

10 Ways to Make the Sermon Much Less Boring

[How to Thoughtfully Listen to a Sermon]

By Pastor Deepak Reju

A note for Parents: The ten points below are meant to be talking points for you as you help your child thoughtfully listen to the sermon. It helps to set proper expectation for your child as they listen to the sermon. Some of these points might seem basic, but I've found that there are things that I take for granted that are not obvious to my child, so I need to not assume anything! Adjust the points based on your child's needs and your own family's specific dynamics. For example, some families might prefer to listen carefully to the sermon, but rarely take notes.

In preparation for the sermon...

1. If you can, **read over the text** on your own or with your parents sometime during the week **prior to the sermon**, so that the sermon is not the first time you are ever hearing the text. [By the way, this is a good reason why you should have a sermon card in your Bible, so you know what text is coming up!]
2. **Go to bed early the night before** so you are well rested for the sermon.
3. **Have a good breakfast** before church so your stomach is not growling during the sermon!
4. **Bring a pen** with you so you can take notes. If you have a personal Bible you like to use, feel free to bring that also. [Otherwise, you can use the Bible in the pews.] Some of you might like taking notes in your own notebook. If so, ask your parents for one, and remember to bring it with you on Sunday mornings.

During the sermon....

5. **Open your Bible to the text of the sermon and follow along.** If the sermon is expositional, it means the pastor is trying to explain what's in the text. So, to get what he's saying about the text, it's more helpful to have the text open in front of you.
6. **Taking notes is important!** If you don't take notes, it's easy to get distracted and for your mind to wander. If you do take notes, it helps you to stay focused and pay attention to the sermon. That's why you take notes.
 - a. When the pastor reads the sermon text to the congregation, listen to what he's reading. When he explains the text during the sermon, it will help you to pay attention if you have listened to his reading of the text.
 - b. **At the very least, try to jot down the outline.**
 - c. Listen to the different points the pastor makes. Write down **anything** you find helpful, including stories or illustrations or other things that caught your attention.

- d. Feel free to take a peek at your parents' notes on the sermon. It is okay to copy notes from what your parents are writing, but it is best if you can think about the sermon and take notes for yourself.
 - e. If it helps you to stay focused and pay attention, draw a picture that reflects something you heard in the sermon. But be careful not to disengage with what the pastor is saying. (See #7)
7. **Don't let your mind wander or daydream.** There is a strong temptation to disengage and to ignore the sermon. Don't do ignore what the pastor is saying! That will just make your time in church harder because after a while, it will start to feel *boring*. So a part of listening to a sermon is fighting to pay attention to what the pastor is saying. *Staying focused is hard work*. It's challenging, and something that requires a lot of energy from you.
8. **Watch the pastor.** If he's a good preacher, he'll be engaging; not a dry, boring, dude. [By the way, your eyes will be moving between your note page, the sermon text in your open Bible, and watching the preacher.]

After the sermon...

- 9. Review what you heard with your parents *after* the sermon. Show your parents you were actually listening. Feel free to ask your parents questions you might have from the sermon.
- 10. Pray with your parents about something you heard in the sermon that was helpful to you.