



BRIGHTLY

Breathe a little easier.

Your 2022 preaching plan is done.

We are happy to present a calendar full of sermon ideas for your ministry! Use the suggested topics to build your own series, or consider joining Brightly for sermon packages that include detailed outlines, creative illustrations, sermon graphics and discussion questions along with helpful content available to members on the Brightly website. Brightly will produce a sermon kit for each series in this plan. Each kit will be available for download six to eight weeks before the series is scheduled to begin.

January

Your people are already thinking of the things they want to accomplish, change or improve in the coming year. Exercise commitments, travel plans, time management, strengthening friendships and deepening faith are on the top their lists. Capitalize on that by creating a sermon series that provides a solid faith perspective on popular resolution topics. What can our faith contribute to decisions about health, travel, time, friends and developing true faith?

At Brightly, we are developing a series called “You Are Here” that follows the topics plan below. “You are here. You want to be there.” Before we make plans for ourselves, we should remember our Maker and who we are made to be.

Jan 2: Health - What should guide my health pursuits?

Jan 9: Travel - Can I really make a global impact with my life?

Jan 16: Time - How can I make the most of the time I have?

Jan 23: Friends - What’s the foundation for lasting friendship? Connect Sunday

Jan 30: Faith - Will my faith ever truly be unshakable?

February

In February, switch gears from the topical series you just completed in January to an in-depth Scripture study on the word “love,” with a focus on Paul’s beautiful, challenging passage in I Corinthians 13. If one of Jesus’ last commands was to love and God is summed up as “love,” then we need to understand the power and meaning of real love.

You can write a series yourself, or, if you’d like a little help, join Brightly to download our outlines for a series titled “True Love.” Included in this package is a detailed plan to lead your church through a “Love Month” campaign of both large and small acts of love throughout your community.

Feb 6: Is I Corinthians 13 meant only for weddings?

Feb 13: All that “love is not...”

Feb 20: All that “love is...”

Feb 27: If love is “the greatest,” then why does it seem to fail?

March through Palm Sunday (April 10)

“Oh I just can’t wait to be King,” “Everybody wants to rule the world,” “King me.” Movie lines, songs and games all reflect a longing in us all. We want control. However, when we get it, we often let our worst inclinations rule. In the month of March, begin a character study on the various kings of the Bible, and draw wisdom to help your church avoid the bad habits of these kings. The beauty of this study on kingship is that it can lead right up to the crowning of the Messiah King, Jesus, at Easter.

At Brightly, we are working on this series. The Palm Sunday (April 10) service is a day of creative monologues by witnesses of Jesus’ final week. It will powerfully illustrate the very different power and kingdom Jesus came to bring.

March 6: Xerxes - Contrast what Xerxes does when in control with how God rules.

March 13: Saul - Saul clinging to his position led to fear and anxiety. Clinging to God leads to freedom and joy.

March 20: David - The fickleness of David versus the faithfulness of God.

March 27: Nebuchadnezzar - Nebuchadnezzar’s pride was mocked. The “lowly” were lifted up. (Proverbs 3:34)

April - “King Me” continued.

April 3: Herod - The life-taking power of Herod versus the life-giving power of God.

April 10: What Kind of King is Jesus? (Palm Sunday - Scenes from the final week of Jesus)

April 17: Easter

Let your Easter service stand alone without tying it too specifically to the previous series. Easter is a day that you will draw visitors who have not experienced your preceding sermon series, so it’s best to not assume they have any prior knowledge of your topic.

This is a day to pull out all the stops. It’s not simply because you are likely to have visitors, it is because Easter is the crowning event of the Christian faith. Start planning early for a tremendous day. With a Brightly membership, you’ll have access to an in-depth Easter plan. We’ll cover everything from using your February Love Month campaign to tell your community about Easter to creative greeter strategies to song selection and ideas for the complete message that day. Our Easter package will be available early in 2022.

April 24: The DNA of This Church

Capitalize on your incredible Easter weekend experience by using the following Sunday to describe the Biblical mission of your church. Returning guests from Easter and your longtime crowd will all appreciate the refresher about what drives the ministry of this church.

May

Graduations, Mother’s Day and the beginning of summer travels always make May difficult for consistency.

One way to build consistency during this month is to dedicate each week to a different line of the Lord’s Prayer.

The Prayer naturally touches upon topics that overlap with the various events of this hectic month.

May 1: Surrender (Your will be done.)

May 8: Gratitude (Give us this day our daily bread) Because May 8 is Mother's Day, this topic allows for some great encouragement for mothers and mother figures, who often prepare the bread, and laundry, and schedules, while working, and the list could go on and on. The day's message can not only thank them for what they provide, but it can also remind them where their strength and sustenance comes from.

May 15: Forgiveness (Forgive us our debts...)

May 22 Wisdom for Graduates (Lead us not into temptation...)

May 29: Trust (For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory...)

June

We can all remember the thrill of summer days. School's out, and so is the sun. It was time for playing with friends. Maybe you got a summer job to make a little money. Perhaps you hoped to drop a few pounds for those beach and pool day pics. And who hasn't had a little summer love? The themes of summer days offer a tremendous opportunity to speak God's truth into the lives of your younger crowd. But as we all know, adults need these lessons, too. So, get nostalgic with your church, remember the themes of summer, and bring wisdom to those memories. If you could go back and speak God's truth into these situations, what would you say?

At Brightly, we're working on a series titled, "Glow Up." It's a term that might be new to many of your people, but your young adults and teens will know it. The summer "glow up" is a time to focus on friends, money, fitness and, yes, even sex. But we all know these aren't just topics for younger crowds. And each one needs the wisdom and guidance from Scripture.

June 5: Friendship

June 12: Money

June 19: Fitness (Call it "Dad Bod" for Father's Day)

June 26: Sex

July

If you want to get to know the Beatles, you turn on the radio. If you want to learn about Jane Austen, you pick up a book. If you want to understand Picasso, you go to a museum. What we know is this: if you want to learn about a creator, you take a closer look at their creation. Artists, authors, and musicians put themselves into their work: their art tells us what they think about, what they care about, who they're talking to, and even who they are.

The same is true of the Creator: God. God can feel far away. It can seem like an impossible task to get to know a God that's so different from us. But, one of the ways we can get to know the Creator is by looking around at God's Creation. And summer is a wonderful time to do just that. Time and time again, psalmists, prophets, apostles, and even Jesus himself point us to the world around us as a tool for getting to know God.

For these six weeks, we're working on a series called, "Take a Hike." We'll backpack with the authors of Scripture, and we're going to see what they can show us about God. We're going to do a deep dive into the meaning of Paul's words in Romans 1:20 where he teaches that God's invisible qualities have been made known through what God has made.

July 3: The Freedom of God
July 10: The Abundance of God
July 17: The Beauty of God
July 24: The Purpose of God
July 31: The Renewing of God

August

As vacations end and school gears back up, you'll see your usual crowd begin to become more consistent. Additionally, August is a significant month for visitors. Those who have moved to the area and those looking to get their children involved in church tend to visit at this time. So, take the opportunity to show off the ministries of your church. Fill August with key ministry "takeovers." Orient the service around the major ministries people can join to experience the life and growth the ministries of your church can provide.

NOTE: If you have a strong "Local Outreach" ministry, remember that it could take center stage back in February during the "Love Month" campaign. If your church has a vibrant "Missions" ministry, see that it gets special treatment in November. So, if you follow this Brightly plan, those ministries do not need special emphasis in August.

August 7: Adult Groups - Connect Sunday

August 14: Kids (Pre-K - Elementary Age)

August 21: Serving (This is a "catch-all" Sunday to sign people up to volunteer. Utilizing some of the time in this service for current volunteer appreciation would be a wise decision.)

August 28: Youth (Middle/High School)

September

The fall months are a great time to get into some in-depth study. The months flow, uninterrupted by major holidays or church events/celebrations. We suggest one Old Testament emphasis and one New Testament emphasis series. The first series can serve to introduce people to the work of one or more of the Hebrew prophets. The second series is seven weeks spent in the book of Acts.

The series we're working on for the prophets is entitled, "Tired." Is there a word we hear more in our conversations than tired? In response to a casual "How are you?" at work and at school, in our most intense and vulnerable conversations with friends and family, in the middle of our fights and conflicts—it seems like everywhere we turn, people are tired. And, if we're honest, we're tired too. Tired of watching the news, tired of scrolling through our feeds, tired of getting up for work, tired of having the same conversations—no matter how we spin in, we're tired.

But, when we look at the promises of Scripture, we begin to glimpse the reality that tired—exhausted, weary, and burnt out—is not the way God wants us to be. In Scripture, we encounter the ways that God's interactions with God's people change their exhaustion into energy, their weariness into peace, and their burnout into excitement for what God has to come. Over the next six weeks, we're going to bring our different kinds of tired to God, and we're going to find rest in some truths that have brought God's people peace throughout history.

4 Tired of Working (Note: Labor Day)

11 Tired of Watching (Note: 9/11)

18 Tired of Worrying
25 Tired of Waking

October

2 Tired of Waiting
9 Tired of Worship

In Mid-October, we'll kickoff a deep dive into the book of Acts. While the book could easily be read in a couple of sittings, encourage your people to spend the next seven weeks with this thrilling story. While they read four chapters per week, you can focus your teaching on one story or lesson from that section. It is a powerful way to reignite passions for evangelism, the Holy Spirit, groups, celebrating diversity in the church, community impact and commitment to persevere in faith through trials. It's an amazing story!

16 - Chapters 1 - 4
23 - Chapters 5 - 8
30 - Chapters 9 - 12

November

6 - Chapters 13 - 16
13 - Chapters 17-20
20 - Chapters 21 - 24 (Generosity Focus - Thanksgiving Day 24th)
27 - Chapters 25-28 (Missions Focus)

December

Like Easter, Christmas is a time to go all out. While Easter celebrates the culminating events of Jesus' work, Christmas is important because of its place in our broader culture. There is no other time on the calendar when people are more open to attending something at church. Your Christmas series should reflect that. Hit on notes that will resonate with those who are giving church a chance this season. You can be sure that we at Brightly are dreaming up a Christmas series that honors Scripture, the historic celebration of Advent and the way God may stir hearts in the broader culture this time of year.

4 - Surprising Ancestry
11 - Surprising Audience
18 - Surprising Admirers
25 - Surprising Savior (Note: Christmas Day...like you didn't notice)

If you're doing Christmas right, you'll have a huge service planned for the days leading up to Christmas. Brightly will supply a worship plan for a sensational candlelight service. But however you plan your event, you'll need several of your key staff and volunteers. For that reason, we encourage you to rethink Christmas Day. Consider giving your volunteers the day off by hosting an online only service. Do you have a lot of transplants in your community who'd love a meal, gift-opening and sing-a-long gathering?

Each church community will have to make the best decision for your staff, volunteers and broader community. As is always the case, some will love your decision and others will not. All you can do is think it through, make the decision and communicate it well.