STUDENT SPEAKERS COMPETITION GUIDE

Georgia Baptist Bible Drill and Speakers Inc.

Eligibility

Students in grades 10-12 are eligible to participate in the Student Speaker's Competition. You may participate through your church, Christian school, or home school group.

Scholarships

Two scholarships are awarded to the state winner. One is a scholarship to Brewton-Parker College, Shorter University, or Truett-McConnell University. The other is the Jenny Rogers Memorial Scholarship, which is good at the college or university of the winner's choosing.

Student Speaker Basics

The Student Speakers Competition is for students who want to learn to share their faith verbally, grow toward Christ likeness, develop poise and confidence, and become better communicators. It's about making a greater difference in the world, both now and for the rest of your life.

If you want to speak more confidently, share your faith more passionately, have some fun, and maybe win a college scholarship, then you should be a part of the Student Speakers Competition.

A good way to get started is:

- Tell your youth leader, pastor or parent that you want to participate and ask if they will assist and support you.
- Choose a topic and start researching and writing your speech.
- Practice your speech several times so you know it by heart.
- Put dates for each level of the Competition on your calendar.

There are four levels of competition: church, associational, regional and state. All speakers are eligible to participate at the church, associational and regional levels. The two top scoring speakers in each region advance to the State Competition. The state winner represents Georgia at the National Competition.

Student Speaker Competitions

Check the dates and locations tab on the bibledrillandspeakers.com page for a list of dates and locations for the Regional, State, and National Competitions.

Resources:

The Following resources are available at bibledrillandspeakers.com

- Student Speakers Topics
- Student Guide (Free Online)
- Judges Guide (Free Online)

Levels of Competition

Church. Participating churches, Christian schools, and home school groups may send an unlimited number of students to their Associational and Regional Competitions. However, they are still required to hold a local Competition in which students compete and receive feedback from judges. Church and local Competitions should be held at least one week before the Associational or Regional Competition.
You can download a copy of the Judge's Guide at www.bibledrillandspeakers.com for instructions on how to judge speeches and give students feedback. Speakers should submit a copy of their speech by email (or three hard copies) to their church's Student Speakers Competition Coordinator one week in advance of the Church Competition.

Association. Associational Competitions should be held at least one week before the Regional Competition. If your association has a competition, you must participate in it. If you are unable to participate in your association's Competition for any reason, you must contact the associational coordinator and explain why. If your association does not have a Competition, you are still eligible to participate in your region's Competition. Be sure and email a copy of your speech to your association's Student Speakers Competition Coordinator one week before the Associational Competition. Contact your associational office for the name of your coordinator.

Region. All students who participate at church and/or associational levels are eligible to participate in their region's Competition. See dates and locations tab on bibledrillandspeakers.com webpage for dates and locations of Regional Competitions. The two highest scoring eligible speakers from each region will advance to the state Competition. A third speaker from a region may be invited at the discretion of the Competition leadership. You must register for a regional Competition at least seven days before your region's Competition. Submit your speech via the dropbox link on bibledrillandspeakers.com, complete the online registration form and submit along with the registration fee.

State. Check the dates and location tab of the bibledrillandspeakers.com webpage for the date of the State Competition. Regional winners must submit speeches via the dropbox link and the Registration form (handed out at the Regional Drill) to Georgia Baptist Bible Drill and Speakers, Inc. (maria@bibledrillandspeakers.com) no later than 10 days before the State Competition. Previous state winners may participate again at the church, associational and regional levels. However, they may compete only one time at the state level. (This includes winners from other States.)

Preparing Your Speech

Students entered in the Student Speaker's Competition must prepare a four-to-six minute speech. You may choose a topic from the list on our website or choose one of your own. Your speech should inform, inspire, encourage and/or cause listeners to be concerned about an issue.

Fifty percent of your total score is based on content. Judges grade speech content on five criteria:

1. Originality/Related to subject

Your speech must be your own.

You must write your own speech, and not copy or borrow a speech from anyone else. It is definitely okay to be influenced by someone else and to quote others, but your speech must be in your own words, except for quotes.

Your speech should reflect what you think.

Quoting scripture and telling what others think is good, but your speech should also reflect original thinking on your part and express what you feel and want listeners to know and do.

Your speech should deal with your subject.

Everything in your speech should deal directly or indirectly with your subject, and not just dance around it.

2. Organization/Logical Sequencing

Content should flow logically and ideas and information should be properly sequenced.

Your speech should flow logically and in a way that makes it easy for listeners to understand what you are saying.

Your speech's core belief or idea should be clearly evident to the audience.

All good speeches have a strong and clearly identifiable bottom line or core idea. Tell the audience what you want them to know most of all, and say it more than once to make sure they get it. It's good to say it somewhat differently each time, but saying it multiple times makes sure they get it.

You should have a strong opening and closing.

The most important part of any speech is the opening, the first 30-45 seconds. If you don't get the audience's attention then and make them want to continue listening, they probably won't. Stories, quotes, visuals and gestures make good openers.

The second most important part of a speech is the final 30-45 seconds, or the close. That's because an effective close summarizes briefly and reminds listeners of your bottom line or core idea.

This doesn't mean the middle of a speech (points, subpoints, etc.) is not important. It just means a good speech starts by making people want to listen and ends with a strong take-away for listeners.

3. Structure and Grammar

Use complete sentences and good grammar.

All sentences should have at least a subject and a verb (Ex. — *I believe*). Most sentences have a subject, a verb and an object (Ex. — *I believe in God*).

Many sentences will be even more expressive (Ex. — *I believe in a God who spoke the entire universe into being and knows more than all the super computers in the world, yet counts the exact number of hairs on my head*).

Subjects and verbs should always agree (Ex. — *He did it*, not *He done it; She and Mary were there*, not *Her and Mary were there*).

Correct punctuation is also an important part of good grammar. Periods, commas, semi-colons, exclamation points, apostrophes, etc. should all be used correctly.

Words should be spelled correctly.

There is little excuse for misspelled words today. If in doubt, look up words in a dictionary. And even if you use your computer's spellchecker, read through your speech again; a spell-checker can be fooled.

Use paragraphs properly.

Paragraphs should be used to signal a shift in content, such as moving from one key point, sub-point, or idea to another. Good paragraphs are unified, coherent, and well developed.[1]

All sentences in a paragraph should relate to a single main idea (unity). Ideas should progress easily and logically from one sentence to the next (coherence). Specific details should clearly support the paragraph's main idea (development).

While there is no set length for paragraphs, they should be long enough to adequately develop an idea, but short enough to make the speech easy to read and maintain the focus of readers and listeners.

4. Use of Resources and Proper Credit

Use an adequate number of quotes.

In addition to telling listeners what you think, it's good to tell them what others have said about your topic. Three to five scripture references and quotes is about right for a 4-6 minute speech. If there are more than that, you won't have time to tell what *you* think.

All resources use use should clearly help the audience understand your topic and point.

Remember, good speeches are built around a clearly defined bottom line or core idea. All resources you quote or refer to should help the audience understand and/or buy into that thought or belief. Quotes should never be used just because they sound important or have dramatic effect.

Refer correctly to references.

When quoting a source or citing a reference, be sure and lead into it correctly. This is one of those little things that sets accomplished speakers apart from the crowd.

When quoting a scripture verse, use a lead in like: "It says in 1 Corinthians 13:6 that…" Don't say: "1 Corinthians says …" Technically, a scripture verse doesn't say anything; you are the one saying it.

When quoting from a book, an article, or anything another person wrote, say something like: "John Doe wrote in his book, *How to Do the Right Thing*, that …" If you quote from the same resource a second time, just say: "John Does also said …"

If you are quoting what you heard another person say, lead in with something like: "I asked John Does what he thought and he said …" or "I once heard John Doe say …"

Of course, all quotes from a source other than yourself should be surrounded by quotation marks. However, quotation marks should not be used when quoting yourself.

Give proper credit for all scripture and resources.

It is very important to give credit where credit is due. Always use quotation marks to identify quotes and tell where the quote or idea came from.

Scripture should be identified by the book and verse, as well as the translation quoted. Quotes from books and papers should give the author's name, book or resource title, date published, publisher's name, the copyright holder, and the page number.

When quoting something another person said, be sure and note the person's name and the date they said it (if known.)

Endnotes/Footnotes and a Bibliography/ Works Cited pages are required. Reference all your sources in the body of your speech with a superscript number at the end of the quote or reference. Then identify each reference with the corresponding numbers in your endnotes/ footnotes. We recommend the Chicago Style. For assistance with the Chicago Style, visit owl.purdue.edu. Five (5) points will be deducted for no bibliography. Two (2) or three (3) points will be deducted for an incorrectly or inconsistently formatted bibliography.

When actually giving your speech, you may identify only the author and the resource. Or you may give only the person's name if it is something you heard someone else say. Song lyrics may be quoted but not sung.

*Judges will take into consideration the Baptist Faith and Message as they judge any theological elements. Students may use the 1963 or 2000 version depending on their individual or church preference.

5. Purpose Accomplished

Your speech should accomplish its purpose.

What you want your speech to accomplish should be very clear to listeners. Your speech should inform, inspire, encourage and/or cause listeners to be concerned.

A good speech reveals its objective within the first minute. You may say something like “I’m going to prove …” or “I want you to know...” Or you may be more subtle and reveal your objective in the bottom line or core idea your speech is based on.

Be sure and number your sources both in the body of the speech and in your endnotes/ footnotes. Double-space between lines, and use 14 pt or 16 pt font size for titles and 11 pt or 12 pt for the rest of the speech.

Giving your Speech:

Good content is important, but it’s not enough. You must deliver your speech in a way that causes your audience (and the judges) to take interest in what you say.

Fifty percent of your total score is based on how well you give your speech. Judges will score you on five criteria:

1. Eye contact with the audience

Maintain eye contact with the audience.

Eye contact is arguably the most important connecting skill a speaker can use. You should look members of the audience in the eye, except when looking away to gesture, to emphasize something or to glance at notes. Looking at walls, the floor or objects in the room don’t count.

Look at persons in all parts of the audience

Some speakers look mostly at people they know or only to one or two parts of the audience. Effective communicators, however, make regular 3-5 second eye visits with all parts of the audience. It’s one of the ways speakers tell people they are speaking to them.

2. Articulate and expressive voice

Use good vocal energy and enunciate clearly.

Sound enthusiastic. Vary the volume. pitch, and inflection of your voice to match what you’re saying and feeling. Speak loudly, distinctly and slowly enough that your words are clear.

Caution — Be passionate and emotional, but don’t be overly emotional or dramatic. Judges may think a speaker who is overly emotional has lost his poise or is trying to manipulate them or the audience.

Avoid distracting vocalizations

Avoid distracting vocalizations, including: clearing your throat, monotone voice, and overuse of non-words and phrases like:
Okay, *You know*, *Uh* and *Like*.

Speak loudly

Speak loudly enough for everyone in the audience to hear you clearly without having to strain.

3. Poise and Confidence

Be relaxed and in control

Prepare well, know your speech and exhibit controlled enthusiasm. Even when speaking loudly and forcefully, there should be a steadiness in your voice to let the judges know you’re in control. Your voice should never quiver or tremble.

Appear confident

Confidence is one of the first things people notice that a speaker has or doesn’t have. The way you move toward the podium, the way you stand, the steadiness of you voice, and the look on you face are all clues to confidence.

Be convincing, interesting and understandable Your ultimate goal is to communicate effectively with the audience. If you want them to hear and understand what you say, you must hold their interest. Convince them you know what you’re talking about and that you believe it. Speak with conviction and sincerity without being overly serious. Relax and let the real you shine through.

4. Posture/Movement/Gesturing

Use good posture and effective body movement.

Good posture is important because it makes you look confident and more believable. Stand up straight and don’t lean on anything.

Moving purposefully about the podium while you’re speaking will help keep the audience focused. Don’t be afraid to move both laterally and toward difference parts of the audience. It’s a sign of confidence and a great way to connect with people. Pacing,

however, is not appropriate body movement unless used as a brief, purposeful gesture.

Use effective hand and arm gestures.

Speakers who want to connect with people don't stand straight with hands and arms at their sides the entire time they're speaking.

Use natural hand and arm gestures for emphasis or to make points. An effective gesture combined with the right words can help people understand the more subtle points of your message. Avoid distracting gestures like: rubbing your hands together, folding your arms in front of your chest, tugging on your ear lobe and putting your hands in your pockets.

Nervous gestures like these are distracting.

Smile and use appropriate facial gestures

Use your face to help express what you're saying and feeling. Effective facial expressions include smiling, frowning and looks of bewilderment. The key is for facial gestures to match what you're saying.

5. Delivered from memory

Know your speech well.

"Internalize" your speech by becoming thoroughly familiar with it. That means practicing and giving it often.

You are permitted to use one page of notes when speaking but you should refer to them only if necessary. You could be penalized if you look at them excessively or sound like you are reading.

If you forget, keep your cool.

If you forget a part of your speech, pause and try to remember. When you do remember, just start where you left off. If you can't remember after four or five seconds, move on to the next part of your speech. Don't "back up" if you remember what you left out later on unless it's essential to helping listeners understand your speech.

Personal Appearance

Dress modestly and comfortably.

Clothing doesn't have to be expensive to be neat and in good taste. *Appropriate* is the big thing. Clothing styles are constantly changing but there is always a line between what's appropriate and what's not.

Dress modestly and comfortably. That means slacks and collared shirts for boys, and dresses, skirts, slacks and collared shirts for girls. Jeans, shorts, t-shirts, short skirts, flip-flops and bare midriffs are not acceptable. Points will be deducted for such dress.

Be well groomed

Hair should be neatly combed or brushed. Makeup should be modest and in good taste. Boys should be clean shaven.

Time Allotment

Your speech should be between 4 and 6 minutes in length. Speeches will incur a penalty of two points for every ten seconds, or fraction of ten seconds, the speech is under four minutes or over six minutes. There is a maximum penalty of ten points per speaker for a time infraction.

To ensure that your speech falls within these guidelines, aim for a speech of about five minutes when practicing. Speeches often run 10-15 percent longer or shorter when given than when practiced.

Speech Deadlines

Students who turn in speeches late will be assessed a penalty. Late speeches will be assessed a penalty of two (2) points for the first day they are late and one (1) point for the second and third days. Speeches more than three days late will result in automatic disqualification of the speaker. Speeches for the regional competitions are due seven (7) days in advance of the Regional Competition. Submit your speech via the dropbox link on our website, bibledrillandspeakers.com You will receive a confirmation of receipt within 24 hours. If you have not received this confirmation - email our office at maria@bibledrillandspeakers.com

[1]Harbrace College Handbook Eleventh Edition, Copyright 1990, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc., page 322.