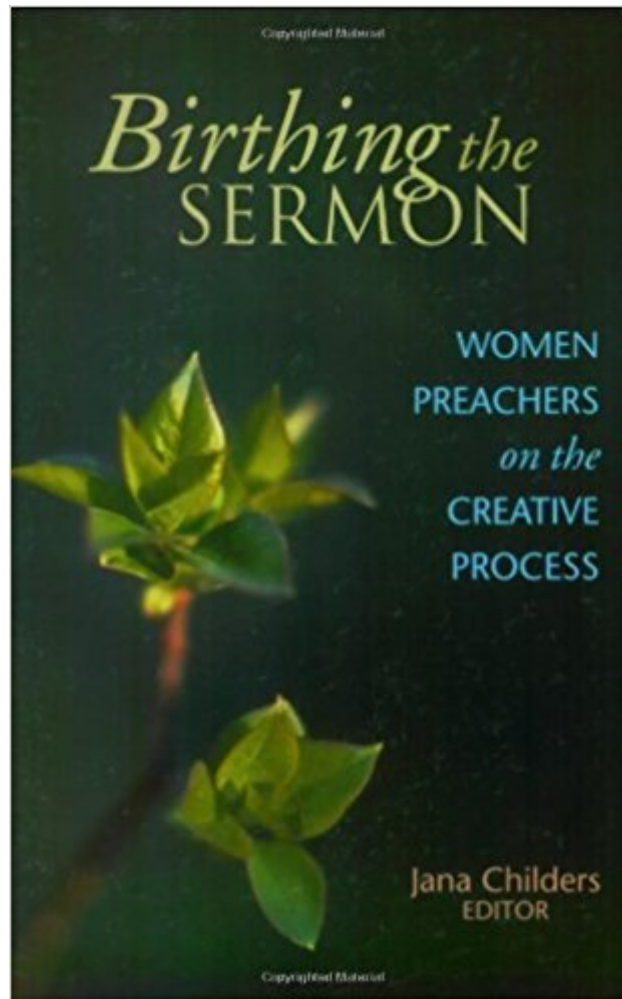


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# Birthing The Sermon: Women Preachers On The Creative Process



## Synopsis

Where do preachers get their ideas for sermons, and how do they turn those ideas into great sermons week after week? Sharing their experiences, these dynamic women preachers take us through their process from conception, through development, to the actual delivery of the sermon and beyond. Each chapter includes a sermon that illustrates the results of that preacher's labor of love. Contributors include: Barbara Shires Blaisdell, Teresa L. Fry Brown, Jana Childers, Linda L. Clader, Yvette Flunder, Mary G. Graves, Linda Carolyn Loving, Barbara K. Lundblad, Karen Stokes, Barbara Brown Taylor, Mary Donovan Turner, Margaret Moers Wenig.

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## Customer Reviews

After hearing Jana Childers present her Sermon-Lecture on the same title, Birthing the SERMON, I enjoyed a slow reading. Her sermon on the process of Creativity was received gladly by the Preaching Conference of over 600 preachers in National Christian Church of Washington, D.C. During my second month of digesting comments and sermons by Jana and 11 other distinguished women, I am convinced that other male preachers would also profit greatly from a

slow reading. Those sermons which have jumped out as strongest and most creative, alongside of Jana's "A Shameless Path" - based on Luke 11:1-13, are by Teresa L. Fry Brown of Emory-Candler, Barbara Lundblad of Union Seminary, Barbara Brown Taylor and Rabbi Margaret Wenig. Prof. Fry in "A Love Letter Written in Blood" reeks with poetry, music and intimacy of personal imagination. Dr. Lundblad supplies inspiration from her style of sermon birthing to the context of her sermon delivered in the Riverside Church of New York, "After Emmaus." Never to be under-estimated, Barbara Brown Taylor gives her short sermon, "Bothering God" from Luke 18. Finally, the surprise is from Rabbi Margaret Moers Wenig, the People's Temple in NYC and professor of Homiletics at Hebrew Union College. She moves from "Preaching as Dialogue," to "Generating Ideas vs. Shaping and Editing the Sermon." Her sermon is a midrash, or a commentary on the Torah as story. The unique and lengthy sermon is spiced with phrases and sentences in Hebrew - often 5-6 on each page. The title is more than picturesque - "Their Lives a Page Plucked from a Holy Book." I surely recommend this book, whole heartedly, with all stars! Chaplain Fred W. Hood

In this book 12 women share their process of "birthing the sermon," from the conception of the idea to the delivery of the message. Each person describes her process, followed by the sermon. With one or two exceptions, the sermons are thought-provoking and inspirational. Except for the birthing metaphor (not used by everyone), it seems that the process would be similar for male preachers as well. Even if the process isn't unique to women, this collection is an important contribution to the homiletics field. It's a good study text for new preachers with its format of describing the crafting of the sermon followed by the sermon. It's a good resource for seasoned preachers who might be stuck in a certain style or wonder if they have anything worth preaching. Even Barbara Brown Taylor has her moments of doubt when she thinks, "That is so obvious. That is so dumb. Everyone knows that already and you are about to put them all asleep." And it's a good resource for planners of preaching programs who often do not invite women to the pulpit. (Send a copy to your planner today.)

I just finished reading this book and I loved it. All of the essays in this book focus on the creative process itself instead of formulas. As I read through the essays and sermons presented in this volume, I found myself saying, "Yes, I do that too." and "I hadn't thought of that, what a great idea!" While there was concrete information about how to structure a sermon, (Eugene Lowry, David Buttrick and Fred Craddock were cited, among others), I believe that there was more emphasis on the offering of creative ideas that anyone can use joined with encouragement to find one's own way

of creating. After reading the essays and the sermons, I feel encouraged to explore and be more creative with my own preaching style. I am also glad to know that others live with the challenge of balancing healthy self-confidence in one's own voice with the fear and trembling that goes along with, "What? God wants me to say something hopeful to these people?" This is an excellent preaching resource for anyone who feels the call--whether you have been preaching for forty years or this is your first attempt.

If you are new to preaching and are struggling with the process of sermon preparation this is the book for you. Delightful stories that great nuggets of truth that will aide you in your ministry.

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