



Sermon Whisperers: introduction

Early in the month Preaching Fellows assemble a Sermon Whisperers group of congregational members to serve as conversation partners over the course of the program year. Think about factors like generational range,¹ varied life circumstances, length of church membership, and gender balance. You want a group that reflects the congregation.

Designate a Sunday in the weeks before the meeting when all the Sermon Whisperers will listen to the same sermon. At the group's first meeting, they will give general feedback and be able to ask the preacher questions (about the sermon itself or about the process of sermon development).

1. Welcome and introductions, if needed
2. Prayer
3. Share impressions of the designated Sunday's sermon
4. Open questions about the sermon and the writing process
5. Watch the following "How to Listen to a Sermon" videos and talk about what you've encountered in them:²
 - a. Introduction
 - b. What Qualifies You
 - c. Before and After the Sermon
 - d. The Goal of Preaching
6. Decide which Sunday sermon the Sermon Whisperers will provide feedback on.
7. Read the preaching text for that sermon together.
8. As a way to prepare for that sermon, go through the T.R.I.P. process laid out in the video.
9. If you'd like to get a jump on November, watch the video on delivery and distribute the month's feedback form.
10. Pray for God's Word to come to the group and for God to be present as the preacher prepares the sermon.

If you choose not to use the forms and simply have a conversation, that's just fine. Just make sure the group talks about the specific questions on the form. Submitting forms to the Project isn't required.

¹ Don't neglect to include a high school-age member. Think of it as creating a group of young people with a theological vocabulary and, maybe, even the start of a pipeline for future pastors. Check out this book: Lyle Griner, *Youth Are Either Leading or Leaving*.

² Iowa Preachers Project videos on "How to Listen to a Sermon" are found at www.iapreachers.org.