

FORMULA TWELVE

The Formula of Communication
Leader's Notes



The Formula of Communication:

The 2+2+2 Strategy

Sermons are among the most important components of every church's Sunday experience yet most pastors don't have strategies to improve their preparation and delivery of sermons.

The 2+2+2 Strategy of Communication will help you focus in on the **2 most important goals** in communicating to your church, understand the **2 audiences** in every church, and stay **2 steps ahead** in your communication preparation.



A Biblical Initiative

*“So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’”
(2 Corinthians 5:20, NLT)*

As you prepare each week:

- Do you think of yourself as **Christ’s ambassador**?

An ambassador is an **authorized** messenger or representative of a king or kingdom. In Paul’s context, an ambassador was sent in a way that every word, outfit, and action represented not just the message but the heart of the king.

- Do you treat your moments in the pulpit as though **God is making his appeal through** you?

“We who teach will be judged more strictly.” James 3:1b



The Bible commands us to “preach the word,” but it does not give us a singular method for doing so. Therefore, we lean on things like prayer, wisdom, and counsel to determine what will be the best way for us to “preach the word.”

There are a lot of ways to be a great speaker. What follows are just some of the simple things I’ve learned that have proven helpful to me over the years.

The 4 Basics For All Communicators

1. The best speakers are the best versions of themselves.

The worst thing any communicator can do is attempt to be someone else. I cannot be TD Jakes or Rick Warren, I can only be me. Until you discover your own strengths, weaknesses, and style you will never feel comfortable as a speaker and the audience will notice.

2. Find common ground with your audience.

"If I had to pick a overall rule of communication - it would be to look for common ground. All week long, I work to prepare a message for Sunday. I thought my congregation would approach Sunday with the same anticipation I would. But the reality was they were living their lives - working, spending time with family, running errands, playing sports, visiting with friends, and so on. Nobody was waiting with bated breath to hear me speak. And when Sunday rolled around, I couldn't expect them to enter my world. If I wanted to connect, I had to meet them in their world." -John Maxwell

3. We can all get better.

"I make it a practice to listen every sermon I preach. I once shared this self-improvement technique with a pastor who had come to me for advice. His church simply hadn't grown, and he was looking for help. So I asked, "What do you learn when you listen to yourself preach?" He made a sour face and said, "Oh no. I can't stand to hear myself preach!" my response was, "Well, neither can anyone else apparently. Perhaps that's the problem." Believe me, I know it's awkward and disconcerting to listen to yourself, and double so to watch yourself - which allows you to be horrified by how you sound and how you look. But I walk away from those brutal listening sessions becoming a more effective communicator." - Robert Morris

4. Preparation directly correlates with success.

We are going to cover how to get 2 steps ahead later in the presentation.



The 2+2+2 Strategy

2 Important Goals

Goal # 1: Information

Ensuring that people comprehend information is the foundation of effective communication.



The 2+2+2 Strategy

2 Important Goals

Questions to ask when you giving information:

- What is God asking me to say?
- What are the needs of the people?
- Is my information practical?
- Did I take the time to study?
- Am I giving too much information?
 - Do I stay on point or wander all over the place?
 - Does this information make them want more, or want me to stop?
 - Does this sermon make the Bible easy to understand?
 - Does this sermon cast vision?
- Can an unchurched person receive something from this message or am I only speaking to believers.



The 2+2+2 Strategy

2 Important Goals

Consider the way you organize the information.

- 1-Point Outlines (Jentezen Franklin)
- 2 or 3-Point Outlines (Tommy Barnett, Billy Graham, Steven Furtick)
- Preaching the Narrative (TD Jakes)
- Expository Preaching (Reformed, Baptist, Jack Hayford)
- Text and Tales (Joel Osteen)
- Practical Application Preaching (Craig Groeschel, Andy Stanley)

The 2+2+2 Strategy

2 Important Goals

Tools for disseminating the information:

- **Printed Outlines**

We forget 90-95 percent of what we hear within seventy-two hours. That means by Wednesday, if they didn't take notes, your congregation has forgotten all but about 5 percent of what you said on Sunday.

- **Non-Verbal Communication**

If you want to succeed in connecting with others you need to be sure your communication goes beyond words.

- **Media**

- 77 percent of all Americans get about 90 percent of their news from television.
- Video and web conferencing are replacing on-site face-to-face sales meetings
- Children now log about twenty-two thousand hours watching television by age nineteen, more than twice the time spent in school.

Other great tools: Screens, Apps, CD's & DVD's

High school speech class teacher will tell us that the first 90-120 seconds were the make or break zone of a talk. We either connect with them in the first 2 minutes or we risk never "having" them.



Try to use the word "We" instead of "You" whenever possible. People want to be talked with, not talked to.

Consider explaining why we use sermon series.

The 2+2+2 Strategy

2 Important Goals

Goal #2: Inspiration

We often communicate as if information changes our lives but the reality is information only guides what we are first inspired to change. Many pastors inform people but do not inspire them to change.

Inspiration ensures that we don't let the bible become boring. Only the most talented speakers can make the most inspiring book boring.



The 2+2+2 Strategy

2 Important Goals

Consider these questions to ensure inspiration in your sermon:

What is the most positive way to say it? *Keep it the good news.*

What is the most encouraging way to say it? *Don't tell it as it is, tell it as it could be.*

What's the simplest way to say it? *Say your entire message in one sentence.*

What's the most personal way to say it? *Be vulnerable and transparent.*

What is the most interesting way to say it? *Funny stories or creative elements.*

Stories

Perhaps the most effective way to capture people's interest and make the experience enjoyable when you talk is to include stories. Neurologists say that our brains are programmed much more for stories than for abstract ideas of PowerPoint slides.



Humor

"Humor is one of the most powerful things you can use. It is a must when you speak on difficult issues. I insert humor every 7-8 minutes." - Dave Ramsey

The 2+2+2 Strategy

2 Audiences

Audience #1: Believer

A church that only targets Non-Believers in sermons sacrifices size for depth. A church that only targets Believers in sermons sacrifices depth for size.

Believers sermons are intended to mature the people in the church. These are sermons with a big call to repentance, life change, and aligning your life with Jesus' mission through the church.

Tips for communicating to Believers:

1. Tie sermons to your vision

Believers need to see how when they grow the local church grows. *"My goal is not merely to teach, but to lead the church through the pulpit."* - Mark Driscoll

2. Always appeal to action

Many believers develop a tendency to want to **learn more** and **do less** so your sermons should intentionally call them to action. Preaching that changes lives brings the truth of God's Word and the real needs of people together through application.

3. Don't overlook the basic issues

Avoid getting trapped in the mindset that you have to impress people with your knowledge. This will cause you to speak over the majority of your audience. Remember that every person, no matter their spiritual maturity, has emotional, financial, relational and faith issues they face.



The 2+2+2 Strategy

2 Audiences

Audience #2: Non-Believer

Non-Believer sermons are intended to bring people in to the church. These are sermons that center on a felt need, address something controversial, or have a major evangelistic thrust.

We'll cover proper calendaring for these types of sermons later...

Communicators of growing churches have found the way to acknowledge and connect with Non-Believers every week even when their sermons are targeted at Believers.

Tips for communicating to Non-Believers

1. Consider your time

People are either going to get in their car and exclaim, *"That lasted forever, I thought he'd never stop talking!"* OR they'll exclaim, *"I wish he would have talked longer!"* The second reaction is better. The attention span of our culture is getting shorter and shorter, and as communicators we are not only battling the distractions that are present in the room, but we are now battling against the distractions that are in our listener's hands. Very few communicators can hold the attention of an audience for more than 30 to 35 minutes.

2. Don't use assumed language

Often we use **church** terminology that Non-Believers may not be familiar with (sanctification, fellowship, etc.) and we talk about the bible as if everyone in the room has read it and many Non-Believers have not.

3. Relevance & practical application

"Our English word communication comes from the Latin word communis, which means "common." You can't communicate with people until you find something you have in common with them. The ground we have in common with unbelievers is not the Bible, but our common needs, hurts, and interests as human beings. You cannot start with a text, expecting the unchurched to be fascinated by it. You must first capture their attention, and then move them to the truth of God's Word." - Rick Warren



The 2+2+2 Strategy

2 Steps Ahead

Step #1: Preparation

Every successful sermon is created in the habits and preparation that formed it. Consider the following tips to improve your preparation efforts:

Create a routine for success

Recognize when your mind is at its best and schedule message preparation time into those times. Share Pastor Bryan's routine for a week of prep.

Involve a team.

"I find that the more organized I am, the better prepared my team will be to work with me." - Steven Furtick

Manuscript vs Outline

A manuscript carries several benefits: Your material is internalized for memory. You will better recognize sections to cut or add. Your illustrations and stories will not have unnecessary details. You can easily make the jump to being an author.



Consider preaching your sermon to an empty room.

Some things are better on paper than they are out loud - this will help you purge some of those things. This helps you see the places that need transitions - how will I get from this point to the next one? This helps to train yourself to preach your content without being affected by the reactions of the room.

The 2+2+2 Strategy

2 Steps Ahead

Step #2: Calendar

Creating a preaching calendar allows for more preparation and prayer for each series. The effectiveness of each message increases as it matches the the state of mind of the audience.



The 2+2+2 Strategy

2 Steps Ahead

- January:** *Topic of life change or purpose*
(21 days of prayer) - New year people are thinking life change.
- February:** Do a relationship series, people are considering Valentine's Day.
- March:** A book study or something to feed a discipleship need.
Pre Easter mode.
- April:** Easter means a new series that interest the unchurched. Strive to use a lot of stories of life change.
- May:** Use an 'improve your life series', topics that are very intriguing to a person beginning their faith journey.



The 2+2+2 Strategy

2 Steps Ahead

Step #2: Calendar

June & July: Biggest slump we experience in a year. Concentrate on a believer's series.

I always vacation and speak away during this time.

August: Revival centered series that includes 21 days of prayer for the fall harvest.

September: 2nd biggest growth season of the year. Use a new series that interests the unchurched.
ATM, Fall Festival after service, etc.

October: Use a strong series that connects with the church and un church.

November: Compassion centered series or generosity based.

December: Felt needs where people struggle the most
More people commit suicide between thanksgiving and Christmas than the other 11 months combined.

There are a handful of Sundays that most preachers in the U.S. can take off without hurting momentum at all. These include:



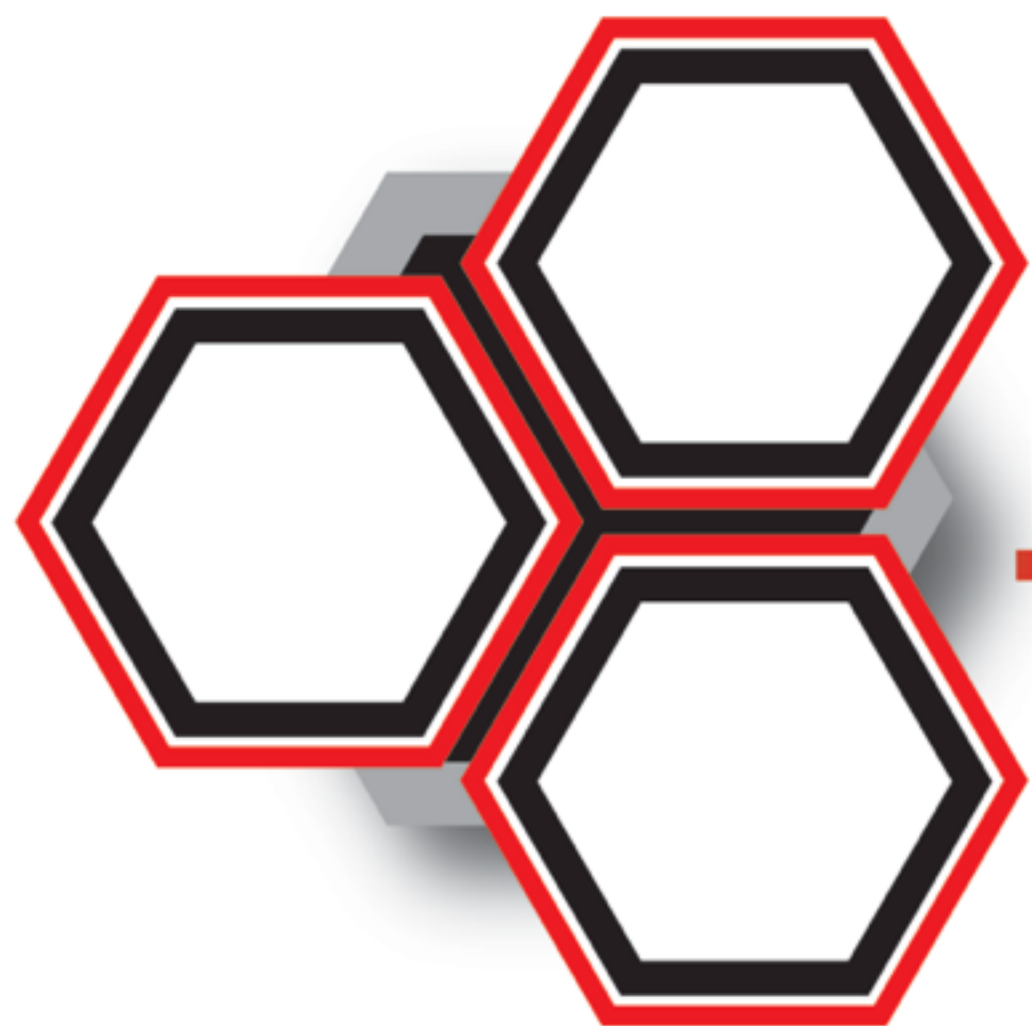
The first Sunday of the year (if it's close to New Year's Day), the Sunday after Christmas, Memorial Day weekend, Spring Daylight Savings weekend, Fourth of July weekend, Labor Day weekend

The Formula of Communication

Final Thoughts

No one can preach better than he prays. A clean heart helps you have a clear mind.

You cannot be thinking of yourself and change someone else's life.



FORMULA TWELVE



**WHITEBOARD - This will be an interview with
Pastor and Joe**



The Formula of Communication:

Lab



Extra

At Mars Hill Church, we organize our teaching around “campaigns.” A campaign is more than a sermon series; it involves linking your entire church or ministry up to your pulpit and pushing one big idea through every aspect of your church or ministry.

The pulpit is not the only piece.

Practically, this means making the pulpit a central piece, but not the only piece. It means doing some hard work to plan out how to tie your sermons into your small groups, your counseling, your events, your design, your online strategy, and more. Mars Hill and I give away a lot of these resources and sell some others, if you’re looking for examples.

How to give a clear altar call.

Here are some suggestions for leading people to make that commitment.

- Clearly explain exactly how to respond to Christ.
- Plan out your time of commitment.
- Lead unbelievers in a model prayer.
- Never pressure unbelievers to decide. (Keep in mind that you're asking people to make the most important decision of their lives.)
- Platform is for influence - stage is for performing

“Ego murders an audience like few things.” - Jon Acuff

Andy Stanley’s goal in preaching is to present the scriptures in a way that everyone wants to come back next week with a friend.

“I let people out on time because my goal is to have them come back next week. So I don’t need to cover everything.”

