love for us. Cultivate in your listeners a desire to consider Jehovah’s feelings and to please him.



Remember that *Jehovah* draws people. Use his Word to motivate your listeners.

IN THE MINISTRY: When possible, use questions to find out what your listener really believes. Observe his facial expression and tone of voice for signs of his true feelings. However, be patient. You will likely have to build trust before your listener will reveal his inmost feelings.

Effective Conclusion

SUMMARY: In your final remarks, appeal to your listeners to accept and apply what they have learned.



Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Connect your conclusion to your overall topic.** Restate or rephrase your main points and theme.

- **Motivate your listeners.** Show your listeners what to do, and give sound reasons for doing so. Speak earnestly and with conviction.

- **Keep your conclusion simple and brief.** Do not introduce new main points. Using as few words as are needed, make a final appeal for action.



Do not rush your conclusion, and do not let your voice simply fade away. Deliver the last few sentences with a note of finality.

IN THE MINISTRY: As you conclude the discussion, repeat the main point you want your listener to remember. If a conversation ends abruptly, conclude the conversation on a positive note. Even if a person is rude, respond in a way that may motivate him to listen next time.

