

**Subject: Community Outreach – Ministers' Tips -- What You Do If You Knew You Could Not Fail**

**"What You Do if You Knew You Could Not Fail"**

***Ministers' Tips***

***Ministers' Tips—Idea #1***

Start and maintain a "Story file" either on computer or on paper. As you read stories and jokes, have a pair of scissors handy and cut them out, assign them a topic and file them for future use in Sunday lessons and talks. If you have a list of topic headings you work with you can even ask for volunteers from your church to be "readers" for you. Give them the list of topics and ask them to peruse their favorite (or your favorite magazine) for stories, articles, quotes and jokes that you can use in your talks. With a story file, you won't find yourself scrambling at the last minute for the right quote or joke or illustration. And it's even better if you put everything you get in your word processor!

***Ministers' Tips—Idea #2***

Most everyone in your church probably has the desire to be of service—even if they don't feel they have the time. One way to involve more people in "helping out" is to schedule quarterly "Work Parties" during which time volunteers arrive at the church to spruce it up, do minor repair work, plant seasonal flowers, clean the windows, whatever. We do ours on a Saturday morning, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. We provide morning refreshments and we encourage people to come for whatever amount of time they can come. We require our Board members, staff and minister to be there ready to roll up their sleeves to. I am there – in my "grubbies"—as well. (The idea of "work parties" was first learned of from the Living Enrichment Center in Portland, Oregon. Special thanks to Reverend Mary Manin Morrissey.)

***Ministers' Tips—Idea #3***

One way to strengthen a Sunday message and help people remember that message, is to give them something tangible to remember it by. Over the

years, we have done dozens of lessons with trinkets.

Here are some examples: Sermon from a Pin, Lesson from an Acorn, Lesson from a Penny and two series of lessons from animals. We've given as reminders, straight pins, bells, mirrors, animal charms, coal, pennies, acorns, and lots of other items. What we have found is that people save them for years and remember the basic points of the message! And when done as part of a series, it boosts attendance because they don't want to miss getting one of the charms or trinkets (which are only available the Sunday the talk is given.)

#### *Ministers' Tips—Idea #4*

Subscribe to other minister's Sunday messages and listen to them—not just to the message, but to the announcements and how they do their offering. You'll get a tremendous number of ideas.

#### *Ministers' Tips—Idea #5*

Come up with a system to gather and organize ideas from other ministers and church newsletters. None of us has the time to think up all the great ideas there are. By looking at our colleagues newsletters we can get some great ideas for special projects, activities, community outreach programs, etc.

#### *Ministers' Tips—Idea #6*

Make good use of the "P.S." on your letters. It's the most read part of a letter. We actually promote upcoming events in our "P.S." section. We're brief—only a sentence or two—but we know that the more ways and more times we can "get the word out" about whatever is happening at the church, the better our attendance and involvement will be.

#### *Ministers' Tips—Idea #7*

Hand write personal notes on the bottom of your computer-generated letters. It adds a very special personal touch. It can be as simple as "Have a great week, Mary," or "Hope to see you again, next Sunday, Mary." Be sure to use their name. I have many of our members who have been coming for years tell me that is the part of the letter they like the most!

### *Ministers' Tips—Idea #8*

If you receive lots of Christmas cards from your congregation, create a Christmas card grab bag—save the cards, and select a card a week after the new year and send that person a note about their Christmas card and that you are praying with them that week. Imagine how amazed they will be when you send them a note in June telling them you've just re-read their lovely Christmas card and wanted to tell them you'd be holding them in your prayers! (Special acknowledgement to Reverend Arthur Hammons, Christ Church Unity in El Cajon, CA where we first learned of this idea).

### *Ministers' Tips—Idea #9*

**Write your Sunday talks in advance—way in advance!**

No matter how far in advance you've written your talk, (I write mine 6 months in advance and have been doing so for almost 20 years) you can still keep it fresh and current. By knowing what you're going to be speaking about in advance, you can really keep your ears and eyes tuned for current events, stories, jokes that would strengthen your message. And I promise you your musicians will love you for it! They will have enough time to find just the right music or perhaps even create something original for you with so much time. And you (or your staff) will have the time to create album covers (if you're working in series) or postcards to promote your upcoming messages.

How do you do it? To get it started will take some extra effort. You'll need to double up writing talks for awhile. But once you've gotten ahead, all you'll have to do to keep up is write one talk a week—just like you do now, only you won't be writing it for this Sunday, you'll be writing it for a Sunday several months ahead. This practice is truly worth the effort.

### ***Ministers' Tips—Idea #10***

**Read your Sunday talk every day during the week before you give it. You don't need to (or want to) memorize it. But if you review it daily, it will be fresh in your mind, your mind will be "primed" to be on the lookout for current events, stories, facts that you can add in at the last minute to make it very current and interesting.**

### ***Ministers' Tips—Idea #11***

**Do whatever it takes to get—and stay—organized. It can do more to increase your productivity than most anything else. Get—and really learn how to use it well—a good day planning system. And request your key staff people to use the same system as you do! This will boost staff efficiency more than you can imagine and go a long way to help things from "slipping through the cracks."**