

2.2.5 DRAFTS FOR INSTRUCTORS

2.2.5.2 SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN / STRUCTURE

(School of Diaconal Formation)

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Introducing a Skill ... Brief Tutorial on that Skill and Demonstration

Exemplars ... Charts and Other Aids

1. At the end of each term's Focus talk, all teachers take their classes aside for a brief-15 minute-introductory tutorial:
 - a. "For the first assignment, the X Sunday in Y Time, we're going to be concentrating on 'finding the pearl,' or 'what's the message/moral of the story'"
 - i. "Here is one way/are some ways to do this; for example..."
 - b. The gospel/readings for the X Sunday, Y Time, from Evangelist A,B,C, "we see Jesus in..., doing..."
 - i. Read the gospel passages leading up to this one and those that follow [weekday Mass should be 'lectio continuo;' Sunday Mass more separation between one Sunday's gospel and the next]
 - ii. "Notice that...Keep in mind...your audience is..."
2. At the beginning of the first session, in a short tutorial review, go over what the focus of the week is [message. e.g.] and how we will be looking for it in your homilies [along with the other facets, but focusing on that skill building]
3. Hear the individual homilies. Critique with 2 basic questions:
 - a. "Was there a message/moral of the story/pearl?"
 - b. "Was it developed for the benefit of the listeners? Was it 'Good News' for them [and for you?]"
 - c. Suggestions for re-shaping: "avoid too much detail; avoid retelling the gospel; stay with one idea and show how it works for us, etc."
 - d. If time, or make the time, allow for immediate retry based on suggestions [learn best what we learn last!]
 - i. EX: "Jack, while you are sitting and listening to your classmates' homily, can you reflect on what we said about that [opening, message, catechetical development, closing] and revise it? Then, before we leave for the evening, can you present it again for us?"

- e. When a student struggles, stop. Say: “Breathe. Pretend you are in a room with your best friends and loved ones, and tell them a story” {The Homily Mood}
 - i. We are born, hard-wired storytellers, like our ancestors who had no access to written or recorded methods. Think about coming home from work or school and being asked: “*So, what happened at work today?*” Transfer that to “*So, what did Jesus say to you today?*”
 - ii. ALMOST EVERY TIME, when a preacher is unable to make sense of his thoughts and the homily comes out too strained, we ask him: “*What did you really want to say?*” Generally, with the pressures of meeting criteria ‘off,’ the candidate will pour out a series of sentences that get to the heart of his thoughts
4. In the last 15 minutes, another short tutorial as on the first night following the Focus talk, but a review/preview: “So, what we did tonight; for next time, we’ll be looking at ...”
5. Standard Skill topics for tutorials

A ‘tutorial’ should be a short, powerful, lesson with one goal and offering a ‘guided practice’ or ‘how to’ [example, exemplar, rubric], leading to the ‘independent practice’ of the practicum homily.

- a. The Message/Pearl/Moral of the Story
- b. Developing the message for the listeners: is this ‘Good News?’ How? Why?
- c. Staying on target: the ‘one point’ in the homily; rhetorical skills in writing and developing a story
- d. The opener: we do this AFTER we have found a pearl and developed it, so that it helps lead into the homily, not force the homily to follow it
- e. The closer: narrowing it down to the point again
 - i. All of the above can be supported by exemplars: ‘leaders,’ ‘connectors,’ transitions,’ ‘closers’
- f. Support topics
 - i. Scriptural study: lectionary commentaries, exegesis, linguistic explanations, historical and cultural explanations
 - ii. Catechetical study: cf. Homiletic Directory [Vatican 2014]: confer CCC, commentaries
 - iii. How do either and both ‘fit’ in the homily?
 - iv. How do either or both help ‘shape’ the Good News

- v. How do either or both tend to make themselves into the homily: a biblical or catechetical informational talk, but not a homily; a reflection of personal thoughts only, but not a homily; a ‘tour of the museum’ but not a homily
- g. Preparation methods
 - i. ‘Lectio Divina’ as a homily preparation
 - ii. A homily preparation guide [many books on this to draw from]
- 6. Over the span of twelve lessons across two semesters, or six in one semester, the teacher can choose one of the topics and design the short tutorial, using the pattern of ‘introduction/practice’ and ‘review/preview’
 - a. Time management is a priority. Give a fifteen-minute tutorial at each end, leaving 1.5 hours for listening and critiquing
 - b. Focus on what is most important for them to hear. Comments need to be focused and data-driven [I heard you say...] both from the teacher and the fellow students
 - c. Use a ‘spiral’ method; as the candidates move ahead from one year to the next, the same topics can reappear in tutorials but with more depth and width
- 7. Simple resource tools for tutorials can be, among others:
 - a. “Preaching Better.” Bishop Ken Untener
 - b. “Preaching Matters: A Praxis for Preachers.” Deborah Wilhelm and Sylvester Ryan

Both of these volumes are designed with short, compact chapters that more easily lend themselves to tutorials as opposed to other excellent volumes on preaching that are more lengthy and complex
