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Church Lodge, Whitmore Lane, Sunningdale,  
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## USING CLOWNING IN EVANGELISM

### **ASK BEFORE YOU START - DO YOU REALLY WANT SINNERS IN YOUR CHURCH?**

Is everyone in your congregation ready to extend a genuine welcome to “whomsoever” – people with problems, people who don’t know how to behave in church? Will you all be willing to keep on loving them, even when they keep on slipping back into their old habits, and your church is tainted by association?

### **BELIEVE YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY**

You are equipped with God’s own creativity - Deut.8:18.

The Sovereign Lord has given you an instructed tongue - Isa.50:4.

You are not on your own; the Lord’s promise, “Surely I will be with you always” (Mt.28:18) applies especially when you are engaged in evangelising or discipling!

When obedient to the Spirit’s leading, expect divinely-arranged appointments (Ac.8:26-).

### **HOW TO SAY IT**

*“I can teach you with a quip if I’ve a mind, I can trick you into learning with a laugh,*

*O winnow all my folly folly and you’ll find, a grain or two of truth among the chaff.*

*When offered to the world in merry guise, unpleasant truths are swallowed with a will.*

*O he who’d make his fellow fellow fellow creatures wise, should always gild the philosophic pill”*

*(Jack Point, the jester, in “Yeoman of the Guard” by G&S)*

“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt” (Col.4:6). Include Scripture in normal speech, because: “The Word of God .. penetrates .. judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Heb.4:12). Introduce Bible quotes naturally, easily, conversationally, and not with a roll on the drums. It is a gentle word that breaketh a bone. (Prov. 25:15 ). Trust God - “Open yourmouth and I will fill it” (Ps.81:10)

Be joyful! Make them want what you’ve got!! (You’re being watched *ALL* the time).

### **DEVELOPING CREATIVITY**

Seek out the company of creative people. Make a time for working together. “Iron sharpens iron” (Prov.27:17).

Develop a safe environment in which to try things out. Agree together that there is no such thing as a bad idea – just produce a better one. (John Betjeman said, “The only way to criticise a poem is to write a better poem”)

Pinch good ideas from others, quite unashamedly.

Improve upon them, work at making them your own.

Pray for, believe for divine inspiration (Dt.8:18)

Develop your own material. Use it Improve it.

Be sincerely flattered when your ideas get pinched!

.... it shows its time to develop some new stuff.

### **STORY TELLING**

Tell a Bible story from the view-point of a peripheral character, or even an invented one, such as:-

Sampson’s mother: -“Been in and out of the juvenile court with him no end of times”

A soldier who failed Gideon’s selection .. Who Dares Wins.

The half-mad psychiatrist who certified the madman of Gegessa.

One of Nebuchadnezar’s magicians .. “Do what O King? You can’t be serious”

The roof repairer .... “A BED did you say?”

Cookery expert – One thousand tasty ways of using manna.

Soldier(s) at the well-mouth (Jeremiah is down below).

The priest(s) and the healed leper “You’re kidding. No-one gets healed of that”

A private investigator.

/ Continued over ....

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## STORY TELLING (Cont'd)

Put a Bible story into a modern time frame, such as:-

- TV news report of an event... "Over to our reporter at the scene."
- Sports commentary: e.g. Israel against Amalekites - Moses is the coach on the touch-line.
- Slow-motion action replay.
- "Bible Name - This is Your Life"
- Receive a telephoned report from Bible Name.

Tell the story as would a Personality, such as:-

- David Bellamy or Rolf Harrison on the Flood.

Incorporate topical references (latest movie, pop song, etc.) and/or local references.

- Simon-Peter as "Rocky", Daniel as Desperate Dan, Boy David as rock guitarist. Sampson who brought the house down.

Tell a story – or part of one - in rhyming couplets, or as a limerick, or some other poetic meter.

## COMPENSATE FOR CRITICISM

In church: A performer will not get enough of it (unless of course he happens to be the vicar!). The school play syndrome, "Little Johnny was marvellous" - even though he did forget his lines, tripped over his robe and wrecked the scenery. Compensate for this by seeking frank and honest criticism from someone who will give it to you.

Outside: The public's responses will be more honest. At what point did they walk away? "Thou shalt not bore". If you can keep the presentation interesting and fast-moving, they will stay a little longer. When they do leave, don't get disheartened; they didn't come out to see you anyway, and probably were on their way to another appointment. Essential that team members should encourage one another. Praise God together for even small-seeming results; nothing is without effect in Kingdom terms. Sometimes we're sowing, sometimes we're reaping.

Everywhere: Be attuned to audience reaction, body language. Change and improve continually. Strive for excellent, "cringe-free" presentations. Christians should be able to produce work of a professional standard that equals or betters anything the world can produce.

## OUTDOOR WORK

Importance of the workers in the audience. There are no stars – it is a team operation.

The set-up. Child-size chairs, Demarcate a performance space with cones or rope or chain.

Be honest and up-front about evangelistic intentions.

Usefulness of give-away items – balloons, sticky badges, sweets, "Jesus" rock.

Keep balloon models till last, if working solo.

## THE FOOL FOR CHRIST

The clown always believes in the logic of his actions – no matter how absurd they may seem to others. But despite his apparent folly, he emerges undefeated from every trial.

Compare the apparent stupidity of walking as if one believed every word in the Bible. This new walk will never come naturally, so try asking, "How would I behave if I really believed all of this to be true. Then *ACT* in this new character. In this way you will be co-operating with God in the process of being transformed and made new in your inmost being. Your super-natural self will become daily the more natural. Soon you will have become a Fool for Christ.

*"And suddenly you're feeling brave, as you make believe you are"* - The quotation, appropriately enough, is from "The King and I"!

## ONE LAST THOUGHT

"They won't blame you, as long as you're funny". (Jack Point again).

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<http://www.holy-fools.org.uk/>