



CREATIVE MINISTRY
NETWORK

Better video for your church.



A practical guide to planning,
filming, and finishing your next video.



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A free resource for church creative teams

Sunday is still coming.

A little preparation can make the whole process easier.

There's a lot that goes into making a video. When you're working with a small team, it can feel like you're supposed to figure all of it out at once.

What camera should we use? Where should we film? Why does the audio sound so different once we get it into the edit?

This guide gives your team a starting point. Whether you're recording a message from your pastor, sharing someone's story, or inviting people to an event, you can build a process that helps.

You don't have to solve everything on your next shoot. Pick a few things to improve, build a process your team understands, and keep learning as you go.

YOUR GUIDE

Plan the message / Script & purpose

Prepare the shoot / Space, camera, light & audio

Finish well / Directing, editing & workflow

Take it with you / Your next-shoot checklist

01

Get clear before you get the camera out.

Before you think about equipment, answer three questions: Who is this video for? What do they need to understand? What do we want them to do next?

Give the video one clear purpose. An event invitation might explain why the event matters, who it's for, and how to register. A personal story might help someone recognize what God is doing in another person's life.

Decide where the video will live. Sunday screens and social media may need different framing, lengths, and openings.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

Finish this sentence: "After watching this video, we want people to ____."

02

Write something a person would actually say.

Read the script out loud before the shoot. Better yet, have the speaker read it. Listen for long sentences, unfamiliar words, and places where the main point gets buried.

Instead of "We would like to take this opportunity to invite you to participate," try "If you serve on a team, we'd love to see you at our volunteer night."

Use your church's language and explain anything a newer person might not understand. A full script can help with announcements. Thoughtful questions give someone sharing a story room to answer in their own words.

If you use a teleprompter, leave time to practice. Match its speed to the speaker and let them change phrases that feel unnatural.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

Confirm names, dates, details, and the next step. Have the message owner approve the copy before filming.

03

Find a space that helps you.

Listen before you set up. Air conditioning, refrigerators, traffic, nearby conversations, and room echo can all become distractions. A quieter room with soft furniture may work better than a busy lobby.

Check the background for clutter, signs, or objects that seem to stick out from the person's head. Give the speaker some distance from the wall when the space allows it. A simple background can work well.

Windows can provide useful light, but changing sunlight can make a longer recording harder to keep consistent.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

Record a short test in the actual space. Watch it and listen with headphones before committing to the location.

04

Build a setup your team can manage.

One well-positioned camera is enough to get started. Use a stable tripod or support. For a direct-to-camera message, place the lens around eye level. For an interview, put the interviewer close to the camera.

Leave a little space above the person's head and check the frame's edges. A second camera offers editing options, but only add it when your team can manage it alongside lighting, audio, and directing.

Confirm resolution, frame rate, focus, white balance, and exposure. Check batteries, power, and recording space. If you need horizontal and vertical versions, allow for the crops or record separate versions.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

Save a photo of the setup and write down the settings so the next person can recreate it.

05

Make the person easy to see.

Start with one soft light, slightly to one side of the camera and a little above the speaker's eye level. Watch what happens on their face as you move it.

Look for clear eyes and some shape to the face. If the shadows are too strong, soften the light or use a white surface to reflect light back toward the person.

If they blend into the background, adjust their position, the background, or add another light when you have one. Check overhead lights for unhelpful shadows and mixed colors.

Make one adjustment at a time. It's easier to understand what's helping when you aren't changing everything at once.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

Make lighting decisions by looking at the person's face on camera.

06

Give audio your full attention.

Get the microphone close enough to capture a clear voice. That might mean a microphone clipped to clothing or positioned just outside the frame.

Listen for clothing rubbing, jewelry, buzzing, echo, and volume changes. Have the speaker practice at their actual delivery volume. Leave recording-level room for louder words and laughter.

Someone should listen with headphones during recording. A meter can show that sound is coming in, but it won't tell you whether a necklace is tapping the microphone.

When possible, record a backup audio source. Capture a short stretch of the room with everyone quiet, too. That sound can help smooth transitions in the edit.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

Play back a test recording. Confirm the voice is clear and the audio was actually recorded.

07

Help the person feel comfortable.

Explain where to look, how much they'll record at a time, and that they can pause or start again. Give specific direction: "Picture explaining this to someone after service," or "Let's take a little more time with that sentence."

Record scripted videos in manageable sections. Leave a short pause before and after takes. For stories, listen and ask follow-up questions. Give the person room to explain rather than pushing toward a convenient ending.

For sensitive stories, agree on what can be shared and who will review the video before release.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

Check that you have a complete, usable take. Capture missing lines while everyone is still there.

08

Make the edit easy to follow.

Choose the strongest takes, remove repetition, and check that the message makes sense to someone who wasn't at the shoot.

Balance dialogue, keep music beneath the voice, and make brightness and color consistent. Use readable text. Review captions, spelling, names, dates, links, and instructions.

Use music you have permission to use for the intended platform and purpose. Watch the whole video before review. Test Sunday videos through the church's playback system and social videos on a phone.

Have one person collect feedback into a single, agreed-upon list of changes.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

Confirm that the finished video delivers the purpose you identified at the beginning.

09

Make the next shoot easier.

A repeatable process helps your team spend less time figuring out what happens next. For each project, name the people responsible for these four jobs:

The message owner

Confirms the purpose and information.

The production lead

Coordinates the shoot and edit.

The final approver

Gives permission to release it.

The delivery owner

Makes sure the finished video reaches the right place.

On a small team, one person may fill several roles. Naming the responsibilities still helps.

Work backward from delivery. Leave room for filming, editing, review, changes, and playback testing.

Copy and verify the footage before clearing recording cards. Keep scripts, footage, audio, project files, and final exports organized so someone else can find what they need.

After the project, talk about what worked and what you'll change. Update the checklist while it's fresh.

Your next-shoot checklist

PROJECT: _____ DATE: _____

PLAN

- ☐ We know the audience and purpose.
- ☐ Destinations and required versions are clear.
- ☐ The script or interview questions are ready.
- ☐ Names, dates, details, and next steps are confirmed.
- ☐ Shoot, review, and delivery dates are agreed upon.
- ☐ One person is responsible for final approval.

SET UP

- ☐ The location is quiet and the background is intentional.
- ☐ The camera is stable, focused, and framed.
- ☐ The person's face is clearly lit.
- ☐ The microphone is positioned and tested.
- ☐ Batteries, power, and recording space are checked.
- ☐ A test recording has been watched and heard.

RECORD

- ☐ The speaker knows where to look and what to expect.
- ☐ Someone is monitoring audio.
- ☐ We have a complete take and needed pickups.
- ☐ We have any supporting footage the edit needs.

FINISH

- ☐ Footage is copied, verified, and backed up.
- ☐ The message is clear and accurate.
- ☐ Audio, color, text, and captions are checked.
- ☐ Any required permissions are confirmed.
- ☐ The final version is approved and playback is tested.

Start with one improvement.

Maybe your next step is finding a quieter room. Maybe it's writing the script earlier or giving one person responsibility for feedback.

Choose something your team can follow through on. Make that part of your process, then build from there.

The goal is to help people understand what you're communicating and take their next step. The equipment, planning, and editing all serve that purpose.

Need help with your next video?

Through Creative Ministry Network, I help churches turn what they need to communicate into video they can share.

If you have a project coming up and could use help bringing it together, let's talk.

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