

## Using the 1, 2, 3, Model

1. Read the book “*Heaven Is Like...*” —*A Gospel Model for Writing, Preparing, and Delivering the Sunday Homily*, Jay Comier, 2000 [ISBN 1-58051-072-8]
2. Write a homily using the method and directions used below.

**Write a homily** based on a gospel reading from the Sunday Lectionary

Maximum two pages using **14-point**, New Times Roman font, single spaced

Minimum of 1-3/4 pages

How many words are there? How long does it take to preach?

**Your goal** “is to help people make the connections between the reality of their lives and the reality of the Gospel...” —*Fulfilled in Your Hearing*, USCCB

The longer a homily gets, the more it rambles. My personal problem is shortening all the “good” information to two pages. But, doing so makes it more to the point. One main point in a homily is better than several points such that listeners can’t figure out what the message was.

If your homily does not speak to you, it won’t speak to your listeners.

Your homily should look like this:

<b>Homily Title</b> Your Name
<b>Story</b> ...
<b>Connection</b> ...
<b>Invitation</b> ...

The three sections must be *very roughly* equal in length. One section can’t be only a line or two long.

The **model** for the homily comes from “*Heaven Is Like...*”—*A Gospel Model for Writing, Preparing, and Delivering the Sunday Homily*, Jay Comier, 2000 [ISBN 1-58051-072-8]

The **title** must be about a half line in length and tell the message you want to convey to your parishioners. You may not be able to figure out the exact words until you are about finished writing the homily.

The three sections of the homily are:

1. **Story**—this is like Jesus telling a parable. He told an interesting story that gained the crowd’s interest. For you, the story can be from anywhere. I find that parishioners like stories that involve my personal life, and those are sure easier to come up with. They might be about me, my family, or a friend. The story is about someone’s personal faith journey and cannot be wrong—it’s their journey!
2. **Connection**—this is where you transition to what the gospel suggests. Of course, you have to have done your **exegesis** to know what this is.
3. **Invitation**—this is asking people to do what the gospel suggests. This is where the rubber meets the road. This is where you “help people make the connections between the reality of their lives and the reality of the Gospel...” This is the **hermeneutic**! Do not use the pronoun “you.” Instead use “we” or “us.”

How to approach writing the homily paper:

- **Start at least one week before it is due** (I start two months\*) so that it has time to perk
- Read the gospel pericope; think about it—let it perk; read it again
- Write down some notes on what the gospel may be saying to your community
- Listen to someone else read the gospel
- Do exegesis—what did Mark mean, according to at least one scripture scholar. Read the Bible footnotes. Look at the bigger picture in the Gospel from which the pericope comes.
- Look at someone else’s homily only if you can get no idea of your own. In this case, you will be looking for an idea to develop yourself; you will not be looking for a homily. Your homily has to come from your heart.
- Edit and perfect
- Have your friend or wife read it—someone who will tell you the truth

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\* I write for a homily service that required my homily one month before the Sunday it is preached.