

Tips for Youth Sunday

Tips for Helping Youth Plan

- **Schedule multiple rehearsals** and run throughs. Consider doing this during a Friday to Saturday night sleepover. It's NOT recommended to pull an all-nighter Saturday to Sunday which can be too anxiety producing for some youth.
- **Offer both positive and critical feedback** on presentation and content.
- Ask youth to both **attend and participate in creating worship all year long** so they are familiar with the process and content.
- **Ask the minister to meet** with planners to discuss tips and tricks for great worships.
- **Talk about the arc of worship**, why it's important to build to a peak, and why almost every service follows a similar pattern: turning away from the world and into sacred space, coming into community, reflection/communion with the divine, inspiration, going back into the world.
- Go through a typical order of service and **identify the parts**. Tell them they can change elements or eliminate pieces the congregation may be used to, but they must find a way to accomplish a similar goal.
- **Invite actors, directors, and other performers** to talk with youth about how to project, pace and pause for audience reaction. This works best when everyone has a chance to read their part and the guest has the opportunity to offer positive suggestions and they get a chance to implement that suggestion immediately.
- **Have a conversation** about how, as worship leaders, they need to be conscious of everything they do on the chancel, whether or not they are actually in the pulpit, because the worship leaders set the mood in the room. What the congregation sees them doing, they will emulate. If you act silly or laugh at inappropriate moments, the congregation will not take the service seriously. If they are calm and focused, the audience will be too. (or are more likely to be)
- **Ask youth to identify elements they love**. It's a great way to lift up that these things are meaningful to *someone*, even if it's not your thing.

Tips for Presenters

- **Read it.** No ad-libbing.
- **No loose-leaf papers.** If, heaven forbid, you trip or drop your paper, you will regret having to put it back in order. Plus it looks much more professional to have it in a sexy black binder.
- Read it so **slowly** you feel like you are talking through a mouth of molasses. Trust me. In your nervousness, you will speed up; if you go too fast, people won't even try to comprehend what you are saying.

- **Enjoy** yourself and let the audience see it. You have worked hard on your paper and deserve to feel proud of it!
- **Relax.** Your distress will stress out your listeners. Everyone in the room wants you to be successful at your presentation - use that energy to help you have fun with it.
- **Practice** with the microphone more than once. Each mic is different so just because you practiced with that one mic that one time doesn't mean you'll know how to use this one.
- **Pause** after each sentence, or each comma, and look at the audience/congregation. You may not remember to do it every time but trying to implement it gives you the appearance of connecting with the congregation.
- Find a face (or a chair) at the rear of each quadrant of the congregation and **speak directly** to that chair. (It doesn't matter if you can actually see the person there; it works just as well if you focus on a spot just above their head.)
- If you're using a handheld mic, **hold the mic** like a diva (see below). If you are using a pulpit mic, it works best in "contemplative cobra" position. Practice holding and/or moving the mic in the right position.



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Ideas for preparing to read

- **Read out loud** to as many audiences as possible, as many times as you can, in the next week. Cut out phrases that consistently trip you up (I had trouble with a particular sentence with too many "f"s in it in my Foucault paper - it looked perfectly fine, but sounded funny out loud...)
- Make **technical notations** on your reading copy - I know it sounds silly, but when you are reading you may forget to pause when you should, or forget to emphasize certain words. So come up with w/ highlighter color code or some other notes-to-self to remember this. (Hell, I even wrote things like "look up," "take a deep breath RIGHT

NOW" and "take a quick sip of water during this pause" on my last paper, so I wouldn't forget....)

More Resources

[A Good Telling: Bringing Worship to Life with Story](#) by Kristen Maier

[Story, Song and Spirit: Fun and Creative Worship Services for All Ages](#) by Erika Hewitt

Acknowledgements

Liz Martin, DRE South Valley UU Society, UT

Amanda Alice

Kathy Smith, DRE Unit the Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge, LA

Andrea James, DLFD First UU Church of Winnipeg, Ontario

Layne R Hammock, DLFD West Shore UU Church, OH

Samaya Oakley, Minister South Fraser Unitarian Congregation, BC

Sam Wilson, DYM Winchester Unitarian Society, MA