

**TRAINING CHURCH LEADERS**



# **Advanced Liturgist Training**

**The Art of Faithful Speech in Worship**



**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A)**

# Course Contents



## Connection

Moving from a performance mindset to connection



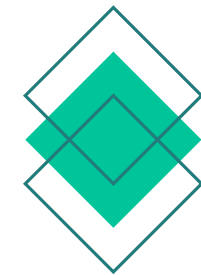
## Voice as an Instrument

Using vocal variation to guide meaning and attention



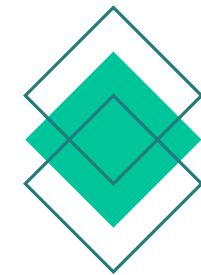
## The Power of the Pause

Listeners need space to process and receive



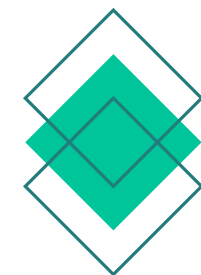
## Reading vs. Reciting

From mechanical reading to meaningful communication



## Engaging & Embodying

Speaking to people rather than at people



## Preparing the Text

Using visual cues & structuring into phrases

# The Goal is Connection

▶ It is not about performance!

▶ It is all about connection!

▶ People are not evaluating you!

▶ People are listening for meaning, clarity, and understanding!

▶ It's not: "Did I sound good?"

▶ It's: "Did they understand it?"

▶ Focus on the people listening and making a connection!

▶ Speak like what you are saying matters!

# The Goal is Connection

**The exact same passage can be read two different ways:**

▶ One way leaves people struggling to follow along, waiting for it to be over.

▶ The other way draws them in, helps them see what's happening, and allows the words to settle into their hearts.

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▶ The difference is not the text; it is the connection!  
Connection begins with clarity!

▶ If people cannot easily follow what you are saying, they will stop trying!

**“Clarity creates connection,  
and connection creates transformation.”**

# Your Voice is an Instrument



## Pace

How fast or slow you speak. Most people speak too quickly and people can't keep up.



## Volume

It's about projecting your voice, being supported and clear, strong enough to be heard.



## Pitch

Your tone, the rise and fall of your voice, the emphasis you place on words changes meaning.



## Energy

Are you engaged with what you are saying? It's not about excitement, but about being attentive and grounded.

# The Power of the Pause



**“Silence is not the absence of communication.  
Silence is communication.”**

**“A pause, used intentionally, tells the listener  
that what was just said matters.”**

**“Without pauses, even the most meaningful  
words can blur together.”**

**“You are creating room for people to process  
what they’ve heard. You are creating space for  
people to listen for God.”**

# Reading Scripture vs Reciting Words



Everyone can read words on a page, but not everyone helps those words come alive.



Our role is not simply to pronounce the text correctly, but to communicate its meaning.



You cannot express what you do not understand.



Read thought-by-thought, not word-by-word. All words should not be treated equally.



# Engaging the Listener

## Invite

Speak in a way that draws people in.

## First Sentence

The first sentence sets the tone for everything that follows.

## Speak To

Speak to people and not at them.

# Embodying the Word

**People are not just listening to you, they are also watching you.**

## **Posture**

Stand upright, grounded, balanced, and open.

## **Movement**

Let your movement be intentional. Move with purpose or be still with purpose.

## **Facial Expressions**

Your face communicates before your words do.

## **Alignment**

Your voice, body, and attention all working together to serve the moment and help people hear.

# Marking the Text

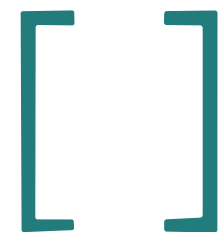
When you mark a text, you are preparing yourself to communicate it clearly, training your eyes to see meaning, and your voice to follow that meaning.

## Identify Natural Pauses



Whenever you see a comma, place a '/'. At the end of a sentence use a '//'.  
[Group words into complete thoughts] [by bracketing phrases.]

## Bracket Phrases



[Group words into complete thoughts] [by bracketing phrases.]

## Identify Key Words



Identify and underline key words; words you want to emphasize slightly.

## Other options





It's not about cluttering the page. It's about clarity. Use what works for you.



# Common Mistakes

- **RUSHING**
- **SPEAKING MONOTONE**
- **NOT PAYING ATTENTION TO PHRASING**
- **DROPPING VOLUME**
- **READING WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING**

Awareness is the first step toward growth. Even small changes can have a significant impact. When you slow down, vary your tone, follow the structure of the text, and speak with understanding, people will be able to listen more easily, connect, and understand.



# Practice & Coaching

Each person will have the opportunity to read a short passage. This is a safe space. Give yourself permission to try, experiment, and make mistakes. That's how we improve.

After each person read, we're going to offer a brief moment of feedback.



## **One Affirmation**

Name one thing that worked well and helped us listen



## **One Refinement**

Name one clear, actionable idea to make it stronger.

And as you receive feedback, try to receive it with openness. You don't need to defend or explain. Simply take it in, consider it, and decide how you might apply it the next time you read.

# Thank You!

**You are not just speaking. You are serving.**

**You are not just reading. You are helping others hear the Word of God.**

**And that is a gift worth giving well.**

## Closing Prayer

Gracious and ever-speaking God, who calls your people to proclaim your Word with clarity, faithfulness, and love: grant that we who have been formed in this time together may use our voices as instruments of your grace, speaking with intention, listening with care, and serving your people with humility and confidence; that through our words and our presence, others may hear more clearly, receive more deeply, and be transformed by your living Word; through Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forevermore. Amen.