Lesson Plan & Study Guide

Seminar Leadership
Use of Audio Visual Materials

Walking with Jesus

iFOLLOW

The iFollow Discipleship Series

Seventh-day Adventist Church

Vervent

Center for Creative Ministry

About the iFollow Discipleship Series
Pastor's Edition

Categories

The iFollow Discipleship Series is designed to be used in congregations to assist people in their pursuit of God. This assumes that individuals are in unique places in their journey and there is no perfect set of lessons that everyone must complete to become a disciple-—in fact discipleship is an eternal journey. Therefore the iFollow curriculum is a menu of milestones that an individual, small group, or even an entire church can choose from. The lessons can be placed in three general categories: **Meeting with Jesus** (does not assume a commitment to Jesus Christ); **Walking with Jesus** (assumes an acceptance of Jesus Christ); and **Working with Jesus** (assumes a desire to serve Jesus Christ).

Components

Each lesson has a presenter's manuscript which can be read word for word, but will be stronger if the presenter puts it in his/her own words and uses personal illustrations. The graphic slides can be played directly from the Pastor's DVD or customized and played from a computer. There are also several group activities and discussion questions to choose from as well as printable student handouts.

Usage

The lessons are designed to be used in small groups, pastor's Bible classes, prayer meetings, seminars, retreats, training sessions, discussion groups, and some lessons may be appropriate sermon outlines.

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Use of Audio Visual Materials

Learning Objectives

1. Learn to include audio-visuals and make presentations more effective

2. Understand computer software that makes slides

3. How to select and create pictures, music, video clips, props

4. Develop skills related to flip chart, overhead projector, white board, etc.

Content Outline

A. A wide variety of materials

B. Position of the speaker

C. The "Edgar Bergen" principle

D. Presentation software

E. Components of the slide

F. Backgrounds, layouts, pictures and graphics

G. Physical props

Background Material for the Presenter

There are many types of audio and visual materials available to speakers today, from the blackboard to DVDs. In between, there's everything from whiteboards with colored markers and overhead transparencies to computer-generated slide shows. The computer-generated slide show has become the most common, and it often incorporates many of the other media. Since most of the same principles apply to other types of presentations, this chapter will focus primarily on composing and presenting a computer-generated slide show. Even if you are never called on to put together one of these, but only to present one created by someone else, understanding how to most effectively compose one will assist you as you select
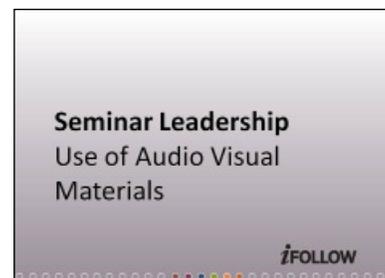
and present them.

Positioning

In some venues you will have no choice about the matter, but where possible, the speaker and lectern (if any) should be to one side of the viewing screen. This will allow you as speaker to direct and focus the audience's attention. By gesturing with an arm and looking toward the screen, you can direct the audience's attention to what is on the screen. Then return to looking at and relating directly with the audience, your eyes and gestures directed at the audience and not the screen. If you are between two screens, then you should gesture part of the time at each one. **Do not** alternate back and forth; it will make your audience dizzy and seem mechanical. Do not fall into the error of talking to the screen. The more you make contact with your audience, the more effective your presentation will be.

When using audiovisual materials, always remember the "Edgar Bergen" principle. Edgar Bergen was a famous ventriloquist in the 1930s. His vaudeville act became so successful that he was given a national network broadcast on radio. At the first recording session, technicians complained that they were having trouble with Charlie McCarthy's microphone. Charlie McCarthy was the ventriloquist's dummy. Edgar Bergen laughingly told the technicians, "Mic me, I'm what's happening here."

The most important thing for a seminar leader to remember when using audio and visual materials is that they are tools. Like Charlie McCarthy, they are aids the speaker uses to communicate with the audience. But the seminar presenter is what's happening. The presenter is the central communicating force, not the visuals, not the sound effects, not the computer slides. All of these other things are aids for the presenter. To the degree that they distract from the presentation, which they can easily do, they are a hindrance not an aid. C. S. Lewis said that writing was like driving sheep down a road: they will turn off the road and in at any gate. There are many things that can distract an audience. Make certain that the audio visual materials you use don't beckon the audience into a side road.

One of the most common ways in which these things can hinder a presentation, is simply by having too many of them, especially ones that do not contribute directly to the message. A speaker at one of the SEEDS church-planting convocations at Andrews University gave a lengthy sermon accompanied by computer generated slides. At one point, the
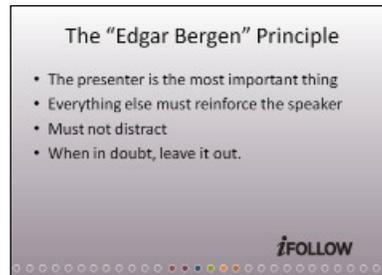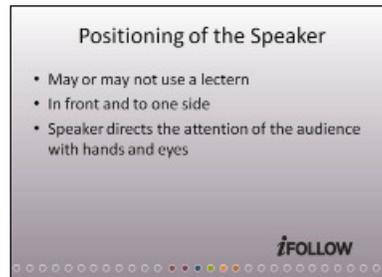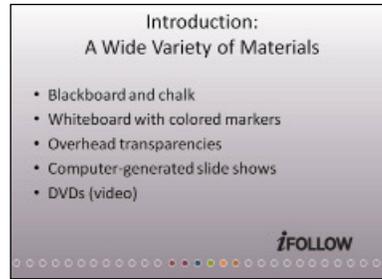
speaker referred to an early Adventist pioneer. On the screen the audience saw a picture of an anonymous white frame building. Given the context, it must have been a picture of the pioneer's actual home. However, with no explanation given and no label on the slide itself, it was impossible to tell. It was not a readily recognizable landmark. This unexplained picture confused the audience to the point that they lost track of where the speaker was going. The sermon would have been much better off without it. So, a simple rule for assembling slides is; if it doesn't add emphasis or focus to the words of the speaker, eliminate it. When in doubt, leave it out.

Software

There are several types of presentation software available. At the top end you will find software that receives multiple inputs, and sends selected video and audio to the projector and sound mixer at the click of a mouse. Others help the user construct computer slide shows with lesser degrees of sophistication.

Microsoft PowerPoint: Many software packages that can produce computer-generated slide shows. The number and capabilities of the software packages continually change, and any listing would be dated before this material is published. However, after 20 years, it is clear that Microsoft PowerPoint is here to stay and will continue to be the most commonly used presentation software. Most worship and event presentation software, such as Media Shout, accept only slide shows in the PowerPoint format. So whatever computer platform is used, it is essential to be able to convert presentations in PowerPoint format.

For the budget minded, Open Office software offers a program which produces presentations in PowerPoint format. The Open Office Productivity Suite can be downloaded free at the Open Office website, http://www.openoffice.org/.

If a laptop can be hooked directly to the projector, then the presentation software will work. If the computer system at the venue for the presentation has Media Shout, the slides must be in PowerPoint format.

Media Shout: Media Shout is a common worship presentation software package used in many churches. Its popularity is related to the fact that Media Shout allows many different types of media, including computer-generated slide shows, to be integrated in one seamless package, which can then be sent to the screen in almost any order. It allows for great flexibility in the preparation and presentation of many different media features during a single event.

The advantage is that if there is a song service or some other preparatory activity, there will be no need to switch cables from one computer to another. Everything can be

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handled through one server. The disadvantage is that usually the use of Media Shout precludes hooking another laptop to the system. Instead, the file will need to be transferred to the main server running Media Shout. Most of the time, the easiest way will be via flash drive.

Media Shout also precludes the presenter having direct control of the slide advance. The presenter must work out some way to signal when the operator is to advance the slides, bring up the next bullet point, etc. Unless presenter and the operator have an opportunity to practice, this will make for some delays and distraction during the presentation. But in many large churches this will be the only practical way to get a computer presentation up on the screen.

If the computer can be connected directly to the data projector, the presenter can retain more control. Depending on the physical setup, however, he or she may need some sort of remote mouse or other controller.

An important rule for all such multimedia presentations is: motion draws attention. This is true whether it involves slide transitions, animated objects moving across our through slides, or movements of the speaker. Thus, the use of motion should be governed by the same principle as every other element of the presentation. Motion either contributes to the presentation by reinforcing what the speaker's words, or it is a distraction, and should be removed. Action draws attention, but too much action results in distraction.

Components of A Slide

Except for things like animation and motion, much of what is said here about computer-generated slides can also be applied to overhead transparencies, illustrations on flip charts, or any other sort of graphic presentation.

Components of a Slide

- Background layer (at the bottom)
- Layout layer (in the middle)
- Top layer (in the foreground)

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A computer-generated slide consists of several components, usually referred to as layers. The bottom layer, the one behind all the others, is called a background. For those accustomed to using whiteboards, blackboards or flip charts, this will be a new consideration. For the older technology, the white or black background on which we write is constant and unchangeable. But with computer-generated slides, a virtually infinite variety of backgrounds are possible. Detailed discussion of how to select and use backgrounds will follow later.

The next layer consists of what one presentation software calls a "layout." The layout of the slide determines how various elements will be displayed. For example, a bulleted list layout will specify how the title and subtitle and the bulleted list items will be displayed. Also in the layout layer, the font (typeface), color, and size of each of those items can be specified, as well as the type and color of bullets.

The top layer of the slide is the foreground. In the foreground appear items that will be in
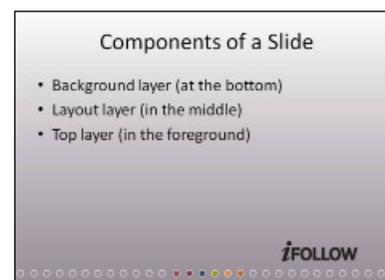
front of—and thus cover up—items on the background and layout layers. Here you insert the information specific to this particular slide. Backgrounds and layouts remain the same for every slide where they are employed. But pictures, text, and information added at the foreground level are seen only on that individual slide. In addition, and complicating matters somewhat, some elements in a layout can be modified for use in a single slide. Layouts specify how the information on the slide will be presented, but that information is filled out at the slide level.

Backgrounds: The background sets the mood. Just as with every other element, any background which does not help the listener focus on the information being presented should be avoided. The two biggest mistakes made with backgrounds are (1) patterns that are too busy and (2) too many graphic elements. In general, the simpler the background the better. It will make it easier to make text stand out, less likely to be too busy, and less likely to intrude. Ordinarily, it is best to choose a soothing color, easy on the eyes.
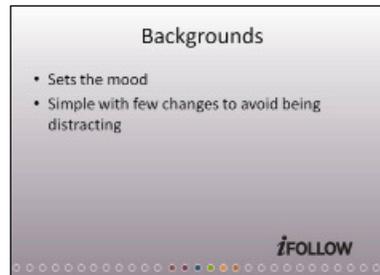
Seldom should more than a handful of backgrounds be employed in a single presentation. A slide show with a different background for each slide over-stimulates and confuses the audience. A handy rule of thumb would be to have no more than one background for each major point or section in a presentation. Many excellent slide shows have but one background. Almost always, simplicity will work better. When in doubt, leave it out.

Layouts: Different types of software have different types of layouts. Most have at least the following types: (1) Title slide, which includes space for a title and a subtitle. (2) Bulleted list slide, which consists of a title, subtitle, and specifications for the bulleted list. (3) Graph layout, which consists of a title, subtitle, and a location for a graph. There are many more possibilities, such as a "combo "layout which feature a combination of a graph and a bulleted list; an organization chart layout; and many others. Many of these features, such as bulleted lists and organization charts and graphs, can be constructed at the layout layer. Using a layout gives you the advantage of constructing a consistent color scheme, font, and other elements that give your slide a look of consistency, without having to re-specify every attribute every time you want to use them. Layouts primarily are a shortcut to a unified "look and feel" for your slide show.
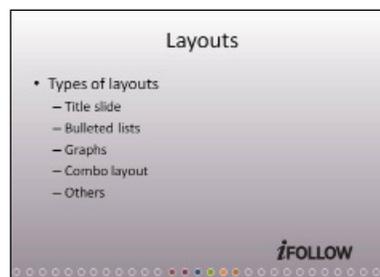
Pictures and Graphics

Pictures and graphics that illustrate the presentation go in the foreground layer. Used carefully, these things can
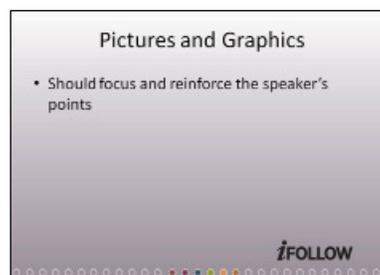
add a great deal to a presentation. But like everything else, unless the artwork, picture, graph, map, chart or other graphic element helps the audience to focus, concentrate, and understand the point or points that slide is designed to make, then leave it out. When in doubt, leave it out.

Some professionally produced presentations have elaborate artwork and a picture on every page slide. Unless you are a professional artist, or have access to one who can design artwork specifically for your purposes, it would be wise to limit your use of graphics. Even reproductions of paintings by the masters used on every slide would likely be distracting. Partially because of the conflicting styles. Rembrandt and Van Gogh both produced brilliant paintings, but placed on successive slides, their radically different styles would likely jar the viewer.

Transitions from Slide to Slide

The process of moving from one slide to the next during a slide show is called "transition." Presentation software offers dozens of different kinds of transitions. Most of these involve motion. Generally speaking a smooth dissolve, fade, or sweep reduces the abruptness and shock of an immediate change, without distracting the audience.
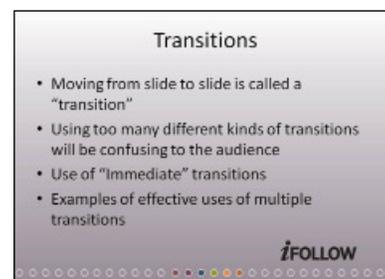
When the Macintosh computer came out in 1983 and for the first time people had access to multiple fonts, they often produced charts with so many different fonts that it confused people. This became so common, that desktop publishing experts came up with the term for it, "chart junk." Computer slide shows often suffer from several similar maladies.

Multiple Transitions: Some slide shows suffer from multiple transitions disorder. It seems like every slide comes in or goes out with a different type of transition. A slide drops in, or spreads out from a star shaped hole the middle of the previous slide, or flies off into space, or drips in; the different ways a slide can transition to another can be staggering. The new slide show impresario gets so fascinated with these different effects and that he or she uses a different one for every slide. When it comes to transitions, as to everything else, we should ask one question: Does this contribute to the audience's understanding of the message? If it does not directly contribute, most likely it will distract. So the law of simplicity applies here: when in doubt, leave it out.

Most of the time, your slideshow should proceed with the same type of transition, one slide after another. And this transition should be a simple one. A simple sweep from left to right, a fade or dissolve from one slide to the next, these do not jolt the viewer. The transitions labeled "immediate" generally do jolt the viewer. The new material appearing on the next slide materializes suddenly. So what should be done with all these other type of transitions? Corel Presentations lists more than 50 kinds of slide-to-slide transitions. Why

let these all go to waste?

If the purpose of the presentation is to demonstrate a mastery of all the possible types of transitions, then by all means, use every one of them. Otherwise, all of these different effects will only confuse the audience. If the seminar is on any topic other than "Mastering Corel Presentations," use only the transitions that sharpen and clarify your message.
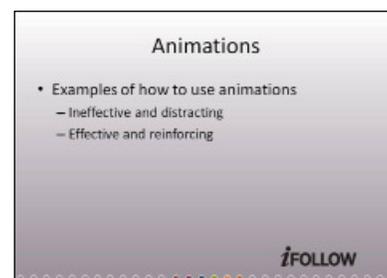
When is it a good idea to use, for example, the "immediate" transition? When you want the new information that appears on the next slide to surprise your audience or make a sudden impact. And there are occasions when other transitions can have a special impact. Often these involve special graphics. For example, a presentation which begins with a slide showing a scroll rolled up, the two rolls with their handles in the center of the slide. The next slide shows the scroll opened, with the two rolls at the extreme right and left of the slide. Using the transition "Sweep Open (Vertical)" to move from the first slide to the second gives the impression that the scroll is unrolling. At the end of that presentation, the process reverses, going from the slide of the open scroll to the slide of the closed scroll using the "Sweep Closed (Vertical)" transition, making it appear that the scroll has been rolled up and closed. That's an example of a special use. Although not as fancy as a video showing a scroll opened and closed, it's pretty effective. And it **adds to the presentation** by signaling to the audience that we are "opening up" a passage of Scripture at the beginning, and that we are "closing it up again" when we are finished. Not essential, not necessary for a good presentation, but a little polish, a little extra that helps the audience understand where we are.

In between the unrolling of the scroll at the beginning, and the rolling up at the end, the "Sweep (Right to Left)" transition can be used to simulate rolling the old material out and the new in. Not a perfect effect, but effective. It gives the viewer the impression that we are progressing through the scroll, and thus focuses and reinforces the transitions in the presentation itself. It means a total of three different transitions in the entire slide show, but almost all the time, the same transition, "Sweep (Left to Right)," is used to give the viewer the sense of moving through the material. The other transitions are used only at the beginning and at the end of that segment to signal the beginning and the end.

There are many creative ways to use the more than 50 transitions, but always subject to the rule of simplicity: when in doubt leave it out. Although the transitions mentioned above make the slide show appear quite polished, it would still be quite effective without them. A simple fade or dissolve transition between slides would work quite well.

Animations

The same rule applies to animations of all kinds. Only if they add to the effectiveness of the presentation should they be included. There are times when an animation makes a point

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nothing else will. But often, they distract some viewers every bit as much as they help others focus. For example, an animation of a flying dove might be inserted into a slide where a diagram included the Holy Spirit. The presenter thought it would be clever to insert this flying dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, but when he gave the presentation, it became clear that the endless flapping of the dove's wings not only distracted but actually annoyed most of the audience. It was a mistake.

Depending upon the software in use, they will be several options for using animations in presentations. In general, these include running the animation once, initiated by mouse click, or to have the animation run in an endless loop. Generally the endless loop will be distracting and annoying to the audience.

An example of an animation used effectively is an animated lighthouse, its beam sweeping from the far right until it flared as it pointed directly at the viewer. Using a mouse click to start the animation made it a dynamic illustration to demonstrate the role of the Christian as a bearer of light in this dark world. The picture of the lighthouse, not moving at first, helped focus the audience on the point, and its single sweep punctuated the point and drove it home. Had it been in an endless loop, it would have distracted the audience and diluted the point.

Bullet Points: The bulleted list has become one of the hallmarks of computer-generated slide shows, and for good reason. Used appropriately, bullet lists reinforce the major points of a presentation and provide visual reminders of the logic. However, the ubiquity of lists has given them a reputation for being boring. There are a number of ways to avoid that.

If it is to have any impact, a written presentation cannot simply be transferred to slides. If all that is said appears on the screen, it will drive the audience crazy. Use bullet points to summarize and compress the major points of the presentation, and to reinforce those points and focus the audience's attention by putting them on the screen. Think of the screen as a blackboard or white board, where only the most important things are listed. Think of the points that show up on the screen as an outline.

Remember the Edgar Bergen principle: the speaker is what's going on. If the screen is distracting or more interesting than the speaker, then the speaker may end up looking like a dummy.

That's why it is important to control the appearance and the timing of everything that shows on the screen. When the speaker starts another
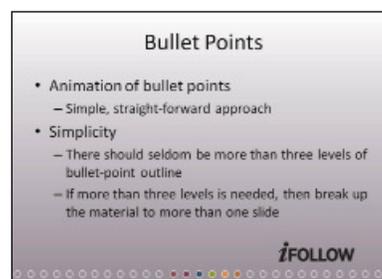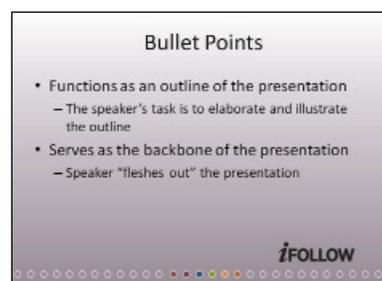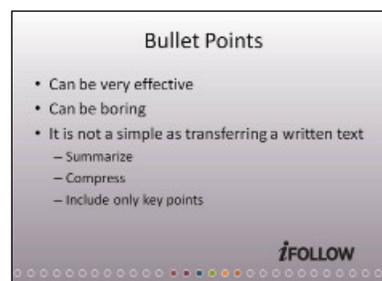
point, that point should show on the screen, but it will be in its simplest, most concise form. The speaker elaborates, delineates, illustrates, and demonstrates the point. Despite what some will say, there is no problem in letting a slide stay on the screen for an extended period of time. If there are multiple points, and the speaker is elaborating on each point, then that set of bullet points might remain on the screen for some time. That the earlier point is not germane at the moment is not a problem. On the contrary, it keeps the audience aware of the progression of the whole topic, even as the most recent point is explained.

Simplicity

Seldom should bulleted lists include more than two levels, **never** more than three. Each new level of indentation in the bulleted list generally results in a smaller typeface, making the point more difficult to read. Going to the fourth level of a bulleted list gives the viewer a structure too complicated to easily comprehend. Usually this indicates the presentation needs to be reorganized. If it is necessary to go to the fourth level of an outline, break up the bulleted list into separate slides. In that case, the first level becomes the title of a slide, and the list on the slide begins with what would have been the second level item. (In the PowerPoint file that goes with this unit, Slide 18 is an example of a slide with too many levels of bullets, too complex structure. Slide 19 and Slide 20 provide an example of how this same material can be broken up into several slides.)

Charts, Maps, and Graphs: Any and all of these can be useful, but as with everything, they should be as simple as possible. The purpose of these is to make the meaning of the presentation clearer, not to add another complication. If possible, their color scheme should not clash with the background. As with everything, if they do not reinforce what the speaker is saying, or if they distract in any way, they should be altered or eliminated.
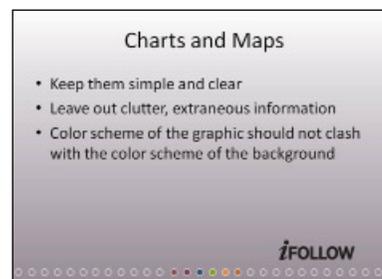
Audio and Video Clips

Hollywood movie producers and directors spend millions of dollars to produce a precise audience response. Professional screenwriters write the lines, cinematographers capture the pictures, sound and sound-effect professionals produce a soundtrack. Sometimes all these things come together in a very compelling way. Contemporary audiences are familiar with famous movie scenes and movie lines, including a video clip can sometimes make a point in ways that a speaker with a static visual cannot.

On the other hand, a seminar presentation is not and should not attempt to be a feature film. The purpose of the seminar is to instruct, not entertain; to communicate information,

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not to provide a spectacular experience. Like everything else, video clips should be subject to the Edgar Bergen principle. Either they reinforce what the speaker is saying and move the audience forward in the presentation, or they are a distraction. Because video is a powerful medium, it can be an especially powerful distraction. Like any other razzle-dazzle element, when in doubt, leave it out.

The best video clips are short. The shorter the better, so long as it makes the point effectively. Rarely will a video clip longer than 30 seconds be effective. A video clip longer than one minute will almost always cause the audience's attention to wander.

If possible, include captioning for video clips or audio clips, so that those who do not hear well still get the point. An audio clip of a song should have the lyrics on the screen.

Text

What ever form the text on the slide takes, whether it's a paragraph or a bulleted list or a verse of Scripture; do not crowd the screen with text. Scripture quotations and quotations from other authors should be as brief as possible. If it is necessary to quote an extended passage, break it up into two or more slides.

Especially with Bible texts or other quotations, it is useful to break the text into easily read and naturally spoken phrases, called "sense lines." (Use the example in the PowerPoint file that accompanies this unit. Compare Slide 19 and Slide 20. Note how much easier it is to read the text in Slide 20. The font is exactly the same size, only the arrangement of the words differs.)
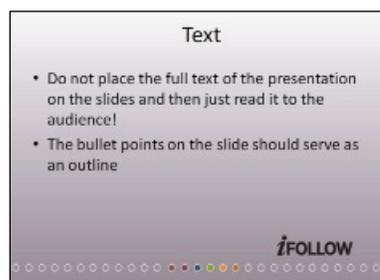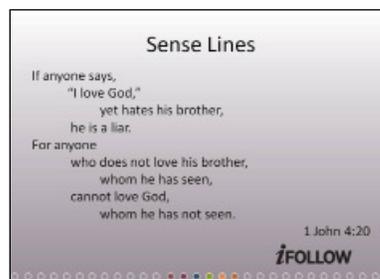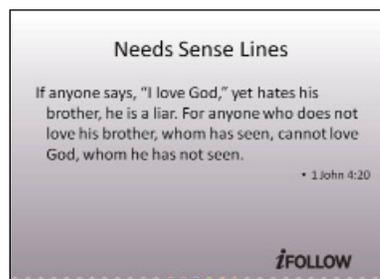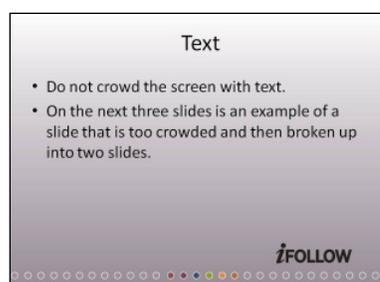
Physical Props

Amid all the excitement over high technology, we can easily forget that some of the best audiovisual materials are real physical items. Jesus often used readily available physical things to illustrate His points. Jeremiah speaks of the potter and his wheel, and of shattered vessels. Jesus mentioned the mustard seed. A peerless teacher, surely He must have held some of the tiny seeds in His hand as He spoke of them and then pointed to a tall mustard plant to drive home His point. Sitting outside, He asked His listeners to consider the lilies growing around them.

Physical props such as these are can be employed to great advantage in almost any setting, including during a presentation of a computer-generated slide show or a series of overhead transparencies. For example, one woman illustrated a children's story about gossip by turning on the fan blowing feathers around the sanctuary (she had cleared this with the pastor and the custodian before she did it). Even a child could see from this that some things are easier to spread than they are to clean up.

When speaking of how sin chews away at our integrity, making it difficult for us to receive love, one pastor slowly tore into the edges of a Styrofoam cup. Years ago, C. Mervyn Maxwell used a vacuum cleaner at the podium to demonstrate that unless we are "connected to our source of power," we can do nothing. No matter how sophisticated the presentation, the use of physical objects brings a special focus and poignancy to illustrations.

Additional Resources

Duarte, Nancy (2008). Slideology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations. Cambridge: O'Reilly.

Moore, Jason and Len Wilson (2006). Design Matters: Creating Powerful Imagery for Worship. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Reynolds, Garr (2008). Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery. Berkeley, CA: New Rider.

Robbins, Jo (1997). High-Impact Presentations: A Multimedia Approach. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Schultze, Quentin J. (2004). High-Tech Worship? Using Presentational Technologies Wisely. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Computer Software

Bible Graphics Studio is a set of templates and photos of Bible stories produced for the NAD Church Resource Center. These lend themselves to a presentation in which a Bible story or theme is going to be used, especially preaching or evangelistic presentation. It can be purchased from AdventSource: www.adventsource.org

Media Shout is a program to mix and manage various kinds of audiovisuals. It is widely used for church services and events. For more information: http://www.mediashout.com/

PowerPoint is the most widely used software today for the creation of slides for presentations. For more information: http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint/default.aspx

Keynote is the parallel program to PowerPoint for Apple computers. For more information: http://www.apple.com/iwork/keynote/

Online Resources

Good Salt is a supplier of art that can be used as backgrounds or illustrations in slide shows. The digital versions can be downloaded from the web site and they also sell 19 different discs with collections of art. Started by two Adventist artists who often do work for Pacific Press and the Review & Herald Publishing Association, Lars and Kim Justinen, it has become the largest supplier of Christian art: http://www.goodsalt.com/

Oxygen Church Media's original Christian PowerPoint collection is a library of 25 CD-
    ROMs that include over 10,000 unique illustrations, images, and PowerPoint
    slides. The website offers presentation sets for download as well as CD-ROMs.
    Oxygen was created by It Is Written Digital Media Group, the same team that
    produced New Beginnings DVD Evangelism and presentation graphics for many
    of the NET satellite evangelistic series.
    http://www.oxygen-multimedia.com

SermonView helps churches communicate visually, with thousands of Christian Pow
    erPoint background sets created specifically for biblical presentations.
    Every presentation set comes with title slides and multiple slide compositions for
    easy-to-assemble graphics for your next presentation, and work with any presen
    tation system from worship software like MediaShout or Easy worship to Power
    Point or Keynote. SermonView also offers money-saving membership options,
    including a plan offering unlimited downloads.
    http://www.sermonview.com

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Discussion Questions

1. Have you seen examples of slide shows that were more distracting than helpful?

2. If so, what did you find most distracting?

3. Can you think of any video clips that you've seen used effectively? Any which worked too long or distracting?

4. Can you remember a sermon or story that used a physical prop effectively? Share with the group.

5. What is the most useful thing you've learned from this topic?

Group Activities

Activity One

Rearrange the following quotation into "sense lines:"

"The beatitudes were His greeting to the whole human family. Looking upon the vast throng gathered to listen to the Sermon on the Mount, He seemed for the moment to have forgotten that He was not in heaven, and He used the familiar salutation of the world of light. From His lips flowed blessings as the gushing forth of a long-sealed fountain." (Ellen White, Education, page 79)

Compare and discuss the different arrangements for clarity and ease of reading.

Activity Two

Set up a lectern and a screen, and give individuals an opportunity to present a simple slide show. Discuss how to improve their performance.