

Engaging the Westover Multimedia Ministry for Video Production

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Getting Started

So you've decided you need to have the Multimedia Ministry produce a video for you. Unless you've done this before, you might not have a handle on the amount of work actually involved in getting a concept from your head onto the screen. It is not unusual to spend two hours of editing per minute of program, and this doesn't include the time spent gathering the video, still photos, and other components of the production!

Here's how to get started.

1. Get on the Production Calendar

Get on our calendar in one of two ways:

- Fill out the "Request for Video Services" form on our website at www.westover.org (click "Multimedia" at the left). You can go directly to the form at www.onr.com/user/ldedear/wmmm/engform.htm.
- Call Lee Dedear at 997-0809 (daytime) or 248-0636 (home), or email at multimedia@westover.org. Let us know when you need to have the video finished, and if you need us to cover an upcoming event, let us know when the event will take place.

Let us know how your video will be used. Will it be shown in the new worship center? Will it be shown to a large group elsewhere—and do you need help with arrangements for the equipment to show it? Will you need multiple copies? Do you need it on any specific media?

If you call us, we may ask you to fill out a form describing your requirements.

2. Assemble Your Materials

The more preparatory work you do, the less we have to do, and the sooner we can produce your material. *We'll work the fastest if you provide the following:*

- A complete script, with notations of all music, still images, video, and titles to be included
- Recordings of all video, music, narration, and sound effects
- All still images in electronic, print, or slide form
- All art work in camera-ready format

We can provide any or all of the above, with a corresponding increase in the time required to finish your video. Be prepared to spend time telling us what you want or working with us to decide on what you want.

You can find information that may be helpful to you on our website: www.westover.org (click "Multimedia" at the left).

<p>Copyright issues: please try to avoid using any copyrighted materials without permission. We'll mention this several times in this document.</p>
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Narration

The narration will most likely contain the message of your video.

Write It Yourself

For the fastest turnaround time, you can write your narration yourself. This will probably also result in the most meaningful message. No one can tell a (non-fiction) story better than someone who has lived it.

Tips for Writing Your Own

- As in all writing, use the active voice as much as possible. Say "We taught Bible classes every day", not "Bible classes were taught every day."
- Read it out loud as you are writing. You'll find that some things that look good on paper sound really strange when spoken, or are difficult to pronounce.
- If you're writing about an event that has already happened (and you're not going to be able to get any additional pictures of it), be careful about writing about things of which you don't have pictures. Think about what people will be looking at while they're hearing those words. It may work to put some kind of generic image up, but if the preceding narration is accompanied by appropriately matching pictures, your audience might be trying to figure out what this picture has to do with this text, and miss an important point.

Have Us Write It

If you can't write your own, be prepared to spend some time filling us in on your ministry, the background of the event or topic that the video will cover, and the message you want to communicate. Then be prepared to answer questions as they come up while we're writing. Finally, don't be too disappointed if the finished product doesn't say exactly what you wanted to say.

If we're writing narration for a video about a past event, we'll need to be intimately familiar with the video footage and other materials that you have available.

Make sure that the people who are familiar with the ministry are available to work with us.

Record It Yourself

For the fastest turnaround time, you can record your own narration. You don't necessarily have to provide a "perfect" recording: we can edit out mistakes and other defects, if you are sure to re-record any "takes" that have problems.

We can work most easily with a CD, but Digital Audio Tape (DAT) will provide the same high quality, and Mini Disc is a close second. If you can't record your narration digitally, standard audio cassettes will work. We are not currently equipped to handle open reel tape.

Tips for Recording Your Own

- Use the best recording equipment you have or can borrow. Muffled, distorted, or noisy sound distracts the audience from the message, and may prevent them from understanding it altogether. Talk to us about using some of the Multimedia Ministry's equipment, or talk with the Tape and Sound Ministry about helping you.

As a good rule of thumb, the built-in microphone of any piece of equipment (like a "jam box") should not be used because it will pick up motor noise and other unwanted sounds. Use an external microphone.

- Choose your recording location carefully. Background noise (including an air conditioner or a ticking clock) will be distracting to the audience. A room with a lot of echo will also make a distracting sound. Large and small rooms can both be bad about this. A walk-in closet full of hanging clothes can actually make a good recording booth.
- Don't hold the microphone too close to your mouth, or too far away. If it is too close, you may cause popping sounds by blowing air on it. Hold it about two inches away, a little bit to the side, so your breath won't hit it. If you hold it too far away (a foot or more), your voice will be less loud relative to the echo (and noises) of the room.
- Wait a few seconds after starting the recorder before starting to talk. Mentally count to three. Likewise, wait a few seconds after you stop talking to stop the recorder.
- You don't have to get a perfect "take" all the way through your narration. Feel free to stop and start in the middle, and you don't have to go all the way back to the beginning if you make a mistake. We can edit your words together so that no one can tell the difference—if you follow these guidelines.
 1. Try to speak the same loudness and stay the same distance from the microphone.
 2. Try to maintain the same tempo.
 3. If you stop, don't start again with the beginning of the same sentence on which you stopped. Repeat the last few words of the previous sentence, then continue on to the sentence you're re-doing. This way you will have a natural transition between sentences that will edit very well.
- Listen through headphones while recording if at all possible.
- After recording some, listen to your work—preferably through headphones. See how it is sounding. Listen for background noises, breath noise, etc.

Have Us Record It

Choose your own narrator, or let us choose one. Remember to allow extra time for this, because it may take some time to schedule the people and location required.

Video

It is preferable, of course, that a video include some actual *video*, not just slide show style still images. This might include documentary-style videography or interviews, and maybe both.

- **Documentary style**—most of what you shoot will probably be documentary style. Show the places your mission trip went, the things your ministry does, and the people involved—the workers and those ministered to.
- **Interviews**—these can be shot on location (as in "man on the street" interviews) or set up in a more formal setting.

Record It Yourself

We prefer that you provide source footage on Mini DV or full-size DV tapes, in DV or DVCAM format. If you don't have access to that format, Hi-8 or S-VHS is best. We can also easily work with standard 8mm or VHS, but the quality is lower. We don't have a

Digital 8 camera, so if you provide footage in that format, we'll have to find a player—or borrow your camera.

The Multimedia Ministry owns a Sony Hi-8 camera that you can borrow, and we can also provide blank tapes. A Mini DV camera is also available. Ask us.

For each video clip¹ that you plan to use in your program, mark the times of the in and out points² of the clip in the script. Use a VCR or camcorder that has a timer that shows hours, minutes, and seconds. If you don't have access to a VCR that has such a counter, contact the Multimedia Ministry: we have some. If you can't get access to a VCR with a time counter, you will have to describe in detail exactly when each clip starts and stops, by describing the action or dialogue that occurs at the in and out points.

Assign each clip a number that is referenced in the script, to tell us when the clip should appear. Also, include a brief description of the clip in the script.

A better way: if you have more than 5 separate clips that you want to use, and your original footage is on one of the analog formats (Hi-8, S-VHS, standard 8mm, or VHS), ask us about copying it to DV and making you a VHS copy with time code superimposed on the picture. This will allow you to mark you in and out points very accurately and will allow us to find them with complete confidence. You'll find that the time counter built into a VHS deck will never show the same time twice.

Tips for Shooting Your Own

We have a separate tutorial for shooting video for the Multimedia Ministry, and we recommend that you read it. Here are some quick excerpts:

- Turn the date and time display off! Having the date showing in the corner of your video will make it look like something from "America's Funniest Home Videos[®]", and it will be harder to get your viewers to take it seriously. If you're afraid you'll forget when you shot it, write the date on the cassette label. Or, record a few seconds at the beginning of the tape with the date turned on, then turn the date off and start your real shooting.
- Video is an intimate medium. Wide shots that include a lot of area are useful to let the viewer know in what environment the action is taking place, but the majority of your footage should be close-ups—close enough to see people's expressions and what they are doing.
- Use enough light. If you don't have enough light, your footage will be muddy and grainy, and editing will make it worse. The Multimedia Ministry has a very convenient, highly portable professional lighting kit that you may be able to borrow. Or, you can also get quite good results using work lights of the type available at home improvement stores.
- Please try to avoid the beginner's habits of zooming in and out too often while shooting, and moving the camera continuously from one subject to another without giving the viewer time to absorb what's happening. Compose a shot and stay with it for a few seconds.
- That being said, zooms can be effective if not over-used. If your camera offers multiple zoom speeds, the slowest one is usually the most appropriate.

¹ **Clip**—a short section of video that you want to include in the finished tape, as opposed to the outtakes that you *don't* want to use.

² **In point**—the point at which a video clip starts, usually indicated in hours, minutes, and seconds. **Out point**—the point at which a video clip ends.

- Use a tripod whenever possible. Shaky video is very distracting, and if it is bad enough, it might even cause the viewer to look away to avoid a headache.
- Use the "wide" end of your zoom as much as possible, and get closer to the action if necessary. "Zooming in" magnifies the shaking.
- Staying close to the subject also helps the on-camera microphone pick up the sound better. This is especially important if the viewer needs to understand something the subject is saying.
- An external microphone near the subject will help even more. The Multimedia Ministry has a shotgun microphone that you can borrow.
- Listen through headphones while shooting if at all possible.
- Use more than one camera simultaneously if it will help you cover what you need. We can synchronize footage from multiple cameras and do cuts, dissolves, and other transitions between them like a multi-camera live production. *Note: this type of editing can be time-consuming. Expect to allow a week of lead time for each 10 minutes of such a program.*

Have Us Record It

If you are planning a video about a future event, and can't take video yourself or find someone to do it for you, talk to us about it. Send us on mission trips to far-flung areas of the world—but pay our way!

Provide Video from Another Source

You may want to provide video from another source. If you do, please be sure you have the author's permission to use it.

Copyright and Copy Protection: occasionally people ask us to use movie clips from video tapes or DVDs. Aside from the copyright issue, this often poses technical problems because the copy protection on many commercial recordings prevents a direct copy (including copying to the editing computer). While there is a workaround, it is time-consuming and results in a loss of quality.

Still Photographs

Your video may include still images. We can do the following with still images:

- Intersperse still images with video clips
- Use transitions such as dissolves and wipes between still images and/or video clips
- Show more than one still image on the screen at a time
- Zoom in on still images, move them up and down or left and right, or combinations of these motions

Provide Your Own

We can work best with digital images sent via email (to multimedia@westover.org), CD-ROM, 1MB JAZ cartridge, or 3.5" floppy disk. We can also work well with photographic prints. At this time the Multimedia Ministry does not have a slide scanner, so if you provide slides, we will have to make a trade-off of economy and speed versus image quality. If some of your important images are already on slides, we can work with them, but if you have a choice, please provide prints.

If you will be scanning any prints or slides, *set your scanning software to use 24-bit color*, sometimes called "millions of colors".

Also, keep in mind that the standard resolution for Multimedia Ministry video programs is 720x480. If your scanning software deals with dots per inch (DPI), use 300 or 600 DPI for 3 1/2 x 5" or 4x6" prints, 300 DPI for 5x7" prints, and 150 DPI for 8x10" or larger prints. If your scanning software deals with pixels instead of DPI, please follow these guidelines regarding image resolution:

- Vertical format photos**—be sure that the scanned image is at least 672 pixels wide, but no wider than 1200 pixels or so. Height does not matter, because some of the image will overflow off of the top and/or bottom of the video screen.
- Horizontal format photos**— be sure that the scanned image is at least 672 pixels wide, but no wider than 1200 pixels or so, and at least 480 pixels high, but no higher than 900 pixels or so.

Higher resolution is not better when scanning photos for use with our video production software. High-resolution images slow the program down considerably, or may not load at all.

We can work with all the most common formats: JPG, TIF, PCX, GIF, and BMP. JPG is preferred because the high compression allows more images to fit on a disk, or makes for smaller email messages. TIF and PCX are also good choices. BMP is not recommended because of the huge image size, but otherwise it works OK. GIF is not recommended for digitized photos because it is better suited for computer graphics, but it is also usable if there is no alternative.

Important: each slide, print, or digital image should be labeled with both of the following:

- A number that is referenced in the script, to tell us when the image should appear. If providing digital photos on computer media, put this number in the filename.
- Your name (so we can return it to you). If providing digital photos on computer media, just put your name on the media.

Have Us Take Them

If you are planning a video about a future event, and can't take pictures yourself or find someone to do it for you, talk to us about it.

Art

You may have a poster, printed logo, or some other kind of art that you want to use in your video. We can work best with items 8½"x14" or smaller. Larger items will take more time to work with, and we might have to make trade-offs in quality.

Titles

You will probably want to have one or more titles in your video. At a minimum, you will want to have one at the beginning to identify the event or topic being covered. Make notations in the script of what words you want on the screen at any given time.

We can superimpose titles over video clips or still images, or use a colored background if you prefer. We can also make the titles themselves any color you like.

If you have a special typeface (sometimes incorrectly referred to as a "font") that you want to use, you may have to provide that to us so we can load it on the video editing computer.

Music

Carefully chosen music can really help communicate your message. Nearly everything we have produced has had music in the sound track.

Caveat 1: *There are, of course, some situations in which instrumental music must be used carefully, or even avoided.* If negotiations with Phil or the elders are required, the ministry needing the video is probably in the best position to explain why instrumental music is desirable.

Additional Worship Center restrictions: As of 12/12/2002 there is an unwritten but official policy that no instrumental music can be played in the Worship Center. We will attempt to clarify whether this ban applies only on Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night; or at all times—and whether it applies only to the Worship Center or all areas of the building. We will attempt to get this as a *written* policy. Watch this space for an update.

Caveat 2: *Copyrights may be an issue. At this point the Multimedia Ministry cannot give advice on copyright issues.*

Provide It Yourself

You can provide us pre-recorded music, or record some singing at the event you are covering.

We can work most easily with CDs, but DAT tapes and Mini Discs are also a good choice for high quality. We can also easily work with standard cassettes, but the quality is lower. We can also work with vinyl albums, but the audience will be able to tell. We are not equipped to work with open reel tapes at this time.

Have Us Provide It

Contact us for a list of what is available.

We have a fairly extensive collection of instrumental-only (no lyrics) pieces of different styles that can be tailored to the exact length required by your production. If you have a need for an instrumental sound track, contact us to schedule some time to listen to what we have available. With some advance notice, we can choose several pieces that may work.

Sound Effects

Sound effects may include crowd sounds, village sounds, nature sounds, etc. These sounds can help make your video much more interesting.

Singing might even fall into this category. If you are shooting some video at an event where there is singing, it is good to have a tape recorder running so you can have a continuous music background to use in your video. Most likely you will be starting and stopping your video camera, so you may not have a continuous song in your raw footage.

Provide Them Yourself

You may provide us commercially recorded sound effects, or record your own. Sound effects recorded "on location" can be especially effective in your presentation.

When recording your own sound effects, follow the guidelines described in the "narration" section.

We prefer to work with CDs, but can also work with other formats, with the limitations described in the "music" section.

Tips for Recording Your Own

- Get as close as possible to the source.
- If you find yourself on location and want to record some sounds to use in your video, but don't have a tape recorder, try using your video camera. Get close to the source of the sound, and don't worry about what's in the picture—you won't be using it anyway.
- Listen through headphones while shooting if at all possible.

Have Us Provide Them

We have access to some sound effects, and can record some from scratch if the video warrants it.

Animations

The kind of animation we're talking about here is where 3D-looking words or shapes move into, out of, or around the picture. Animations can be used as titles. In fact, some of the same tips apply to animations as to titles.

We can superimpose titles over video clips or still images, or use a colored background if you prefer. We can also make the titles themselves any color you like.

We can make 3D models of logos and other custom art work that you provide. Here is a simple example—contact us to see others.



If you have a special typeface (sometimes incorrectly referred to as a "font") that you want to use, you may have to provide that to us so we can load it on the video editing computer.

Note: Animations can be time-consuming to produce. Don't ask for them with a short lead time, and don't plan to use a lot of them in a simple production.

Script

The script shows how the entire production fits together. The script describes the content and location of any of the following:

- Narration
- Still images
- Video clips
- Art
- Titles
- Music
- Sound Effects
- Animations

Write it Yourself

For the fastest turnaround time, you should provide us a finished script. We prefer that you email it to us at multimedia@westover.org. You may also provide it to us on a diskette, or, as a last choice, as a printed copy. If you provide a printed copy, please try to print it double-spaced so we can make notes between the lines.

A video script is typically arranged in a grid with a row for each scene, and two columns: one to describe the audible content (such as narration, music, and sound effects) of each scene, and one to describe the visual content (such as still images, video clips, art, titles, and animations). See the sample script following in this section.

It is sometimes helpful for the script to include a third column showing an estimated time (duration) for each scene, and a total at the end for the entire production.

If narration continues through several scenes (several video clips and/or still images), break the narration into a separate row for each video clip or still image, as shown in the example on the following page.

Sample Video Script

Audio	Video	Time
Music: Sweet Sweet Spirit	Video: panning across mountain scene above village (tape 1, 2:57-3:02) Title: "Next Generation Mexico Mission 1998"	5 sec
Music continues	Photo 1 (children's faces)	3 sec
Music continues	Photo 2 (children and old woman)	3 sec
Music fades down low and continues to play behind narration. Narration: "This year's trip to Mexico was the best ever. We taught Bible classes...	Video: children watching puppets (tape 2, 17:04-17:07)	3 sec
and helped build a new church building.	Video: Kevin digging a trench (tape 1, 1:22:52-1:22:56)	4 sec

Note: we may edit your script for readability or technical feasibility.

Tips for Writing Your Own

- Try to keep it under seven minutes. Go as long as ten if you absolutely have to, but unless you're producing a feature film, people will probably start wondering when it's going to end after about eight minutes.

Additional Worship Center restrictions: Videos to be shown in the Worship Center at Westover have a hard limit of 4 minutes unless specifically negotiated with Phil Ware.

- If you have several video clips or still images of different activities, don't try to describe them all in the same sentence. For example, don't try to say, "We knocked doors, taught VBS, delivered Meals on Wheels, handed out tracts, and mowed the church yard", and then try to have a video clip or still photo of each. Back in the days of slide projectors, the equipment couldn't keep up. Video can, but you lose some of the impact of your images if you flash them up so quickly.

Have Us Write It

If you are unable to write your own script, you can request us to do it. Be prepared to spend time describing what you want to do—the point you want to get across, the video and still photos you have available (or think you will need), the music you have in mind, etc. *Make sure that the people who are familiar with the ministry are available to work with us.*