

Composing a Sermon

Finding a cause: What is a current situation, problem, or issue that concerns you? Do you have something that you believe should be changed, and is this change in your power to initiate?

Once you select your topic, you need to devise an argument. Compose one sentence that clearly asserts the claim that you want to make. Then divide it into sub-categories or reasons that support your claim.

Structure of your sermon:

1. Statement of the thesis and full disclosure of the supporting reasons (not evidence)
2. Include a page of proof with quoted evidence from authorities that could include specialists in a field, statistics from research or studies, background laws or rules (including such things as the Constitution, The Bill of Rights, or even the Taft Student Handbook), and, if pertinent, the standing documents of your faith - Bible, Torah and Talmud, Bhagavad Gita, etc. Make sure that your proof has range, depth, and authority. Order your proof consciously. Do not set up the proof in a random way. You might decide to go from the most powerfully persuasive point to the least or to group your proof according to sources. In any case, make sure that the proof is clearly presented and arranged persuasively.
3. Take on the opposing argument. State the opposition in depth, showing that you know the other side of the argument fully. Then refute it and establish the moral authority or ethical rightness of your own thesis.
4. Crystallize. Take your main points down to their essential ideas and reassert them to drive home your point.
5. Conclude with a persuasive comment or paragraph designed to make your audience take some kind of action regarding your topic OR put the fear of retribution or punishment in the audience if your peers do not follow your advice to change the problem you have identified. You have a chance here to give some kind of moral lesson at the end.

Duration: 5 minutes (no longer)