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Resurrect Sound Habits for Easter

By Bruce Lee

Many churches have special programs for Easter. Some pull them off well and some are very memorable - and not necessarily in a good way. One in particular I will always remember is a church who cleverly rigged a way for "Jesus" to be lifted into the heavens by a harness system. The only glitch was that only one cable was hooked up before they began to raise him. Instead of him smoothly rising with out-stretched arms, he awkwardly tried to keep his composure as he spun toward the ceiling. Years later, it is still memorable.

Other churches try to put on something; they just don't have the right equipment to be able to do it well. For instance, they have eight people speaking

with only three microphones used to pass back and forth. Some try to use an older wireless that was put in the closet two years ago because it was always dropping out. When they have nothing else they try to use it again and guess what it does: nothing changed from two years ago.

As you get ready, let me give you some suggestions to help lower the stress level.

1. Know Your Exact Needs

Sit down with those in charge and lay out the entire program. Know how many people will be singing solos, duets, etc. and when in the program it will happen and where on the stage it will happen.

Will there be a narrator or possibly more than one? Do they speak up or do they talk softly? Last Christmas I saw a program where a man and woman did the narration using the same podium mic. She spoke very softly and he spoke loudly. It worked okay when one spoke a section and then later the other spoke. But when they went back and forth in the same section, sometimes even changing off every other sentence or speaking together, it didn't work very well.

Will there be instrumentation that is not used every Sunday? Is there a soft instrument that needs to be amplified or a loud instrument that needs to be suppressed? Will anyone be

CONTINUED ON PG. 2

Inside this issue:

AUDIO

Resurrect Sound Habits for Easter.....	1
Clearance Sale Items!.....	2

MEDIA

Start with the end in mind!.....	3
Did you know?.....	3
Announcements!.....	4

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playing an instrument, speaking or singing a part from an unusual location, such as a balcony? Will they need to be amplified?

2. Take Inventory

Know every mic and direct box you have available to you. Don't forget mics that may be in other areas such as youth rooms. If you really are short for what you are trying to do make your needs known to the congregation. There are probably others that have something you can use.

This Easter we will be bringing in several mics to augment the system at our church. The choir will not be singing in their usual place so we are going to be using MicroBooms from Audix to mic them and also augmenting the wireless for solos and narrators with Sennheiser and Shure.

Some churches rent extra equipment every year. One of the things we have helped our customers with is looking at the cost of renting and laying out a plan

to purchase that reduces their rental costs over time. For instance, if you need four extra wireless mics each time you have a program, rent three one year and purchase one. The next year, rent two and purchase one. Soon you have an investment that allows you to move totally away from renting.

3. Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse

When the musicians, narrators and vocalists rehearse, you should too. Even if they are rehearsing in a space other than your worship space, you should attend, make notes and work through your system needs with your mind.

Also have a copy of the program and mark the material so you will know who is doing what when.

4. Be Prepared

Make sure you set your board up to flow with the program. If you have multiple narrators, make sure they

are grouped together on your board. The same goes with vocalists and instruments. I actually set my board so it mirrors the position on stage. If Mary, John and Bill are standing left to right on the stage then they are also left to right and next to each other on my board.

Have the marked program labeled with the corresponding channels you have set on the board and always anticipate. Have you fingers on the faders that will be raised next BEFORE it is time to raise them.

If tracks will be used it is sometimes helpful to have a backup copy that is running on a backup player along with the original. In case of a failure, it makes a changeover easy and quick.

5. Pray

Spend time in prayer on the days leading up to the program. Pray for those on the platform, those that will be listening and for yourself - that you will work the system in such a way as to not be a distraction.

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Start with the end in mind!

By Yoli Lee

If you have attended one of our MediaSeminars, you are very familiar with this phrase and have heard it a lot. In Media, it is very important that you start your course of action based on where you want to end up, and then move backwards, step by step. I know that this sounds a bit backwards, but let's be honest, you have to be a bit "backwards" to be in the Audio and Media ministry! You are one of the first to get in at church, one of the last to get out and the only time you get recognized is when something goes wrong!

When you start your planning with the end in mind, you already know what you want to accomplish: the destination. All you need to plan is the journey and how to get there. Let's get started! Summer is coming up, and Youth camps, Mission trips, and all kind of ministry opportunities have been planned already. It is extremely important to start planning on how to let the congregation know the outcome of the trips, what was accomplished and which tasks were completed. Many times we ask the congregation to donate money, volunteer time or skills, or sponsor a person to participate on a trip, but fail to bring the results back to the church. We

then fail to let those who donated money, time or skills, share the blessing of what was accomplished or whose lives were touched.

So the first thing you need to think about is: How are you going to bring back what happened at the trip/activity? You have heard the saying: "One picture is worth a thousand words" so how about making a list of all the photos you need to take or video clips you need to shoot to be able to recapture the trip? Think about the beginning of the trip and all the things you need to shoot (photo or video): luggage, bags, people, cars or airport. Then, the trip, starting from the moment they get in the car to travel or to go to the airport. Then, capture the arrival, the excitement, the work to be done, the frustrations, the challenges, the accomplishments, the blessings. After the work is done, capture the faces of satisfaction or exhaustion on the way back. If you're videotaping, have the people talk about their likes and dislikes, their memories. It can be used as video narration or as a documentary.

Are you not going on the trip? Then make sure you let the people

know what you are trying to accomplish, and give them your list of moments to capture. Tell them to shoot anything and everything that it is interesting to them during the trip (afterwards, you can get rid of the ones you don't need!). Remember that it is all about the story and how it is told. If possible, get the stories from the people involved while they are fresh in their minds and they are still excited about them - not after they have shared them with many others. The earlier you get their stories, the more excited and loaded with emotion they will be!

Create a short video for the congregation which captures the essence and accomplishments of the trip. Then, create a longer video for the people in it who went and give it to them as a gift/remembrance of the journey. When those who donated money, time or skills see what their donation accomplished, they will feel like a part of the blessing and will have ownership on the things that were accomplished and on any soul that was saved. Then, the next time, maybe it won't be as hard to get them involved!



You should always take your photos at the highest possible resolution, but project them at the lowest possible resolution.

Now you know!

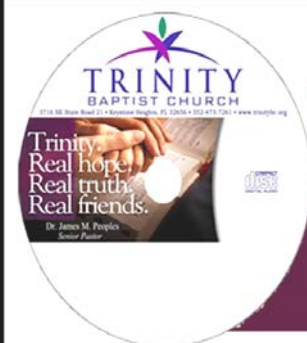
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