

Question: How can I take sermon notes? (This question came in a hand-written note from an eight-year old girl.)

Answer: Thank you for your note. I was touched by your desire to take sermon notes. I hope the following suggestions may be of help to you. If any of these items don't make sense to you, feel free to ask your parents or me.

How to Take Sermon Notes

1. **Listen for main points.** I will usually repeat each main point. There are normally two, three, or four main points. If you listen carefully you will hear me repeat these points throughout the sermon. The main points are typically commands. For example, "Prepare to hear God's Word" and "Determine to Obey God's Word."
2. **Underline or circle key words and write out their meanings.** Don't be afraid to write in your Bible. If you hear me make a big deal about a word, circle that word in your Bible. Then write down the meaning of that word in your Bible. For example, I might say, "In James 1:21, the word **'receive'** is a command. This requires an active decision on our part. The word is often used in the New Testament of Christian hospitality. The word **'receive'** can be also mean 'welcome.' Therefore, we are to 'welcome' God's Word into our lives. We are to make God's Word 'at home' in our hearts."
3. **Write down the verses of the passage and make notes.** After a story or a few opening thoughts, I will give the passage that I will be preaching. When I do, write down each individual verse. If I am preaching James 1:21-25, you should write down five verses (21, 22, 23, 24, 25). Beside each verse, you can write down those truths that stand out to you.
4. **Write down any parallel cross-references.** I will often refer to a Bible verse outside of the passage that I am preaching. For example, I might say, "In Hebrews 4:12, we read that the Word of God is 'living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword.'" Verses like this that I refer to are very important and will help you better understand the passage that I am preaching through. Write these verses down and read them later at home.
5. **Write down questions that are raised.** Write down the questions that you hear me ask. Be sure to write the questions so they apply to you. For example, "How's your spiritual hearing?" You should change this question to "How's MY spiritual hearing?" The next step is to ask yourself that question during the week.
6. **Write down applications and challenges.** In every sermon, I will apply the Bible verses to our lives. When I do, write the applications down. This is very important! For example, if I challenge you to read your Bible ten minutes a day, you should write that down and set a goal to read your Bible.