

Preparing & giving a talk in sacrament meeting

Preparation

Before you write your talk

- Start thinking about your topic as soon as you are asked to speak. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland has said, “May I encourage you to start thinking about and planning early for any [talk] that you are to give.”¹
- Pray for the Spirit to guide you as you determine what to say.
- Think about your own experiences with the topic and how you might share them.
- Read about the topic in the scriptures. Mark or write down things you feel inspired to use.

Prepare and teach by the Spirit

Doctrine and Covenants 42:14 tells us how to obtain the Spirit’s influence in our teaching: “And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith.” Start your talk preparations with sincere prayer. The Holy Ghost can “show unto you all things what ye should do” in preparing and giving your talk (2 Nephi 32:5). Ask God to enlighten your mind so you can understand what you are to speak about and how best to present the information.

Elements of a talk

As you plan what to say in your talk, consider these four main elements, which can be organized in any order:

1. Share a doctrine or principle related to your topic.
2. Use scriptures to teach about the doctrine and relate how they are important to the congregation.
3. Tell faith-promoting experiences — especially ones from your own life.
4. Bear your testimony of the topic and anything else you feel prompted to testify about.

Rehearse

Practice giving your talk in front of a family member, a friend, or even a mirror beforehand. **Make sure it’s about the length of time you’ve been asked to speak — not too long and not too short.**

Delivery

Introduction

A good way to open a talk is with a scripture, a quote (especially from a Church leader), or a story or personal experience. Try to avoid saying something like, “The topic I have been assigned today is ...,” and *definitely* don’t start by telling everyone how unqualified or unprepared you are or that you are nervous or don’t want to be speaking.

Other tips for delivery

- Make sure you speak slowly, clearly, and loudly enough for everyone to hear.
- Stand up straight as you speak — try not to lean on the pulpit.
- Don’t just read your talk with your head down. Look up as much as possible and try to make eye contact with people in the congregation.
- If you get nervous, just pause and take a deep breath. Then move on with your talk. We’re all cheering for you to give the best talk you can.
- Members who participate in sacrament meeting should stay until the meeting ends.²

Additional instruction

General Handbook: “Speakers bear testimony of Jesus Christ and teach His gospel using the scriptures (see Doctrine and Covenants 42:12; 52:9). Messages should build faith and be consistent with the sacred nature of the sacrament.”³

Doctrine and Covenants 42:12: “And again, the elders, priests and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fulness of the gospel.”

Doctrine and Covenants 52:9: “And let them journey from thence preaching the word by the way, saying none other things than that which the prophets and apostles have written, and that which is taught them by the Comforter through the prayer of faith.”

Adapted from “Speaking in Sacrament Meeting?” by John Hilton III and Mindy Raye Friedman, [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/youth/article/speaking-in-sacrament-meeting](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/youth/article/speaking-in-sacrament-meeting)

² See *Handbook 2*, 18.2.2.6

³ *General Handbook*, 29.2.1.4

¹ *Ensign*, June 2007, page 90