

THE TOP THREE WAYS TO USE MINI-MOVIES IN YOUR WORSHIP SERVICES

*Best Practices Gathered
from Churches Around the World*

1 USE MINI-MOVIES AS SERMON INTROS

The most common use of a short video (called a “mini-movie” in the industry) is to play it just before the main speaker takes the stage. Often, the mini-movie matches the main topic of the sermon, and works to help listeners begin thinking about the main sermon topic. The best sermon introduction mini-movies don’t resolve or give away the ending, but simply serve to introduce a topic, ask an important question, or tell a story that’s left open-ended. At the end of the video, the interests of people should be piqued.

BEST PRACTICES FROM PASTORS

- Move directly into your sermon after the video has ended, and avoid verbal wandering.
- Memorize the sentence delivered once the video has ended. Great speakers recognize the opportunity with their congregation listening to what they say next. Make it count.
- Memorize a phrase or a question from the video, then repeat it as you launch into your sermon. For example, if the video mentions that “evangelism is the heartbeat of a Christ-follower’s life”, your memorized initial statement might be, “If evangelism is the heartbeat of a Christ-followers life, then many of us - myself included - need to re-evaluate the way we live. And that’s the journey we’ll take together today...”
- Never draw attention to the quality of the video. Best practices from pastors tell us to simply play the video without saying, “Wow! What a powerful video”, or “Didn’t the youth group do a terrific job with that video?”

2 USE MINI-MOVIES AS SERMON INSERTS

Most pastors and speakers are hard-wired to illustrate a point they're discussing, and normally they do this by telling a story. And because we're all created to pay attention to stories, we immediately lean in and listen with more interest.

When a pastor uses a video sermon insert, they're simply queuing up a video story that helps support a point they're making, but they're doing it **IN THE MIDDLE** of their sermon. Rather than telling a personal story about climbing into a Hawaiian volcano, they'll say something like, "I want to introduce you to _____, because this is a story you'll want to hear." They're not introducing a point or a topic, but rather they're solidifying one.

BEST PRACTICES FROM PASTORS

- When a pastor plays a video as a sermon insert, most of them state the obvious as a way of verbal introduction - "Check out this video, and we'll talk about it in a minute".
- Pastors who use videos as inserts never talk about the topic of the video before it plays. They let it play, then talk about it after.
- The best videos to use as sermon inserts are people-story videos, and the best of that kind are discovered in a pastor's home church. If you have the ability to tell a 3-minute story from a person or couple in your church, that's always best.

3 USE MINI-MOVIES AS WORSHIP STARTERS

The average person doesn't come into a gathered faith community already prepared to worship God. To be clear - these are not bad or evil people who need fixing. They're good and normal people who need reorienting.

And is there anything better to reorient our lives than the worship of God? In true worship, we're reminded that God is the only One who can carry the weight of the glory ascribed to any breathing creature. The pressure is taken off of our feeble shoulders to manage all of life, and placed onto the shoulders of the One who's more than able.

A worship-starter mini-movie begins to help people remind themselves of the sovereignty and goodness of the God they'll lift their eyes to. The mini-movie sets the mood, the tone, and the sacred nature of what they're being invited into. And at the most basic truth, they're reminded that God is God, and that they are not.

BEST PRACTICES FROM PASTORS

- In the vast majority of worship services, pastors play a worship-starter at the beginning of their primary music set. People are seated during the video, then asked to stand by the worship leader when the video has ended.
- Most pastors see no need to tie a worship-starter into the topic of the sermon. If people are drawn into the worship of God - into a heart of surrender and praise - then the words of the sermon will take root in a person's heart no matter what the topic is.
- The transition between the mini-movie and the live music is important. There should be no audio space or dead time. The live song should begin immediately after the mini-movie is completed.
- Some worship leaders pray directly out of the mini-movie, as the keyboardist or guitarists provides a gentle music pad underneath the prayer, eventually launching into the first song of the set.