
GETTING THE POINT: THEMATIC WORSHIP

Session Description

Do your members remember anything about last week's message?

The days when a "three points and a poem" preaching was effective are long past. Today's effective sermons make one major take-home point. And though many music ministers do their best to tie the music to the sermon and liturgists work to choose the appropriate responsive readings, the reality is that too many worship services look like a Golden Coral Lunch Buffet ... there's a little bit of everything in there. In this episode, Drs. Kris and Bill share how to help those in your congregation truly get that "one thing" – even if they nodded off during the sermon.

Session Outline

Worship services carry more than just worship – and pretty much always have

- The lectionary, or texts selected for specific days of the year, is an ancient practice that dates back to the early celebrations of the Passover in the Old Testament – and lectionaries are decidedly developed for teaching
- The lectionaries are based on thematic passages ... they have a "point" to drive home
- Thematic worship services reflect this early practice

Thematic worship services communicate one key point, one takeaway, in every aspect of the service. From announcements to prayers, music to sermon, not one word deviates from the theme.

Develop a team to create a themed worship service

Example Theme: Risk Taking for Jesus' Sake

- Announcements: Risk being a part of a small group, Risk missing the next episode of Downton Abbey to be a VBS volunteer
- Greeting Time: Risk meeting someone you don't know or don't know well
- Invocation, responsive reading, prayers, benediction, etc.
- Offering Meditation: Stepping out in faith (risk)
- Passing of Peace: Risk of reconciliation
- Communion Meditation: The risk Jesus took by speaking truth and being inclusive
- Sermon: Luke 7:1–10 (the Centurion's servant)
- Music: Pretty much anything on walking by faith, etc.
- PowerPoint: Images of risk taking (balance beam, bungee jumping, window washers, skydiving)
- Props: Bike with one training wheel removed, balance beam, parachute, etc.
- Actions: Trust fall,

- Video Clip: Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade – step of faith or choose well; Field of Dreams; Furious 6 the risk of reconciliation
- Take Aways: Hand-off cards – risk giving it to someone

Discussion Questions

1. Give everyone a blank 3X5 card and a pen/pencil and then ask, “Write down the theme of last week’s worship service.” How did you remember –or– why do you think you couldn’t remember?
2. Go through last week’s order of worship. What was well themed and what missed the mark?
3. What needs to happen to create a theme for next month’s sermons?
4. Who needs to be invited to be a part of the creative process?