

Filming Best Practices



Introduction:

We exist to serve the Church and are excited to help your church in the best way possible. These guidelines will ensure our videos have a big impact and serve you well.

Purpose of the guide:

This guide provides basic guidelines and techniques for capturing the best video possible.

Video is an incredible tool for truly reaching and connecting with our audience—both in person at our church buildings and online through social media and other platforms. It's also all too easy to create bad videos that achieve the opposite of our goal, by being distracting or uninteresting. By following these basic techniques & principles, we hope to help you avoid all of the bad videos and create powerful, life-changing videos for your church.



The easiest, most effective way to build bridges that capture attention, influence behavior, and transform those who cross them, is with storytelling” ✨

- KINDRA HALL, STORIES THAT STICK

Importance of high-quality video production for churches:

Single-Cam Shoots

CAMERA SETUP AND POSITIONING



Location:

- Begin with a location that matches the look & feel of your video, and without unwanted background noise.
- Look for a location that can give lots of depth behind the subject.
- The standard shot for interviews is a medium close-up – think from the chest up. It gets us close enough to see the subject's emotions, but not so close it feels awkward. Position the camera a little off-center and level with their eyes – this mimics how we talk to each other, making it seem more natural.



Lighting:

NATURAL LIGHTING

- Can you use the sun to light your subject?
- Inside, this would look like lighting the person with a window. Outside, typically try to avoid direct sunlight, as it creates harsh lighting conditions and typically causes the subject to squint.

ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING

- Try to avoid harsh lighting. There's two main way to do this: Adding diffusion, such as a softbox, between your light source and your subject, and indirectly lighting the subject by bouncing the light off of a white surface.



B-Roll:

When producing testimonials or other story-driven videos, including b-roll can make a huge difference in showing the story and creating a more engaging video.

SOME HELPFUL TIPS:

- Slow-Motion can be very nice for these moments. Try to capture this in 60 FPS if possible.
- Take notes during the shoot of the story for anything in particular to show. Does this person lead a small group in their home? Take some footage of the small group the next time it meets!
- Take some "moving portraits" of your subject. Center them in the frame, and have them smile as if you're taking a picture, but take video instead. You can also have them look down or to the side and back at the frame, laugh, or show other emotion.
- Capture front-follows and back-follows of your character. Simply follow them as they walk in their environment, and then have them turn around and walk towards you. Have them look around, showing any relevant emotion. [Here](#) is a great example of how to shoot this.
- Capture more B-Roll than you think you need. The more that can be shown, the more engaging the video will be.



Helpful Links:

<https://www.docfilmacademy.com/blog/7-Steps-to-shooting-cinematic-interviews>

Multi-Cam Shoots



Planning and coordination of multiple cameras:

- When using multiple cameras, ensure that all cameras share the same settings, including **framerate**, white balance, and color profile.
- When using different brands of cameras, try to use similar brands for similar shots. For example, use your Canon cameras for wide shots and your Sony cameras for closeup angles, or vice versa.



Synchronizing video and audio feeds:

- The simplest way to ensure that all the video can be synchronized is to use the basic clap method – once all cameras and audio is recording, have your subject clap their hands once in view of the cameras. This gives a visual reference to easily synchronize everything.
- Audio can be recorded either directly into the camera or into an external recording device. If recording externally, make sure that the in-camera microphone is turned on a still recording for reference.



Switching techniques and live editing tips:

- For worship recordings with multiple takes, use one take as a “safety shot” that stays on the same subject throughout the entire take.
- Recommended safety shots include a wide shot and a shot focused on the lead vocalist.
- If live-cutting the recording, do not use fade transitions, but use hard cuts instead.

Settings

OPTIMAL SETTINGS FOR EXPOSURE AND WHITE BALANCE



Framerate

- Set the framerate to 23.976 fps (frames per second) for a more cinematic look.



White Balance

- Setting the proper white balance for your camera is very important.
- Match the camera's white balance to your scene and lighting conditions.
- Use presets on the camera (sunny, cloudy, indoors, etc.) or set the temperature manually:
 - 5600K for daylight
 - 3200K for indoor warm lights
- Alternatively, match the colors of your lighting.



Shutter Speed

- Set the shutter speed to DOUBLE the framerate.
- For example, if using 23.976 fps, set the shutter speed to 1/48 second.



Aperture

- Lower aperture values (e.g., f/2.8 or below) increase background blur and allow more light to enter the camera.
- The ideal aperture setting depends on your desired exposure and depth of field.



ISO

- Most cameras have a "Native" ISO value, which records the least amount of grain in the footage.
- Lower ISO values generally mean less grain, but you may need to increase the ISO in low-light conditions.

Audio Tips



External Microphones

- Use external microphones and position them as close as possible to the subject.
- Main options: boom microphones or lavalier (lapel) microphones. Both can capture great audio.

BOOM MICS:

- These mics capture clear, focused audio while minimizing background noise. Simply attach them to a boom pole or stand placed just out of the camera's view. Position the mic a few feet above the speaker and aim it directly at the mouth for optimal sound quality.

LAPEL MICS:

- If you're just starting out, the RODE Wireless Go microphones are an excellent choice for getting the microphone closer to your subject. Try combining the RODE Wireless Go with a Lavalier microphone for even better results. While it does have a built-in recorder, some users find it challenging to conceal and make it visually appealing.



Recording Levels

- A good guideline for recording audio is to aim for peaks at -12dB.
- Recording at a level that is too low will introduce noise when adjusting the levels in post-production.



Room Noise

- The microphones will pick up any audible noise in the recording environment.
- If possible, avoid recording in noisy situations. It's challenging to remove sounds like air conditioners, traffic, people talking, and background music in post-production.

Equipment Recommendations

CAMERAS, MICROPHONES, LIGHTING



Practical Tips:

LED FLICKER

- Many LED lights can cause flickering or banding in the footage.
- In the US, LED frequencies are typically 60 Hz, so adjust your shutter speed accordingly (e.g., 1/60, 1/125, etc.).



Clip Length

- When recording, capture a couple of seconds of additional footage (handles) at the beginning and end of each clip to assist with editing.



Camera Operator Attire

- If camera operators may appear in the footage, it's helpful for them to wear all-black clothing to minimize visual distractions.

Cheat Sheet



* **Camera Settings:**

- ☐ White Balance matches the scene
- ☐ Shutter Speed is twice the framerate.
- ☐ Is the camera recording Audio?
- ☐ MULTICAM: All Cameras Match Settings.
- ☐ Exposure set correctly.
- ☐ Subject is framed correctly, in focus, and with the proper headroom.
- ☐ Double-check for flicker if shooting with LED or Florescent lighting.

During the Shoot:

- ☐ Clear all distractions from the background
- ☐ Shoot into the shadow side of their face.

After the Shoot:

- ☐ Dump all cards as soon as possible.
- ☐ Back up important footage to 2 locations
- ☐ Double check it is on the computer before deleting the memory cards.