

Find Your Writing Focus Worksheet

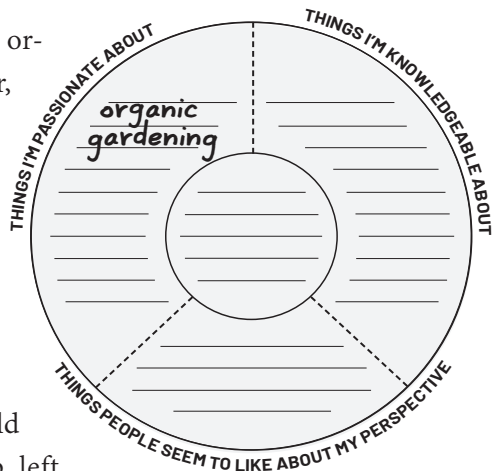
Complete the worksheet below to discover which topics you can bring a unique perspective to through your writing.

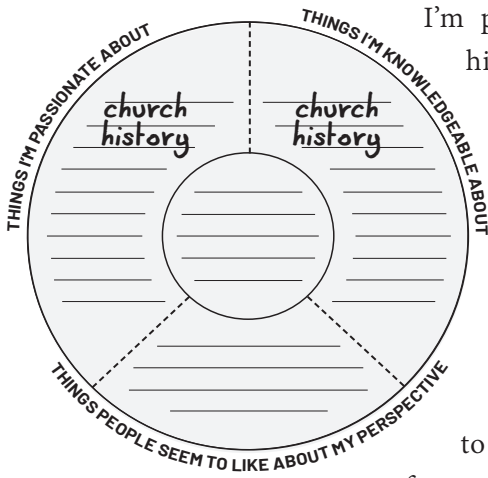
For more exercises and instruction on writing, read the full version of Brandon J. O'Brien's *Writing for Life and Ministry: A Practical Guide to the Writing Process for Teachers and Preachers*.

Think about the things you are passionate about, knowledgeable about, and have unique experience in (what do people like to hear your perspective on?). Brainstorm items in each section of the focus worksheet at the end of the exercise. If a topic fits in one but not the others, put it in the one section. If it fits in all three, write it in all three.

Here's an example.

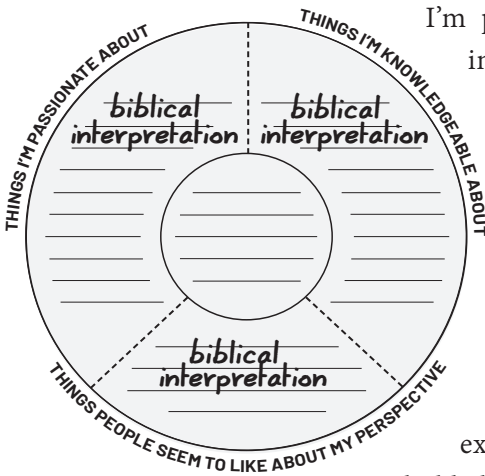
I'm passionate about organic gardening. However, I am *not* knowledgeable or experienced in it (unless you count killing lots of plants as "experience"), and no one really cares to hear me talk about it. For me, "organic gardening" would only appear in the top left space: Things I'm Passionate About.





I'm passionate about church history, and I am knowledgeable about it. I hold advanced degrees in church history. However, based on the dismal sales performance of my only book about church history, I would say people aren't dying to hear me talk about it. So for me, "church history" would

appear in the left and right spaces—Things I'm Passionate About and Thing I'm Knowledgeable About—but not the bottom third, Things People Seem to Like About My Perspective.



I'm passionate about biblical interpretation—and, more specifically, how our cultural assumptions influence how we interpret the Bible. I'm knowledgeable about this topic, both because of my education and because of my personal experience. And, lo and behold, this is a topic people actually

seem to like to hear me talk (and write) about. So I might write "biblical interpretation" in all three spaces.

If something shows up in all three sections, rewrite it in the center circle. This may be a good topic (or topics, if there are more than one) for you to consider as your unique contribution.

Be as specific as you can. I'm not passionate and knowledgeable about biblical interpretation *in general*. I'm passionate and knowledgeable *in particular* about the ways our cultural conditioning affects the way we read and apply the Bible.

So I recommend this exercise to you—and I recommend that you be as thorough and specific as you can be. You may find it hard to complete this exercise by yourself. Ask a trusted friend or spouse or mentor for their input and see what you come up with together.

The diagram is a large circle divided into three equal sectors by dashed lines. The top-left sector is labeled "THINGS I'M PASSIONATE ABOUT", the top-right sector is labeled "THINGS I'M KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT", and the bottom sector is labeled "THINGS PEOPLE SEEM TO LIKE ABOUT MY PERSPECTIVE". Each of these three sectors contains five horizontal lines for writing. In the center of the large circle is a smaller circle, also containing five horizontal lines for writing.