

St. Luke Speech Team

2020-2021

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INTRODUCTION

The St. Luke Speech Team has a long history of developing public speaking skills in a fun, supportive environment where individual effort is celebrated and everyone plays an important part in the team.

The team structure and strategy are designed to help students improve and further our goals as a team. Families who embrace the opportunity to engage in the process will gain the most and see the best results. As a member of St. Luke Speech Team, each student is expected to invest time and energy, all the while focusing on the goals.

SPEECH TEAM GOALS

- **EXCELLENCE:** bring out the potential in each member
- **CONFIDENCE:** find and/or compose compatible speeches
- **SPIRIT:** recognize team members who show effort
- **HONESTY:** give fair, productive, and positive feed-back
- **PRACTICE:** learn and master all the vital speech techniques

SPEECH TEAM REQUIREMENTS

Registration

All paperwork and fees must be complete by October. Registration will be sent via Google forms in an email.

Choose speech categories

Each student must choose minimum two speech categories which are defined later in the Handbook. 7th and 8th graders are encouraged to choose one each from 'Category 1' and 'Category 2'. 6th graders can choose either both from one category or do as the older grades are encouraged.

Secure a coach

Each student will be required to secure a coach right away! Coaches can be parents, adult family members, family friends, past SLS speech coaches or teachers who have time. The Speech Team Coordinators can assist with Coach selections as needed. Coaches are kindly asked to read the last chapter which outlines briefly the nature and reason for introducing external coaches. Coaching sessions take place at the students' and coaches' convenience: at home with a parent, for example, or during lunch break, as in the case of a teacher being willing to coach. The Coaching Guidelines Handbook will be available separately from this Handbook during the first week of October - both online and hard-copy during Speech Meetings.

Time commitment

This year we will definitely meet from September through December. Hopefully more schools will offer virtual tournaments to go through March. Team members are required to attend one zoom Speech meeting a week after school (either Monday or Thursday). Speech meetings are important to manage the process and deliver speech technique guidance. Building team spirit and group exercises will accentuate the meetings. However, successful participation is a matter of regular, independent practice! Students must set up a regular schedule with their speech coaches, at least twice a week. Outside the coaching sessions, students are expected to practice independently as advised by the Speech Team Coordinators and Coaches. Individual practicing could be standing in front of a mirror practicing out loud or speaking in front of a video device.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students interested in Speech Team must make a commitment to the program. It takes time to research, write (in certain cases), and practice. However, the effort develops life-long skills. The responsibilities are as follows:

- Select at least one speech category
- Find and/or write material in the chosen category (except Impromptu)
- Love your speech and want to share it creatively
- Meet all deadlines, especially preparing for tournament dates
- Participate in at least one tournament
- Practice, practice, practice! 20-30 minutes at least two days per week should be the goal. (Literally every day is the best. Consistency is key)

If in-person tournaments resume:

- Provide double-spaced, typed (14-point font size recommended) copies of speeches, mounted on black paper
- Make a copy for you and one for the Coordinator
- Provide a folder or plastic cover for your speech

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents of Speech Team students must also make a firm commitment to the program. They include:

- Work with your child to help him/her choose a speech category.
- Help with speech selection, including brainstorming, researching, and writing assistance to develop sections that meet the criteria of the speech category.
- Help to balance school work, sports, and other activities with Speech Team practice and tournaments

- Help your child during practice time by listening, timing the speech and always encouraging them.
- Volunteering to judge at a tournament

If in-person tournaments resume:

- Bring snacks
- Bring water to share
- Help carpool with other Speech Team members

FINDING A SPEECH

One of the biggest challenges of speech is finding and/or writing the actual speech! The goal has to be to find a category and speech that suits the character and interest of the student. Speaking about a passion or reading from a favorite piece of literature that resonates with the student makes writing and performing all the easier and fun.

Take some time to consider possible sources for a great speech. Talk to other parents who have experience in Speech and ask for advice. The Speech Team Coordinators have a limited supply of speeches in a limited number of categories, but will likewise take time the first meetings to support the students in finding appropriate material.

Think about plays, movies (provided you find a *published* manuscript) for the interpretive categories, and consider your student’s interests and hobbies as a starting point for topic development for the written speech categories.

In the run-up to the first speech tournament at Blanchet, each student will be encouraged to select two speeches, one each from the categories below:

Category 1

Dramatic Interpretive Reading (DI)
 Humorous Interpretive Reading (HI)
 Dual Interpretive Reading (Duo)
 Storybook (Jr. only)

Category 2

Expository (Expos)
 Oratory
 Editorial Commentary (EdComm)
 Impromptu

Blanchet will not offer Duo this year because of the virtual platform.

CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

DRAMATIC INTERPRETIVE READING

One or more selections of prose, poetry and/or drama from a published source. (selections from YouTube, Saturday Night Live, etc. are prohibited unless the speaker presents a copyright printed copy of the material). Material should be serious in nature. If

more than one selection is read, they should be connected by a central theme. The presentation must be from a manuscript. The speaker is required to have short introduction (usually memorized) and 'transitions should connect selections as needed. The illusion of reading must be maintained. Movement and gestures are limited. Over-dramatization may be penalized. Costumes and/or props are prohibited.

These speeches are best when dealing with difficult or challenging or poignantly beautiful circumstances, and when they offer the student several voices to perform. The selection made from a piece of literature, play, or poetry should be truly dramatic when read. The best ones bring tears to the eyes or transport the listener to another 'world' or bring out deep emotions.

Time limit: 8 minutes with a 30 sec grace period (average 5-7 minutes)

HUMOROUS INTERPRETIVE READING

One or more humorous selections from a published source. If more than one selection is read, they should be connected by a central theme. The presentation must be from a manuscript. The speaker is required to have a short introduction (usually memorized) and 'transitions should connect selections as needed. The illusion of reading must be maintained. Movement and gestures are limited. Over-dramatization may be penalized. Costumes and/or props are prohibited.

These speeches should be really funny! If the student is capable of creating great voices for characters and he/she has a lot of charisma, then humorous is a fantastic category. Bringing your own personality into the speech, along with voices, can make the reading material into something truly hilarious.

Time Limit: 8 minutes with a 30 second grace period (average 5-7 minutes)

DUAL INTERPRETIVE READING

A selection from prose or drama involving the portrayal of two or more characters is presented by two students competing together as a team. The same Interpretive reading rules apply.

These speeches can be dramatic or humorous and are best when there is interesting banter between two characters. Think carefully about whether Duo is the right category for you since you will need to schedule all your practices with a partner. This can be challenging if a partner becomes sick or lives a long distance from you.

Time Limit: 8 minutes with a 30 second grace period (average 5-7 minutes)

EXPOSITORY

An explanatory speech that describes, clarifies, explains and/or defines an idea, object, concept or process. This informative speech must be the original work of the student. It may be delivered with or without notes. Visual aids are allowed (recommended but not required). Students can be very creative with this category and it can be fun!

Students should think about their own class curriculum in Language Arts or Science, as they might be able to adapt a written assignment into a speech, thus cutting down on time spent working on the expository. The best expositors are on topics that the students are passionate about, and/or have experience with.

Time Limit: 8 minutes, with a 30 second grace period

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

The commentary takes a position on an issue of public concern as if the speaker were an editorialist attempting to influence the audience toward his/her point of view. The speech must be the original work of the speaker and is delivered with or without notes. The speaker is seated during the speech, as if in front of a television camera.

Time Limit: 1:45-2:00 minutes EXACTLY (no grace period)

ORATORY

This original work of the student is a persuasive piece that requires research and personal opinion to convince the audience. The speech alerts the audience to a threatening danger, strengthens devotion to a cause, or eulogizes a person. The oratory is memorized and must be the original work of the speaker; he/she must have a written copy of the speech present.

Often this category has fewer contestants thereby offering the student more opportunity at success.

Time limit: 8 minutes (30 second grace period) for 8th grade; 5-minute max (30 seconds grace) for 7th grade

IMPROMPTU

Without specific advance preparation, the speaker is challenged to 'think on his/her feet' in delivering an organized presentation about one of three topic choices: a word, a quotation, or a social concern. Use of notes or other materials is not allowed. Timing signals are given by the judge.

Students in this category prepare by reading the newspaper, discussing controversial or current events with parents, teachers, older siblings and friends, and practicing speeches on a variety of topics. Keys to success include being able to think quickly and clearly, organize thoughts and ideas well, and draw on beliefs and opinions to support a position. Again, this category generally has fewer contestants and offers your student a fantastic experience in public speaking.

Time limit: 2-minute prep time; 1-5 minutes speaking time

STORYBOOK (Juniors only)

Choice of children's storybook. Read to the audience sitting down out of the book as a prop. This is a relatively new addition to speech. Please contact Speech Coordinator if your child is interested.

Time limit: 5 minutes with a 30-minute grace period (to be confirmed)

RECOGNITION AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The opportunities to speak in public and the sense of pride that comes from several months of commitment and practice are priceless. Winning a tournament is a bonus, but not necessary to come out a winner! The awards ceremony at each tournament recognizes both individuals and give out team awards. The school awards are our ultimate goal as a team.

Eighth graders in the Open category are eligible to earn a scholarship to the host school, awarded to the first-place finisher in each category. Other awards for top speeches in junior categories this year will likely be different as tournaments are moving online.

TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES

The day before:

Prepare the day before by getting all necessary items ready for the next morning. Plan on getting up early, as tournaments begin usually by 8:30 sharp. Double-check the address and travel time. If online, check your Wi-Fi connection, decide where to set up the computer for a proper background, and prepare other needed technology. Your student should check that he/she has all speeches ready to go.

Have him or her decide on what to wear the day before and lay everything out ready to go. Think about wearing sensible clothes and shoes that are weather appropriate:

- Young ladies: wear your hair pulled back out of your face, so that there is no hair distraction during your presentation. Attire should be neat and not too 'over-the-top'.
- Young gentlemen: likewise have your hair neatly combed and clothes neutral in that the shirts have no glaring insignia or distracting picture. Best is a polo shirt or button-down oxford shirt or the like, worn with slacks or very nicely pressed, relatively new jeans. Shoes should be clean and comfortable.

Plan on a nutritious dinner and no other distractions at night, so that the student gets a good night's sleep.

The morning of the tournament:

In-Person

You should plan on getting to the destination a little early so you aren't rushed. It helps to have a pencil and paper to record the assigned room numbers and times. They are posted well in advance in the morning, but as the day wears on, students need to be on the ball as to when and where they need to be for all the other rounds. Each tournament is run a bit differently - some assign students a number, some use a school code and

last name. Some are more organized in advance while others seem to wait last minute to get the information out. Speech Team Coordinators are there to help, and we'll be reviewing procedures before the tournaments.

Sometimes students need to walk outside among buildings during the tournament, and some parking lots are far away from the school. If it's raining that day, plan on sensible shoes and protect the student's attire with practical rain gear. It's the student's responsibility to look sharp during the presentation.

Things to remember:

- Bring plenty of water and healthy food (no soda pop, milk, or spicy foods, please, as they tend to compromise the vocal cords)
- Have copies of speeches ready in stiff folders
- If you have your student - or you - carry a device, make sure it has enough battery but is turned on mute during the judging. Absolutely no checking the device during the speeches. All eyes on the speaker. He/she deserves our respect!

Guests are invited to hear the speeches during the tournament - but they must remain neutral, sit quietly, and give no special hand or eye contact to the contestants. This rule applies also to the students waiting their turn to speak. Points can be taken off scores of a disruptive contestant.

Online

You should test all equipment in advance of the assigned time for your speech. You should also test the links just in case. Technical problems are bound to occur, especially if you are running late.

Also, you should spend some time clarifying your schedule. You may not be able compete if you are not on time. It will be up to the room judge.

COACHES SHORT GUIDELINES

When dedicating time to coach a student, plan on meeting with the student at least two times a week. Half hour to an hour each time is recommended.

Coaching can be in person or using technology such as FaceTime or Skype, provided you and the student have larger devices such as tablets or PCs. The key is that the systems function well and there are no external distractions, such as other household members walking into the room or making noise.

When coaching in person, plan on working in a closed room or space that is comfortable. The student should practice walking up to the front of the room, facing you, and

proceeding AS IF he/she is in competition. That way, you can address the poise and composure skills as well as the speech skills.

When coaching over a device, make sure that the device the student is facing is large enough for the student to face frontally and for you to see at least the upper body of the student. Best is if the student can stand at a distance from the camera so that you the viewer can see his/her in full. Please note that this is an idea to facilitate if you feel comfortable with it. I have used FaceTime many times when coaching, and found it so very convenient. However, it stipulates that both users feel comfortable with the technology. Ask us if you have any questions.

While one could write books on coaching, the main reason we are introducing 'Coaches' into the program formally, is to provide the students encouragement and direct feedback, coupled with practice time commitments outside the weekly meetings. From my experience, there's no better way to practice, than if you have 'appointments' for which to work towards. It gives the students an opportunity to practice REGULARLY, and BUILDS EXCITEMENT, while providing lots of real-life practice time, which really is the key to success.