

stuff you wish they taught in seminary



5 Tips

**TO MAKE SERIES TITLES
AT YOUR CHURCH MORE STICKY**

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Churches will often organize their Sunday morning content into series. In the simplest terms, a series is a collection of organized ideas and content that is easy for people to understand and share with their friends. As I discuss in my book, [Church Growth Flywheel](#), leveraging the shift from series to series is a great opportunity for churches to grow.

Great titles are the key to making your series stickier. We all know that we judge books by their cover and their title, and the same is true with a message series. A good title both has the opportunity to grab people's attention and makes it easy for them to invite others to listen in as well.

So, how do you create a compelling series title?

Lead with a Conversational Hook

When you develop a title, imagine your people talking to their friends about the series. Make the title conversational, as in the kind of thing that people would actually say in a conversation. I often think about what would happen if I were at the gym talking to a friend—could I actually say the title of the series and capture their interest in what our church is talking about? Lead with this conversational hook.

Use the tool below to measure how conversational your series titles are.

Finish the following sentence:

"You should come to my church this weekend because we're talking about _____."

If you can't finish that sentence eloquently, then maybe the conversational tone isn't there for that particular title.

We use series for teaching because we want to make our content understandable and memorable so it's easy for our people to then share it with their friends. Starting with a naturally conversational title is a core element for enabling content sharing.

Here are some examples of conversational titles for upcoming series:

- Raising Sane Kids in a Crazy World
- A New Year and a New You
- Finding Peace at Work
- At the Movies: Lessons from Today's Movies and the Bible

Each one of those titles could slip into a conversation between your people and their friends. The key is to consider the following: What is that people actually discuss on a regular basis? How can you position your series around those topics?

Use Contrast to Spark Intrigue

When I was a kid, my mom would microwave strawberries and we'd put them on top of ice cream. The taste combination of the warm strawberries and the cool, sweet ice cream was hard to resist.



This response of intrigue tends to happen when we see two unlike ideas together. The human mind is a pattern recognition machine, so when you combine two different ideas the mind is naturally interested in learning more.

Contrast is a powerful communication tool that you should try to use in your titles from time to time.

Here are some examples of series titles that leverage contrast:

- Ancient Truth for a Modern World
- How to Be an Everyday Hero
- Living a Vitally Simple Life
- Slow Down to Speed Up

Each one of those titles attempts to combine ideas that don't normally go together. The contrast draws the reader in and begs them to look for more information. They're intriguing.

Be Google-friendly

Churches are content creation machines. Every week you generate a tremendous amount of material that ends up online including weekend messages and notes, posts, and social media content.

People want to be able to find the series and share what they are learning, so make sure that you consider the searchability on Google and other search engines when you title your series. Sometimes I see churches use super creative titles that are not relevant to what they're talking about, which ultimately hinders the church's ability to leverage their content.

Make sure the titles are easy to understand and contain key words pertaining to your content.

Here are some search engine friendly titles for series:

- Relationship Goals
- Fast Four Weeks to a Deeper Christian Life
- Jesus by John: A Look at What the Beloved Disciple Had to Say
- End Times: Bible Prophecy and Your Future.

Each of those titles contains common keywords that people will use to search either your website or the broader internet to find material relevant to various aspects of their lives.

Another way to approach searchability is through the effective use of subtitles. Often, churches will have a creative title along with an 8 to 12 word subtitle. However, proceed with caution; *don't rely on this tactic to explain to explain your series.* Ensuring that the core series title is something a search engine can find also makes it easier for your people to share, so make the topic evident in the main title from the get-go.

Review Titles of Best-sellers

Strolling through a large bookstore or spending some time on Amazon can be great places to gather inspiration for upcoming series. **These locales can provide you with ideas that you can generate into a title for a series coming up at your church.** After all,

publishers have already put book titles through evaluation by editors and audiences. *Be careful to not use a direct book title for a series* unless you are going to use it as a jumping off point for the series; you may confuse people who are reading or have read that book about what your series is about.

Using Amazon or a bookstore as a research tool can be particularly effective when you are looking for content that will have a broad appeal to people throughout your community. Amazon categorizes the various types and genres of books and shows you which books are the best-selling, so you can narrow down to those titles and covers that seem to be resonating most with the culture. Oftentimes, book covers contain images that reinforce the core messages of the book. This can also be an effective place to find design ideas for graphics and supporting materials for a series.



Test and Test Again!

Asking a few friends and colleagues about upcoming series titles is a good practice; however, you can go even further by instituting a process for testing titles and other content on a regular basis. It's amazing how much information you can garner from simply sending out a small survey to people. Use a tool like Google Forms to create a simple questionnaire that asks people what questions they might have about a certain topic. **By reviewing the completed surveys, you'll likely find patterns in the words of the responses.** Using those common words in your titles will draw your audience in.

Additionally, you could have a small group of creative folks at your church give you feedback on titles you are considering. **Usually, a smaller group of trusted creative people provides better feedback since these folks know exactly what will resonate—and what has resonated—at the church.** An evening of working together in a boardroom with some post-it notes can generate tons of ideas for upcoming series, talks, and messages that you could develop later on as you roll out content.

Getting feedback from people after a series is another a strategic way to pick up information for future series. When you ask people to fill out a small survey about a previous series, one question you can ask is, *"What ideas or questions were left unanswered in this series that we should cover again in the future?"* Feedback is a treasure trove of content ideas that you can leverage in the future at your church.

Every time you start a new series, it's an opportunity for you and your people to invite new friends and families to church. You can leverage series promotion as a way to grow your church rather than relying solely on holiday services. If you want to learn more, go to www.ChurchGrowthFlywheel.com.

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