Here is a guide that I put together & use when I'm preparing a message. The ideas came from the book, "How to Speak to Youth and Keep Them Awake at the Same Time" by Ken Davis. It has really helped me, so I thought it might be of use to others.

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Message Preparation Guide

1. Who is my target audience?

__ Community Students (non-Christian students who live in our community)
__ Crowd Students (Christians & non-Christian students who attend our meetings)
__ Congregation Students (Students who have a relationship with Christ)
__ Committed Students (Students who are growing in their relationship with Christ)
__ Core Students (Students who are serving in ministry because of Christ)

2. What is the subject for my message?

What one word summarizes my message:_____

3. What is my central theme (main idea)?

What 2-3 words narrow down the subject into a single idea:
_____

4. Why am I giving this message?

__ To "enable" (show them HOW to do/accomplish something)
__ To "persuade" (convince them that they SHOULD do/accomplish something)

Complete for "enable" message:

Every_____can_____

My audience can do/accomplish what I'm saying by…

Step #1:

Step #2:

Step #3:

Complete for "persuasive" message:

Every_____should _____

My audience should do/accomplish what I'm saying because…

Reason #1:

Reason #2:

Reason #3:

5. How can I illustrate the message?

Illustration #1:

Illustration #2:

Illustration #3:

6. Preparation evaluation

- Have I considered my target audience's needs?
- Will my subject interest my audience?
- Do I know what I'm talking about or do I need more research?
- Do I know what I want to accomplish with my audience?
- Are my points tied directly to my single idea?
- Have I tried to cover too much material?
- Have I added interesting illustrations?
- Is my teaching consistent with the truth found in Scripture?