

How to get a message across

A DIY training aid

A54 Articles series: Communication

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This Article takes the form of a DIY training aid for any church members responsible for some means of communication. It can be used individually but is best in a group.

This group might include staff, newsletter editor, social media leads, speakers and preachers, writers, outreach team and more. It aims to help everyone see how to approach the idea of getting messages across to, sometimes, reluctant readers or listeners. It applies to beginners and old hands alike. It is, in essence, a write-up of my own training on this general topic but expressed in my 'Article' format.


Explanation for leaders and enabler

This material can be used by individuals but it is really designed for a church group with a leader/enabler, preferably someone who is not part of the host church and so not linked to particular people or internal viewpoints.

You may want to adapt what is presented in print here so that it better fits the church in question. This Article gives you a structure and a possible text to work from.

You are welcome to rework this for an event with some reasonable variation and without copyright restriction, other than to acknowledge source, please, and point to my website.

There are a number of practical exercises to take part in throughout. In a training event these form a vital part of the learning process and one of them at the end (No. 12) offers practical applications to different groups of communicators in your church, possibly as follow-up events.

There are also ten hand-out sheets covering headings, outline notes and exercises at points marked with this symbol: .

1: ‘Message’ and ‘News’

This short introduction sets the biblical context and then introduces the terms ‘Message’ and ‘News’ so that we can drop the term ‘communication’ for most of the time.

Biblical context

EXERCISE 1

What examples would you use from Scripture to demonstrate that God is a God of innovative communication as he puts across messages to his people?

Cover both Old and New Testaments and let each person in the group select something that communicates powerfully to them.

We believe in God ... the Communicator. This is a vital point to make at the start of this training material because when putting a message across we are joining in his work.

Consider Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 22, 26, 29. The statement, repeated over and over again, is that God ‘spoke’.

Consider John 1:1 where the Christ is known as ‘The Word’.

Consider the whole of Scripture as a richly varied means of putting messages across using history, poetry, prophecy, story-telling, teaching, case studies, reported speech, and much more.

Consider the vivid images of the Old Testament covenants, and then the communication power of baptism and of bread and wine as visual aids of the New Testament sacraments.

Consider how Jesus taught using stories to engage with his hearers, teaching with memorable illustrations, then offering explanations for his closest disciples,

Consider Jesus’ charge to his followers to go into all the world and make disciples, to baptise and to teach.

The ideas of message and news

The word ‘communication’ is over-used and for many people lacks resonance with their daily lives. So this training event will think more about the idea of someone wanting to give a ‘message’ to someone else, and of people having ‘news’ to proclaim to others.

Christians, of course, have the Gospel, the *Good News*, to offer to a needy world. But the term ‘news’ is used here to cover a wider range of messages too.

These are less abstract terms than the overworked ‘communication’ so from now on we shall centre most of what is covered on these more specific ideas.

In this material we shall use the term ‘message’ more for internal church communication and ‘news’ when seeking to make contact with those outside the Church, but both terms apply throughout. See, for example, Training Notes TN38/39, *We’ve got news for us/them*, on this website.

EXERCISE 2

So this event thinks in terms of ‘message’ and ‘news’ rather than ‘communication’. What other terms might you use to relate to people’s lives when trying to express what you mean by ‘communication’?

It is worth noting that it is not just people who communicate; consider ‘ideas’ and ‘buildings’ to give two examples of other communicators.

Use a flipchart to build up a range of ideas from members of the group.

2: What happens to a message

What processes are taking place when you try to put across a message to someone else or a group, whatever the means you employ to do this? Here is a simple way of explaining this which has helped many people over the years. It introduces the ideas of a ‘sender’, a ‘receiver’, ‘coding’ and ‘decoding’ processes, and things that get in the way of accurate transmission called, here, ‘screens’.

Exercise to say 'I love you'

Start with this exercise. Ask each group present to work on one or possibly two of the following for about four or five minutes.

EXERCISE 3

Take the very simple message 'I love you'. How might the following each go about putting this across?

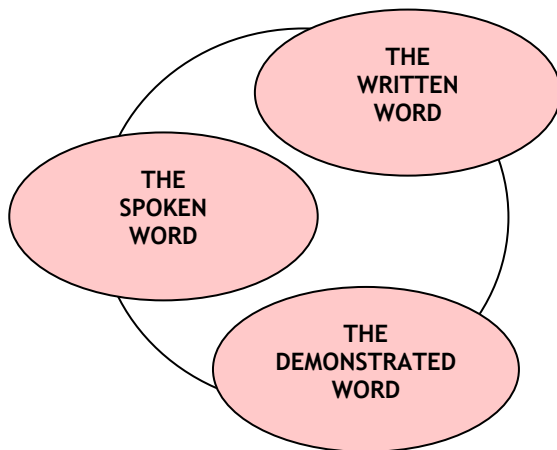
- 1 A young girl to her pet puppy.
- 2 A parent to a teenage son.
- 3 An older couple to their young grandchildren 200 miles away.
- 4 The Church Council / Elders / Trustees to each other.

Now, together, consider how God says "I love you" to us. What does that say to you?

From this you will probably realise that there are all kinds of different ways of sending a message.

Three means of using 'words'

There are in essence three ways in which messages can be sent from one person or group to another. The 'written word' is anything in print or on screen, the 'spoken word' for speech in some form, and the 'demonstrated word' is for actions that communicate. They will often all be included in the sending of one message.



So someone giving out a notice in a church service may encourage people to come to a special event (spoken word). The details of date, time and what to bring can then be included in a notice-sheet (written word). Finally the notice-giver may explain they are going themselves to this event and would love others to come with them (demonstrated word).

Note that the spoken word can create motivation well, the written word is good for recording detail, and the demonstrated word is often the most powerful means of all, offering a model of action and integrity for the message.

Imagine what the actual message might be if the notice-giver explained they could not be bothered to go themselves but they were just giving out the notice.

The demonstrated word does not have to be people giving the message, as has already been explained. Buildings give a message too; of beauty or drabness, of care or neglect. What people wear sends a message about them. History likewise. And many other things.

EXERCISE 4

What kind of messages might be given to a newcomer arriving at your main Sunday service as they come through the door?

In each case, how would this message be given: written, spoken or demonstrated?

Now consider the messages that your congregation might give to people living near your church building (both positive and not) by what happens on a Sunday. To think more about this read Training Notes TN137, *The message of your people*, in the Resources section of the website.

The communication process

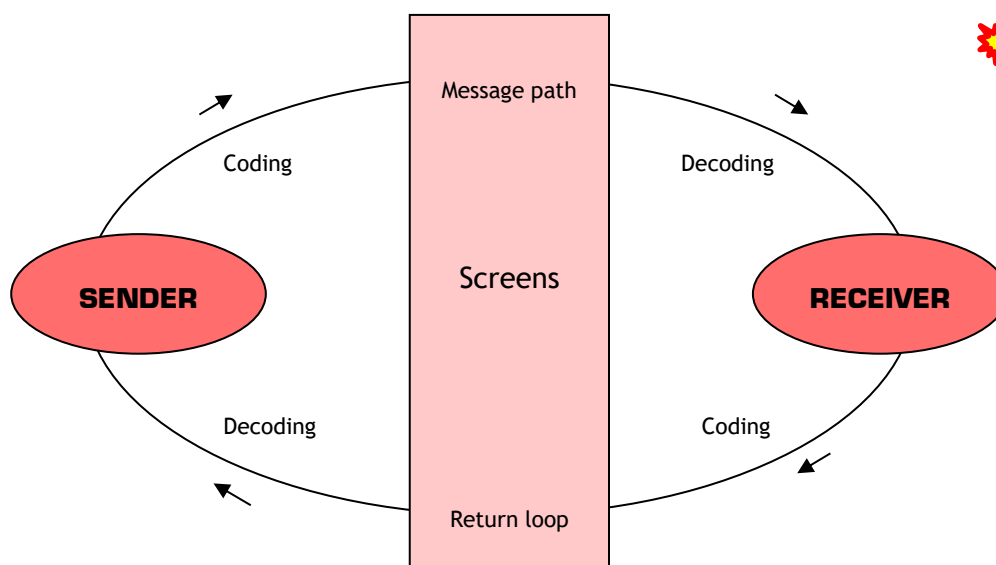
On the next page is a simple diagram to explain what is happening when you try to put across any message by any means. It applies to anyone putting something across to someone else. The diagram is on a handout but it will need to be explained by the trainer along the following lines.

Sender, receiver and coding

Each message has a **sender** (the person or group giving the message) and a **receiver** (those to whom the message is sent).

To send any message the sender puts the message into some form of **code**. If you are speaking to someone you are coding the message into spoken words. The words you use are not the message itself but a means of putting that message across, as when you try to describe how you are feeling to someone else.

The coding may also include how enthusiastic you sound about the message you are speaking, or the look on your face. These all affect the message.



But the coding can go wrong. Your choice of words may not convey the message you are intending. You may use a word that is not quite right, especially if you are speaking in a language that is not your natural one. So a poor choice of words may distort the message.

But so may the tone of voice or other factors. Someone who says 'I love you' in a very bored tone is coding the message very differently from someone expressing themselves with passion! These are examples of the 'demonstrated word' backing up or conflicting with the 'spoken word'.

Following the arrows in the upper half of the diagram, the receiver then has to **decode** those words and expressions to get the message.

But again, things may not go quite as intended. The words the sender has used may not be understood in the way they were meant to be or the receiver may not hear them correctly.

For example, if the sender uses church jargon, the receiver may be unfamiliar with these terms and fail to get the message. A Christian sending a message to people outside the church may not appreciate that they are using terms that only a Christian would understand correctly.

So what you have now is a message which can get distorted at the coding phase and at the decoding stage. But there are two other factors that need to be kept in mind too in addition to coding distortion.

The return loop

First, there is a return loop where the receiver sends a message back to the sender – so their roles become reversed. Again, this has to be

coded and then decoded so there is scope for more misunderstanding.

The return loop may be in the same format as the original as, for example, when the sender uses an email and the receiver clicks the reply button.

But it can be quite different. If the two parties can see each other, for example, the receiver may communicate back by facial expression (of delight, puzzlement, lack of interest) or body language. So a 'spoken word' may be responded to with a 'demonstrated word'.

Some situations means there is an immediate return loop (two people talking to each other, or someone preaching a sermon). But others lead to a delay (writing a letter or email). Sometimes the two parties are visible to each other (a Zoom meeting and sometimes not (a telephone call).

Screens

There is one other factor that may distort the message and that relates to the environment in which the message is communicated. I have called these possible blockages **screens**. They are sometimes called 'noises'. This could be at the coding or decoding phases or at both so my diagram shows them in the middle.

Screens include all kinds of things. If the receiver is feeling under the weather, this might impact their decoding. If two people are speaking to each other in a crowded pub the, literally, noise may get in the way.

Another screen may be how the receiver views the sender. If the sender normally sends irrelevant or longwinded texts, the receiver may

have a low expectation and that can colour their decoding – or they may not bother to read the text at all. If the environment is too hot or too cold for comfort, that may colour the message too. All this can impact the return loop message.

Expectations, morale and relationships

Within this idea of **screens** or noise come three ideas which should not be overlooked.

A receiver may have **expectations** of a message transmission process based on past experience. For example if one preacher is usually dull and lacking in illustration, a receiver may switch off at the start of the sermon, because they know from experience that this is unlikely to be worth listening to. A preacher known to communicate well may have this same receiver's attention right from the start.

I once watched a speaker who took five steps forward and five steps backward continuously. In no time at all the audience were murmuring under their breath, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

But he was taking larger steps forward than backward and so was edging closer to the edge of quite a high dais all the time. The expectation was disaster (he realised in time!) so the real message was completely lost.

Then **morale**. If you lead a training session at 10 am. people are usually alert and it goes well. If you lead that same day at 2 pm. people are tired and that is why this is known as the graveyard slot. If receivers do not feel good, this will impact their ability to decode the message.

Finally, **relationship**. A poor speaker or writer whom everyone loves can get away with putting the message across in spite of poor technique. Someone else who does not have a relationship with the audience has to earn their hearing.

EXERCISE 5

What screens might get in the way of:

- 1 A long sermon on a July morning.
- 2 Someone trying to talk to a stranger over coffee after the service.
- 3 A large poster board with a Bible verse from the book of Romans on it outside the church building.

Ask if one or two of your group would be happy to take a case study of something they have recently tried to communicate, for all to work out the message, the coding and decoding, the return loop and possible screens.

The media codes you can use

You have a variety of messages to give to members of your church or to people outside. Here are some possible media. What are their strengths and weaknesses?

These notes for the leader suggest a few ideas but the group should come up with more.

Personal letter or card

Scores highly for many people as not the norm these days. Very valuable for personal contact and pastoral care but takes time and may need to be hand delivered or posted.

Public print – notice-sheet or newsletter

Less used than in the past. But it can be kept and referred back to, and is a good means for listing details that need to be noted (dates, times, place, etc.) The danger is that it may not be read and distribution may be limited to those present at a service or event.

Digital – email, web or text

The way most people give and receive information today but the huge volume of traffic means messages can get lost. Easy and quick to use with immediate transmission but impersonal and dependent on the tech working correctly.

Digital – social media or WhatsApp

As with email, people are swamped so may not see it, and it is still print-based on a screen.

Telephone – spoken

More personal than some other means and still immediate, with the chance to react on the return loop and correct misunderstandings. But it depends on the receiver being available and you miss the body language.

Face-to-face – your place or theirs

The personal approach, too often ignored these days but vital in relationships. Difficult if the message needs to go to many different people and can take time.

Public announcement – celebration or cell

Good for getting through to larger numbers all at the same time and can aid motivation for action and change. But often done badly and the message can be quickly forgotten, especially any detail that was included.

To lessen the often-heard church cry of 'But no one ever told me!' (you'll never eradicate it in a church!), use every appropriate means possible.

3: ‘Structure’ and ‘colour’

We now look at the coding of messages in terms of two new terms: how to **structure** and **colour** them. For there to be accurate decoding it helps to have a really good structure. For the receiver to be motivated to decode well, you need colouring to make the message interesting.

The text here is written for the trainer (or you if you are working through this individually). The exercises and hand-outs are for those taking part.

Structuring the written word

To structure words in some form of print or screen (personal handwriting, typing, emails, social media posts, etc.) you need both:

- **Groups** of text
- **Breaks** in the text.

Look at the following which is a perfectly correct piece of written communication. What it lacks are groups and breaks:

whenwewritewordsweuseanumberofmeansofgroupingsectionsofthemessagetogetherwithoutsuchfeaturesdecodingbecomesparticularlydifficultyouareprobablydiscoveringthisfromthispieceofungroupedletteringifthiswentonpageafterpageyoureallywouldhaveaproblem

So groups and breaks are part of the coding process to make the print intelligible. Without them the decoding becomes difficult and the message may get lost in the process.

Ask those present to suggest what groups and breaks there might be in a standard novel.

They might come up with (working from micro to macro)

Groups:

- Words
- Sentences
- Paragraphs
- Chapters
- Parts, perhaps

Breaks:

- Spaces between words
- Full stops at the end of sentences and a capital letter to start the next one
- New indented lines for paragraphs
- New pages with large headings to mark new chapters
- New pages with a title page to separate the parts perhaps

So each group has breaks around it to define

the group. People will find it easier to read a novel that has short sentences and paragraphs.

For another example of groups and breaks consider spoken words within speech marks.

Now consider a tabloid newspaper story. This uses word, sentences and paragraphs but has some additional groups and breaks. In particular it will have

- A headline in a font size much larger than the text
- An opening sentence or two in a larger font size or in bold
- Very short paragraphs, often of only one sentence each
- Several columns to enable short line lengths
- A few sub-headings to break up the paragraphs
- Perhaps a list of bullet points to add some interest
- Possibly some short quotations in boxes

This coding is designed to hold the reader because it helps the decoding process.

Good **structure** can be a means to effective coding. But it can become boring by itself. It is all rather mathematical. Hence the idea of **colour** which we come to shortly.

EXERCISE 6

Get everyone to consider the groups and breaks in other forms of communication such as a classical symphony, a traditional hymn, a children’s story, a church website, a church’s weekly email or notice-sheet.

Consider sermons or wedding speeches. Some will be highly structured with groups and breaks (what might these look like?) but others may ignore such means and yet still get their message across (how might they manage this?).

Structuring the spoken word

Structuring speech is not quite so straightforward. Here is an accounts presentation as an example of some points to make.

Announce the structure at the start

“In this presentation I plan first to remind us all of the story of how God has blessed our church in the past. I will then draw out five lessons we need to learn for our present day.”

Add structure reminders as ‘breaks’ between ‘groups’

“That was my second heading. We have now, first, looked at the different types of income, and then considered the shift over the past year. Before we can move on to....”

Change the dynamic for your ‘breaks’

“Let’s pause once again before we move on. In groups of two or three, just as you are sitting, have two minutes to say whether you feel our financial strategy is right or not.”

Be aware of marker words that introduce a new ‘group’

These may be chronological: ‘then..., next..., at that point...’ for a story; or logical: ‘therefore ..., because of that...’ for an argument; or numbered. For a list you might have ‘first....secondly....thirdly’.

Any spoken presentation, such as a sermon or a church notice given out, needs such groups and breaks. If the receivers cannot detect the groups, they will quickly get lost.

EXERCISE 7

Most people will listen to TV News, read the BBC website or equivalent, or (for younger people in particular) take in news from social media platforms.

Consider what has been said about structuring print (eg. a news website) and speech (eg. a TV News broadcast). How is a typical news bulletin structured? Why is it done like that?

How many seconds do you think the camera will stay on one presenter or video clip before changing angle or moving to something different?

What can you learn from this?

Colouring the written word

On the other hand a highly structured website or speech can become rather dull and so there is something else that is needed. I call that **colour**, but I have more than just tints in mind.

First, you can ‘colour’ the type you use. Make sensible use of the font facility on your computer. But don’t mix too many different fonts unless you are a professional or you create a real mess. Best to have one for main headings and a second for the general text (as in this Article).

On the handout exercise consider different types of font and work out what each might be especially helpful for.

- **Bold**
- *Italics*
- CAPITALS
- A serif font
- A sans-serif font
- Different sizes
- Colour (literally!)

For example, see how this Article has used different styles of font. Print fashions change and it is now more normal to avoid too much bold but have considerable differences in font size between headings and text. Newspapers, though, continue with bold.

A ‘serif’ font (like Times New Roman) has small serifs on most letters so see the little extras on the feet and the changes in thickness in

m or **r** compared with **M** or **R** in sans-serif.

Serif fonts are easier to read when small so books and newspapers use them. Sans-serif fonts, like the text here, look neater.

Secondly, you can introduce visual ‘colour’ in many different ways. The expectation of visuals is much greater now than some years ago, partly because of increases in colour-print technology.

You can colour a piece of print with

- Photographs or other pictures (clip art is now regarded as dated)
- Corporate image with logo, fixed font, colour and style
- Layout templates
- Professional print design
- In all the above the use of actual colour

So with fonts, a professional knows how to use variations well. Amateurs can make it messy.

But one of the greatest forms of colour is ... surprise! You can bring that in in the words you use or the visuals.

Colouring the spoken word

There is more scope for colouring when communicating through the spoken word. This is because our voices and bodies can be used in more vivid ways than is possible with print.

Here is a range of points to make which apply to welcoming a visitor at a Sunday service, preaching, giving a talk or any other means of spoken communication.

Be human, rather than a CD player

Consider eye contact, opportunities for two-way communication, body language. Be aware of the differences between reading a script word for word, speaking from notes, and speaking without any such assistance.

Stay close to your audience

Try to avoid furniture that gets in the way and prevents you interacting with your audience. If you speak from a boxed-in pulpit you lose some level of connectivity with your receivers. If you speak without a lectern of some kind, you can interact more naturally.

Use all the buttons on your voice control

You have considerable scope to vary the tone, the speed at which you speak, and the volume of the voice. The voice can express emotion (but if this is forced it may have the opposite effect to the intention). There is scope for emphasis, repetition and the use of pauses. But be yourself in all this.

Beware 'precious' stories

Use well-chosen illustrations to add colour but avoid 'stock' stories that have clearly come out of a book or copied from someone else! But stories from one's own experience can be powerful. Aim to relate to contemporary issues.

Do not force humour

Only tell jokes if they make the point you want and you are good at this. Life can be painful otherwise.

Use background visuals if appropriate

PowerPoint does not turn a poor speaker into a good one. It can in fact make a poor speaker utterly boring. Use it sparingly if you have to: for visuals and for headings in particular. The best speakers have little need for it.

EXERCISE 8

Having considered the structuring and colouring of spoken messages, how might you advise a new preacher to help them get their message across in your church?

In groups aim to come up with about five key lessons to help their sermons be memorable

EXERCISE 9

From what you read in the Gospels, what can you learn about how Jesus structured and coloured his messages? Crowds of ordinary people flocked to him so there should be much you can learn from how he did it.

- 1 What means did Jesus use in his teaching? Story-telling is clearly one. What else?
- 2 What were the characteristics of his teaching, both to the crowds and to his disciples?
- 3 What reactions did he receive and from whom?
- 4 So how was he structuring his messages and how was he colouring them?

What lessons might you learn from all this for your messages today?

Notes for leader on Exercise 9

Numbering as for the exercise itself.

- 1 You might consider the use of humour, even anger, visual content and how his healing miracles linked up to his teaching. He explained the Kingdom of God in very practical, down-to-earth terms, rather than as theological ideas.
- 2 You might note the parable of the Sower and the different approaches to crowd and disciples afterwards. Consider his perceived authority, his integrity, his responding to a question by asking one in reply, and so on.
- 3 Consider acceptance, rejection and puzzlement, among other responses.
- 4 You might like to consider the Sermon on the Mount. In all his teaching his colouring was vivid!

4: The News to the World

In this final section we consider the particular ways in which everything we have considered so far might work out when putting messages across to people who are not church members. This will therefore apply to community newsletters, promotional literature, media releases, websites, and to all attempts to explain some aspect of the church to those in the local community or beyond. So instead of thinking 'News of the World' think 'News to the World'.

Make it news

The key idea here is to think *news*. We introduced this idea at the start as an alternative to *message*, but this may be a better picture when seeking to get across to people who are not church members.

Here are some key principles for how to go about coding up what we want to say. 'Colour' comes first this time.

Colour your news



People-centred

People love stories about people. They want to know about people like them. They watch soaps on TV, they love reality shows. Ensure your story is focused on people in some way.

So if you are wanting to give details of a new building project, focus it on stories of people who use the building, or who are working on the construction. This gives colour to what you are saying.

Local

But what you put across needs to be culturally relevant to your receivers and that usually means your story needs to be local. Receivers need to see that these people live just down the road, or go to the school their children go to, or shop at the same supermarket, or struggle with the poor broadband that the receivers have to endure.

If broadcasting news to a nation make it relevant to people in that nation. You will normally be broadcasting news to people in a local community, so ensure your stories relate there.

Topical

This is an instant world where something that happens in China is reported on in the West within seconds. In your community your social media links and WhatsApp groups will be on to a story as it happens. So putting across so-

called 'News' that isn't, well, new is not going to attract an audience. If you report on a story from two weeks ago that no longer has relevance, you will not attract a readership or audience. You need to be as instant as possible.

Visual

This is a visual age and news stories to your community need not clip art (very dated now) but photographs – and where possible that means photographs of people not things. That of course has implications for permissions.

So if your story is of a very recent event, focus it on people and show photos of those people. Check out your local newspapers (if you still have them) for this.

Unusual

Where possible focus on the unusual or unexpected aspects of your story. Find details that people will not know and which will intrigue them. If everything you say is just what people would expect, your message will be bland. News depends to a great extent on shock and surprise.

Straightforward

First of all ensure your news has no Christian jargon in it. Saying the church had a Eucharist service will mean little to those who never worship with you.

But also try to use strong words where possible and without going to exaggeration. Don't say the building was full, say it was packed (if it was).

Structure your news



Tell the story in the first sentence

Go straight to the heart of what you are saying in the very first sentence. Use a simple, factual sentence and then colour it in in what follows. Avoid unnecessary detail as you start.

Include reported speech

To enhance the personal aspect quote what someone said in inverted commas. Keep these snappy, but avoid 'Marvin said he thought the day had been a success'. Instead: "The event has been a huge success", said Marvin as he closed the session. "Patti's fascinating history of the village has made a deep impact on us all."

Keep paragraphs very short

On a website or in a media release, keep your paragraphs to one or at most two sentences. Check out your local newspaper to see this. You are not writing prose; you are seeking to get a message across to people who may be reluctant to read it. For some reason, people not used to this find it very hard to write like this!

Make headings large

Notice how the tabloid papers have very large headings and sub-heads and then can keep the text quite small.

Local stories can be news

Provided you follow these guidelines, your stories do not have to be spectacular. You can make a news item out of the 100th birthday of a church member, or the arrival of a new member of staff or Minister. As long as there is a News angle to what has happened, you have a story to tell.

So the normal weekly meeting of the Seniors Group at church may not have much of a story to it, but if the speaker had just run the London Marathon or brought her pet python with her, there is enough there for a news story.

EXERCISE 10

Make a list of events of any kind in your church over the past year that, thinking about it now, could have been turned into a news story for the local community or a press release to the local media. There may be more of these than you realised.

MAIN EXERCISE 11: Local news

Have enough copies of today's Sun, Daily Mail and a local newspaper if you have one so that groups of three or four people can have several news pages from all three. The Sun and Daily Mail are the highest circulation daily papers by some way in the UK if we ignore the free Metro.

The issue here is NOT the political slant of the Sun or Mail, or the fact that they may lead on stories that we are uneasy about, or that they may show pictures intended to shock or attract in some way. But these papers are written and designed by professionals whose job it is to enable the circulation to be kept as high as possible. What can you learn from them?

First, check out some of the points we have made about communicating outside the church walls. See

- The telling of the story in the first sentence or two.
- The number of sentences per paragraph
- The use of large bold headings and sub-heads
- The kind of strong words being used
- The use of reported speech
- The amount of visuals
- The focus on people.

Groups then deal with the following.

- 1 What is your initial impression of the page design, the use of print and visuals?
- 2 How are you encouraged to read the stories from the look of the page?
- 3 What positive (and perhaps negative) lessons can you learn for how your church tries to communicate with those outside its membership?
- 4 Now EITHER take a recent event in your church's life and, together, write a 200-word press release for your local paper or radio station. Try to follow all the advice given today.
- 5 OR take a forthcoming event in the life of your church that you want members to come to. Write a 200-word piece for a church newsletter or magazine.



SPECIALISED EXERCISES 12

Here is a range of exercises for particular groups of communicators in your church, based on material on this website. Each item listed gives practical applications of the general principles that we have covered today. In each case group members will need to be given a copy of one relevant item listed. All are freely available to download and print out in the Resources section of the website.

The exercise is to devise a series of perhaps ten specific principles for your own church for this one practical application to help you all get your messages across well.

Everyone

- Training Notes TN2: *Ten steps to help you communicate*

Groups or individuals with overall responsibility for communication

- Article A2: *Watch your image! – Visual design for churches*
- Article A11: *Become a better emailer – ... and make everyone happy*
- Article A39: *A plan for your communications – A template for churches*
- Training Notes TN22: *Appoint a church photographer!*
- Training Notes TN82: *Print or screen?*
- Training Notes TN105: *Recording a voicemail message*

Groups or individuals responsible for outreach

- Article A21: *The use of print in outreach – Rethinking church practice*
- Training Notes TN9: *Which newspapers do people read?*
- Training Notes TN39: *We've got news for you!*
- Training Notes TN44: *The message of your buildings*
- Training Notes TN75: *Writing for the media*
- Training Notes TN89: *Hold the front page!*

Groups or individuals responsible for internal communication

- Article A9: *A church members' newsletter – Ideas for a new publication*
- Training Notes TN38: *We've got news for us!*
- Training Notes TN69: *Creative prayer diaries*
- Training Notes TN93: *And now for the notices*

Groups or individuals responsible for digital communication

- Article A14: *Create a quality website - ... by asking the right questions*
- Training Notes TN99: *Social media+ guidelines*
- Training Notes TN113: *What to avoid on your website*

Speakers and preachers

- Article A19: *Speaking so that people listen – For leaders and preachers*
- Training Notes TN16: *Interviews in church services*
- Training Notes TN52: *The perils of PowerPoint*
- Training Notes TN123: *Speaking-to-camera tips*
- Training Notes TN145: *Illustrating what you say*

Newsletter or magazine producers

- A29: *A basic guide to paper and print – Helping you communicate*
- Training Notes TN63: *How not to write a newsletter*

Meetings secretaries and chairs

- Training Notes TN45: *Are you sure it's minutes you need?*
- Training Notes TN61: *Mapping out a meeting*
- Training Notes TN97: *How to minute a meeting*

To close the event

One practical outworking of the communication diagram we have used is to put yourself, as SENDER, in the shoes of your RECEIVERS and consider how they might react to the coding of your message, through the return loop in the diagram.

To get your message across seek to make it:

- **Clear**
Good coding so that it can be decoded accurately, with screens minimised as far as you are able. Avoid language people may not understand and keep it simple.
- **Correct**
As Christian disciples you need to be sure you are giving messages that are

true when the danger may be to exaggerate or rely on sources that cannot be trusted.

- **Concise**
The best messages cut out all unnecessary information to focus on the central message being put across.
- **Credible**
The sender needs to be believed by the receivers so their past practice matters and it is helpful if they can have a positive relationship with their receivers.
- **Captivating**
The sender needs to colour the message to make it interesting both in its content and in the way it is put across

Use this material in any way you wish. As stated at the start it can be used on your own but is written for an enabler to train a group of leaders and those involved in some aspect of communication, or a wider group of church members. Over to you!

It is however only one event in what should be a process. So the event needs to close with an agreement of process from this point, preferably with action taken for specialist group meetings within the next month.

Here is a link to the ***hand-out sheets***. You will find them in the Author's Notes section of the synopsis page for Article A54.

This article and training aid is available at <https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Articles-index> then A54. You will also find hand-out sheets on the same web page. For related Articles and Training Notes see the specialised exercise on the previous page.

John's resources are marked for filing categories of Leadership, Management, Structures, Planning, Communication, Administration. File A54 under Communication.

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