

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERMON SERIES USING PAWN QUESTIONS



The way to get the highest percentage of people to respond to anything in the life of the congregation is to do it on Sunday, most likely in worship. This is the one place when the most people are involved and the one spot where you might actually reach everyone. That makes worship a great place to interface with people.

In addition, the Word of God is designed to not drop into a vacuum but rather to address the concerns of real life. This is the power of an incarnational faith. This means the using scripture and the sermon to start this discussion is a faithful approach and a way to teach people that the words on the people's lips matter. It may start with the preacher, but good proclamation impacts the conversations for everyone.

This approach uses a three sermon series to ask questions relevant to the life of the congregation. The pastor can use the lectionary to introduce these in his/her sermon each week of lectionary preaching is the norm where you are. In any event, lay out the series connecting the message to the Assets, Wows and Needs approach to looking at information and ideas. There is no need to do the three weeks in any particular order. Just be sure that all three sets of questions are used over the three sermon series.

Hand out the questions to be used the week before the sermon that deals with them. That allows everyone to think a bit about them. You may also want to share the scripture that is the sermon text then as well. This way people aren't caught cold with nothing to share but can think and bring their best to the discussions. Use a different color paper for each week. That makes it easier to keep things straight when you get them all back!

The pastor begins the process with the message about the text. For example, if the text relates to a person who needs healing and Jesus offers healing to that person, the preacher could see the needs of the person as the doorway to the sermon or they could see the "wow" of Jesus' healing as the doorway. Choose a doorway that fits the text and leads to the questions to be covered that day. The message should be less than 5 minutes in length total time.

At the end of the brief sermon, the preacher should then give people a couple of minutes in silence to complete their handout for the questions being covered that week. This allows people who didn't prepare or weren't here the week before to have time to think and jot things down, too.

Then have people turn to another person, preferably not a family member. Have them discuss their ideas and answers to the questions. Give them 12 minutes to talk – that's 4 minutes on each question. Monitor time for people and give them a 2-minute warning when they have just 2 minutes left to talk. Then close the sermon time with prayer and collect their sheets. These can then be used to collect the answers and ideas from the congregation and help with planning ministry and mission for the congregation's life together.