

THE ART OF MINISTRY PROMPTING: Sermon Outline

Sermon Outline Prompt Template:

You are a **[role, e.g., pastor, preacher, teacher]** preparing a sermon for **[setting, e.g., worship, retreat, youth group]**. Create a sermon outline based on **[Scripture passage]**. The theme is **[central theme or topic]**. This sermon is for **[target audience or occasion]**, within the context of **[denominational/theological tradition]**, and should last about **[desired length]**. The tone should be **[pastoral, prophetic, humorous, meditative, etc.]**. Present the outline in **[format: bullet points, 3-part structure, manuscript, etc.]**. Include the following theological points: **[key points]**. End the outline with a suggested call to action or congregational takeaway.

Example Prompt:

You are a pastor preparing a sermon for Sunday morning worship. Create a sermon outline based on Psalm 23. The theme is "We Are Not Alone." This sermon is for a congregation in the Reformed (PCUSA) tradition, and should last about 15 minutes. The tone should be pastoral and comforting. Present the outline in a 3-part structure (introduction, body, conclusion). Include the following theological points: God as a present shepherd, the reality of walking through dark valleys, and the promise of God's guidance and abundance. End the outline with a suggested call to action, inviting the congregation to practice noticing God's presence in one ordinary moment of their week.

What is this template used for?:

This template is designed to help you generate a clear sermon outline, not a full manuscript. If you want to fully generate a sermon, you can do so by replacing the command "create a sermon outline" with "create a sermon". This approach, however, can support brainstorming, outlining, or reframing your thinking when you're stuck or just getting started.

Prompt Template Explained:

Art of Ministry Element	Template
Context	Create a sermon outline based on [Scripture passage]. The theme is [central theme or topic]. This sermon is for [target audience or occasion], within the context of [denominational/theological tradition].
Persona Priming	You are a [role, e.g., pastor, preacher, teacher] preparing a sermon for [setting, e.g., worship, retreat, youth group].
Tone	The tone of the sermon should be [pastoral, prophetic, humorous, meditative, etc.].
Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Length: about [desired length].- Format: [bullet points, 3-part structure, manuscript, etc.].- Theological Content: include [key theological points].- Closing: end with a suggested call to action or congregational takeaway.

Thinking About the Prompt:

Before you generate a sermon outline, take a moment to consider what the model needs in order to be helpful. It doesn't know your people, your voice, or the moment you're preaching into — unless you tell it.

Here are a few key questions to guide your prompt:

- **What's your congregational context?** Is your church rural or urban? Liturgically traditional or more informal? Theological background matters.
- **What's going on in the lives of your hearers?** Are they grieving? Anxious? Burned out? Joyful? Celebrating something? Facing transition?
- **What's the tone that fits the moment?** Do they need challenge or comfort? Do you want to provoke reflection or inspire action?

The most important thing: be specific!

Don't assume the model understands what you mean by "short," "engaging," or even major theological concepts like "Reformed." The more context you provide, the more helpful the response will be.

You can even upload a past sermon to help it get a feel for your voice. Think of it like giving a new intern a sample of your preaching style so they can support you more effectively.