

SPEAKERS

PREPARATION

- Talks take time to come together, so give yourself ample time to begin working on it prior to your assigned talk preview date (which will be given to you by the Lay Director at the team Orientation or earlier). Starting several weeks ahead is always a good idea!
- Begin by praying and reading through the provided outline and understanding the main message and primary points. This is the foundational information for the talk. **All main points of the outline MUST be covered in every Great Banquet talk.** Scripture texts provided in the outline are given for reference and illustration and are not required parts of the talk, though you may wish to use some or all of them. Points can be *accurately* re-worded to reflect the Speaker's voice.
- Use personal illustrations or testimony to illustrate the main foundational points of the talk as provided on the outline. The focus of every talk should always be on the Biblical messages presented in the outline and never on the individual Speaker.
- Please do not add any additional theological content to the talks. All theological content is provided by Lampstand Ministries and we are contractually bound to present only what they provide. This ensures that all Great Banquets teach the same basic Christian components across communities around the world and over time to create a consistent Great Banquet experience.
- KEEP THE TALK TO THE SPECIFIED TIME, typically 30-minutes or less. Talks will be timed during the preview by the ALDs and if they go over, the Speaker may need to make cuts and share the changes with the Lay Director prior to the weekend.
- It is helpful to some Speakers to think of a theme or story (either personal, cultural or Biblical) that helps illustrate the main message and tie the major points together. *Optional.*
- Many Speakers choose to begin their talks with part of a story as an attention grabber, following then with their name and title of the talk and then beginning the foundational information of the outline, following up on the story throughout the talk. *Optional.*
- Speakers often intersperse a variety of either personal narrative, cultural content, Biblical verses and illustrations and humor into their talk to make the points of the outline come alive. *Optional.*

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PREPARATION, continued

- Help is available for new Speakers as you put together your talks, or if you want to run it by someone in advance of previewing. Several experienced Great Banquet Speakers are available to meet or email you to assist in this process. Please see your Lay Director if you would like this type of assistance.
- *Power point presentations and the use of prolonged video clips are very discouraged.* This takes the guests' focus to a screen which counteracts the idea of taking a break from our highly technical world. It also makes it more difficult for the guests to bond with the Speaker on a personal level. Additionally, the inevitable technical problems can make it difficult for the AV person to run and for the ALDs to keep the weekend on schedule. The use of any AUDIO-VISUAL materials in a talk must be pre-approved by the ALDs.
- Props or costume pieces may be used if desired. Music may be used if desired, but it must be provided in advance to the ALDs. *Optional.*
- Speakers often choose to create a handout for their talks with the main points, scripture references cited and/or resources. Please give handouts to the ALDs in advance and they will make copies for the group, both for previews and during the weekend. *Optional.*

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PREVIEW/TEAM MEETINGS

- All talks are previewed during the team meetings, in front of the entire team, in numerical order, #1 through #15.
- If you cannot preview your talk on your assigned date, please let your Lay Director know well in advance. Team meetings are tightly scheduled and he/she will need to find someone willing to switch spots with you if you cannot make your assigned preview date.
- Talk previews will closely mirror what happens during the weekend, including the ALD lighting a candle and saying the same opening each time. However, during previews the Speaker will be prayed in by an assigned team member in front of the team prior to beginning their talk. This mirrors the time of pray-in Speakers receive privately during the weekend.
- All talks begin with the entire group saying the Prayer to the Holy Spirit. The Speaker steps up to the podium and begins by asking the group to join them in the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.
- The talk/preview then commences. At some point near the beginning, the Speaker must state their name and the title of their talk. This information will then be written on a white board or appear on a video screen – whatever the Lay Director decides is best for every talk of the Banquet.
- During team meeting previews, the talk should be delivered exactly as the Speaker intends it during the weekend.
- After the talk preview, the Speaker will exit into the hallway just outside the Conference Room. A Spiritual Director and/or the Lay Director or ALD will accompany them and pray the Speaker out. Again, this mirrors the pray-out that occurs privately after each talk during the weekend.
- One of the ALDs will stay in the Conference Room with the team and ask for a few moments of reflection, then begin the table discussion time.

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PREVIEW/TEAM MEETINGS, continued

- Each of the tables will briefly discuss the talk, led by a Table Leader who will be practicing their skills in preparation for the weekend.
- The Speaker returns to the room to hear the feedback from each of the tables as presented by the Table Leader. Feedback is meant to be constructive and helpful. Please use discernment and do not feel obligated to make changes based on every suggestion. Any questions or concerns the Speaker has about the feedback should be discussed privately with either the Lay Director or a Spiritual Director.

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WEEKEND

- Speakers traditionally dress up for their talks – men jacket and tie; women dress, skirt or dressy slacks. A changing room is provided right near the Communion Room just off the ZPC Sanctuary lobby. Clothes should be hung there prior to send off on Thursday night.
- Some Speakers like to provide an agape item that ties into their talk. Feel free to do so, though this is not expected and entirely optional. Please provide the required number of agape items to the Agape team at the beginning of the weekend.
- Speakers also serve as Assistant Table Leaders. Pairings of Table Leaders and Assistant Table Leaders are announced at the team meeting on Thursday evening of the Banquet.
- The role of the Assistant Table Leader is to support the Table Leader in facilitating discussion among the guests. Please read additional Table Leader Handouts in the notebook. Assistant Table Leaders typically remain unknown as Speakers until they get up to give their talk; so operate as a normal guest would up until that point.
- Most importantly, *no Table Leader or Assistant Table Leader should dominate discussions at a table*. Your role is to allow the guests to discuss and “unpack” the talks as they unfold. Allow them to have their own experience of the Great Banquet in their own way and in their own time. Be patient, especially early on as tables are getting to know each other. Fellowship takes time to build. Join along with your table in any bonding times such as sitting together at meals.
- Support the ALDs’ efforts to stay on schedule by returning promptly to seats when called and by being on time for Chapel each morning.
- An ALD will come get you when it is your time to get dressed for your talk. Meals can be set aside if desired, just ask the ALD to handle.
- Before your talk, you will be “prayed in” (usually in the Chapel) by some team members and your invited guests. We ask that you only invite guests to pray you in that have been through the Great Banquet, or your spouse. Your guests may sit quietly behind a curtain or in the hallway (as space permits) to hear your talk.

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WEEKEND, continued

- The group will then accompany you upstairs and the ALD will notify you of exactly when you are to enter the Conference Room to present your talk.
- After your talk, you will leave the Conference Room through the same door from which you entered.
- Pray-out also happens in the Chapel with a format similar to pray-in.
- After pray-out, you get dressed back into your comfortable clothes and return to your table in the Conference Room after your talk's discussion time.
- Be sensitive to guests who may approach you with similar life stories or who felt especially drawn to what you said. Feel free to enlist the help of a Spiritual Director at any time if you need support with handling a guest.
- Speakers participate in the entire weekend along with their table and, like all team members, must stay actively engaged until Banquet Closing is complete.