

## Preaching with a Teleprompter (sort of): Advantages of an Oral Style Format

*How often have we entered the pulpit with flimsy outlines and vague concepts mustered on the spur of the moment? We struggle to find the right word, fail, yet talk on, hoping beyond hope that somehow the Holy Spirit might work despite our stumbling efforts.*

The above quote comes from *Creative Preaching and Oral Writing* by Richard Hoefler. His goal in writing the book was to provide preachers with a method of homily preparation and proclamation which capture the precision of the writer without dampening the urgency of the speaker.

His method can be summarized in using an “oral-style manuscript” which employs “speech phrases” in place of sentence and “units of thought” in place of paragraphs.

A quick glance at the oral-style manuscript reveals a page of finely chiseled phrases *just waiting for you* to hurl at the listeners...as opposed to mentally and verbally searching and stumbling for the right word. Below is an example:

*Let's try this out,  
shall we?*

*An oral manuscript  
looks something like this.  
You never put more on a line  
than you can say in a breath  
or see in a glance.*

*This not only helps in performance,  
it helps you edit,  
stay concise,  
keep on track.*

*Hey, I think I like this!*

*It helps you determine when your sentences are too complicated by unnecessary and intrusive phrases, although I am sure you are too skilled to suffer from the disease (really quite rampant, today) of run-on sentences and surely you know that to be too wordy, particularly when preaching in times of heightened, or shall we say, increased stress, is hardly beneficial to the parishioners you want to serve so faithfully.*

*Whew!*

*It makes me tired just to look at it!*

*This form of composition  
helps you see the rhythms  
and sounds  
of language.*

*The format itself  
frees your eyes from the page  
for better contact with your listeners.*

*How?*

*Because you can create particular “regions”  
in which to locate particular*

- ideas*
- stories*
- illustrations*
- points in an argument*

*In short, an oral-style format helps you preach from a manuscript  
but LOOK like  
you’re preaching without a net.*

*Give it a try!*

**Additional Advantages to an oral-style format:**

### **Rhythm**

*An eye for grace  
Means you see  
The Holy Spirit  
All over the place!*

### **Alliteration**

*Empty chairs.  
No one likes them.  
    Family meals.  
    Family reunions.  
    Family of faith.  
No one likes an empty chair.*

### **Parallelism**

*The picture of that girl in your wallet?  
Why, that's a picture of someone made for you,  
made by God...  
just for you!*