

MAKING A BETTER SPEECH

Public speaking is a SKILL, not a talent. A skill is something that must be learned and honed over time. A speech is simply an enlarged conversation where the speaker converses with an audience in the same friendly, organized manner one would use in addressing a single person.

So what do you do when you have to make a speech? Most speeches that we are called upon to make, involve a statement of belief, a topic, or a subject that means a great deal to you.

The first step in preparing for your speech is to select your theme. Your theme should be something that is important to you, as the most successful speeches are made when you speak about things that mean something to you personally.

Always start your speech with a S M I L E:

S-start. State your theme, belief or topic.

M-I-L-make it live! Explain why your topic is important to you, what it means to you and your life. Expand upon your topic by using an appropriate story to illustrate your point or tell of some experience in your life. Make your audience realize that you are saying is what you believe.

E-the end. You end the speech by bringing together your topic, illustrations, and examples into a final statement of belief.

There are some helpful tips that will be valuable as you prepare your speeches:

1. Talk about a subject you have earned the right to talk about through long study or experience. Your speech should be something you KNOW and care about! Don't just spend 5 minutes, 5 hours, or 5 days preparing what you want to say! Let 5 months, or 5 years of your experiences help you. DeMolay helps you prepare because of your participation in your DeMolay Chapter. As you move through the different offices, you will learn additional parts of the ritual. This is great practice for speaking in public. Also taking on a different role during the two degrees will also provide additional practice.

Remember, your topic should be something you feel very strongly about. Be sure that your concept is one that you are comfortable with. Don't pick a theme just because it is what you think it is what others expect to hear. Make your talk your own!

2. Be EXCITED about your subject! Everyone can give a superb speech if speaking on a topic about which they are really excited and obviously enthusiastic about.
3. Speak from the heart, not from a book. Many public speakers want to get their topics out of a book or a magazine, or an e-mail, just repeating carefully rehearsed and memorized words,

instead of speaking from their own knowledge and convictions. Speaking from the heart includes being willing to let your audience see, feel and hear your emotions (i.e. excitement, determination, happiness and pride). You must really want to communicate your convictions and feelings to your listeners.

4. Talk about your experiences. Tell about little incidents you have witnessed or participated in which make you more aware of the value of your topic. **USE EXAMPLES!** “A picture is worth a thousand words” applies here. If you are talking about DeMolay being fun, talk about the last fun event your chapter did. If you are commenting on how DeMolay has helped you make friends, say just that. A verbal picture expressed in your speech will remain in your audience’s mind forever. **A word of caution:** Don’t get so involved in your story that you lose your train of thought. Make your points clearly and don’t go off on tangents. Your audience should be able to follow your thoughts without wondering what you are really talking about.
5. Think about what you want to say. Come prepared to speak-don’t count on thinking of something to say as you are standing up to speak. Have an idea of what your topic will be ahead of time. While it is okay to prepare an outline of what you want to discuss, try not to write out your entire speech and memorize it. Play to your personal strengths, whatever helps you best. Many times you will find that a thought on paper needs work before you can express the idea verbally. Practice out loud if possible, record yourself. Talk to the mirror, in the shower, or to your parents or friends. Maybe even the family pet can help. Having notes or cards to prompt you with all that you wish to say about the topic is fine. Practice with those as well. Remember you can always ask your chapter advisors to listen to you as well.
6. Finally, and most importantly, **BE YOURSELF!** There is no magic mold to use in order to become a good public speaker. We all speak daily, and we all have our own unique ways of expressing ourselves. Each individual uses certain words with certain facial expressions to show that we are ourselves. Don’t try to be someone you’re not. The most that anyone can ask of a person is to be the best you that you can possibly be!

And lastly, remember **KISS-Keep It Simple Silly!** Give yourself the proper time in preparing your speech. Nothing is worse than getting overly involved in details and thoughts that really do not add to your message. Speak to your audience; look around the room as you speak. Establish a nonverbal communication that is positive by making good eye contact, exhibiting good posture, and having made this or another speech before. Take a deep breath, relax, and you’ll be done before you had a chance to get nervous!

Public Speaking Break-out

- Play a public speaking game
- One Minute Speech
 - You pick a topic and then you have one minute to talk about that topic
 - You must use the full minute
- 10 public speaking tips
- S.M.I.L.E./K.I.S.S.