**SIX STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL IMPROMPTU SPEECH**

**1. Interpret the quote**

Many times a student will just miss the actual meaning of the quote. A student must be able to:

* 1. Clarify the literal meaning of the quote.
* 2. Paraphrase the quote in their own words.
* 3. State the principle being taught.
* 4. Make application to other situations.

The parent should pick a quote and guide the student through each step. There are many sites on the internet where you can find quotes and I would suggest that you vary the types of quotes. This activity should not take more than 5-10 minutes and should be done several times a week. Once the student is proficient at this step, they are ready to move on to the next step.
Resource: *Quotes to Spark Discussion* by Susan Savion (Incentive Publications)

**2. Prepare the details**

The parent should pick a quote and the student should come up with 2-3 points that they can make about the quote. For example, they may:

* cover the negative aspects and the positive aspects
* show 2-3 different ways of looking at the quote
* make 2-3 points
* disagree with the quote

At first this activity should not be timed, but once they are comfortable, then you should limit them to one minute. This activity should take less than 5 minutes and should be done several times a week. Now they are ready to move onto the next step.

**3. Craft a thesis statement**

A thesis statement should tell the audience where you plan to go; what you plan to tell them. The simplest thesis statement is just to state the 2-3 points that you intend to cover. Typically the thesis statement is stated at the end of the introduction right before you cover the body (2-3 points) of the speech.

An activity would be to give the student a quote and ask them to decide on their 2-3 points and then write a thesis statement. This activity should take less than 5 minutes and should be done several times a week. When they are comfortable with this step; it’s time for #4.

Resource: google thesis statement for some excellent teaching tools and examples.

**4. Tell a good story**

A student should support each of their points. They should not talk about the quote; they should make points based on the quote and then illustrate the quote. They can use the same support for different quotations. For example, the story of Noah in the Bible can be used to support a quotation about obedience/disobedience, perseverance, God’s promises, etc. The support needs to be quite detailed and should have a clear beginning, middle and end. The following can be used as support:

* personal story
* scene from a movie
* scene or story from a book
* historical event
* historical person/life story
* Bible story
* song lyrics
* poem

The student should pick one of these examples and practice telling it with lots of details and a clear beginning, middle and end. The song lyrics and poem should have an introduction and at the end a clear connection to the quote. The student could come up with a story for each of the first six supports and practice telling them. This would provide a good basis for most all the quotations they may come across. The student can use the same story for different quotes. They should also think through what issues each story could be used to illustrate.
As a practice activity at home, the student should pick a story and practice telling it until they can do it proficiently. They may focus on one story a week until they have worked through most of the categories. This activity needs to be done orally and practiced several times a week, including more details each time. (The story should be 30 sec. to 1 min. in length) Once the student has mastered several stories and decided what each story could be used to represent, illustrate or support, they are ready to move onto the next step.

**5. Put it all together**

This activity should be untimed at first, then timed with a limit that the student is comfortable with and then timed using competition timing requirements. Timing should always take into account the comfort level of the student while challenging them to move forward to competition level timing. (2 minutes of prep time for a not more than 5 minute speech) At first the student can just walk through the steps without actually giving the speech. When they are comfortable with the steps, then they can give the speech at home.
The student should be given a quote and then follow these steps:

* 1. Decide on the 2-3 points you will make about the quote.
* 2. Decide on the thesis statement
* 3. Decide what support you will use for each point
* 4. Decide what you will do for an introduction (attention-getter and thesis statement)
* 5. Decide what you will do for a conclusion (restate your thesis and wrap it up)

**6. Practice, practice, practice**

Remember that in a good speech you tell them what you are going to tell them (introduction), then you tell them (body/2-3 points) and then you tell them what you told them (conclusion).