

A-TEENS PRESENTATION TO STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE
“Making Videos to Involve Kids in Your PSR Curriculum”
AUGUST 25, 2018

DENICE: Hello! My name is Denice Flax.

JAYME: I’m Jayme Flax.

DARREN: I’m Darren Flax.

DENICE: (Kid picture) This is Carlee Flax and HarLeigh Flax, who couldn’t be here today. And we are...

A-TEENS: THE FLAXES!!!!!!

DENICE: Ok, guys try again. And we’re....

A-TEENS: (Superhero stance) The A-TEENS!!!

DENICE: I’m sorry, ladies and gentlemen. They are NOT superheroes.

DARREN: (to audience) And what she doesn’t know won’t hurt US!

DENICE: I can hear you. I’m right here.

JAYME: Anyway, we’re here today to show you how to make videos to get kids really involved in your PSR curriculum.

DARREN: If you don’t want to take notes, all the information we’re presenting today will be on the diocesan website, and you are welcome to use it for your class.

JAYME: We don’t have to take notes?

DENICE: No, Jayme — you’re one of the presenters.

JAYME: That’s good — I don’t want to do school stuff on a Saturday.

DENICE: Our mission is to make apologetics videos for teens to teach them about their Catholic faith.

DARREN: We also want to help kids give responses to those who question or attack their faith, but do it in a respectful, confident way.

JAYME: When we do this, we’re hoping that Catholic kids will stay Catholic, or return to the Catholic church.

DENICE: So, we’re wanting to reach as many kids as possible with our videos. To do this, we post our videos on YouTube, social media, and websites.

DARREN: We thought maybe you’d like to see our video. So here is our presentation of “The Terminator.”

DENICE: He MEANS our presentation of “What is Apologetics?” (SHOW VIDEO)

JAYME: You can make videos, too, within your own PSR class. And we'll show you how it's done. You might ask, "Why should I make videos with my class?" The answer is simple: Kids LOVE videos! We watch them all the time! Even when we should be sleeping, or doing our homework, or doing chores...

DARREN: Or maybe we only watch them during our free time, because we would NEVER watch videos when we're not supposed to, right Jayme?

JAYME: Right! Sorry — I got carried away.

DARREN: That's OK — videos are FUN! They're fun to watch AND make, especially when you're starring in them!

DENICE: And there's no better way to learn something than to have to teach it. That's what kids do when they produce a video — they're teaching others.

JAYME: There's also a lot of bad stuff on the internet. If kids are watching videos all the time, why not give them something GOOD to watch?

DARREN: Something good for their minds, hearts, and spirits.

DENICE: Exactly! And there's no easier way to get kids engaged with the curriculum than to do something that they're already interested in!

DARREN: OK, so what do you need to make a video?

JAYME: Snacks — lots and lots of snacks.

DENICE: Maybe you should start with a good laptop — one with as much memory as you can afford.

JAYME: That's because videos eat up a lot of memory. You'll also need a computer to write a script.

DARREN: Yes, you'll NEED a script. You'll not only need it for dialogue, but you'll also need it to plan set-ups.

JAYME: You mean when Darren sets me up to get into trouble? (Darren gives him a dirty look.)

DARREN: No Jayme. A "set-up" is when you get a location ready to shoot a scene. Back to the list.

DENICE: You'll need good software to edit your scenes into one, continuous video. We suggest "iMovie" for Apple devices, which many times comes standard. We suggest "Adobe Premiere Elements" for PC's.

JAYME: There will be a learning curve with this software, so you'll need to mess around with it, or watch some tutorials from the company that makes it.

DARREN: You might even be able to watch a tutorial on YouTube.

JAYME: Or better yet, have a kid edit the video for you!

DARREN: Because everyone knows that kids know more about computers than adults!

DENICE: (sarcastically) Thanks a lot, guys!

JAYME & DARREN: (in unison) You're welcome, Mom!

DENICE: Honestly, you COULD have a kid edit the video. If you're teaching a PSR class with junior high or high school students, chances are good that one of your students is taking a computer class. Use the talents and experience that your students already have.

DARREN: Then, of course, you'll need a video camera. You can use a digital camera, but if you don't have one, use the video setting on your cell phone camera. That's what we did!

JAYME: But your phone needs to have a lot of available memory. Before you start shooting, delete unnecessary emails, texts, voice mails, and recent calls off your phone. Otherwise, your phone won't have enough memory to record the video, which happened to us more than once.

DARREN: You'll also need to use a photo and video saving app, such as Google Photo or iCloud. These apps save your photos and videos automatically in the cloud. Then you can delete them off your phone. This will give you the memory you need to shoot your video. And you'll still have easy access to your photos and videos whenever you want.

DENICE: Consider getting a tripod. You can use one that stands on the floor, or one that stands on a table-top. They even make tripods for cell phones, like this (hold up tripod), which are inexpensive and easy to use. A tripod makes your video more pleasant to watch, because the picture isn't bouncing around.

DARREN: You can also use a selfie stick. But if the person holding the stick is walking, you'll need a stabilizer, such as a small, homemade beanbag, to add weight to the end of the stick. This will help keep the video from bouncing so much.

JAYME: What do you have against bouncing, huh? Bouncing is fun!

DARREN: Not when you're just watching it, Tigger!

DENICE: You'll probably want to get an external microphone. There's no point in making a video if your audience can't hear what you're saying.

DARREN: Many digital video cameras come with external mics, or they are equipped to accommodate others, such as clip-on mics.

JAYME: You can even buy external mics for your cell phone! Oh, what I could do with that!

DENICE: Don't even think about it!

JAYME: C'mon, Mom. I could record you giving me permission to do something, since you always forget when you do that.

DENICE: OK, moving on!

JAYME: You might want to use a few props from time to time. Sometimes a simple prop will add a lot of meaning to what you're saying.

DARREN: What you'll really need is time. It can take a lot of class time to write a script, then more time to shoot the video.

JAYME: But remember, your students will read and discuss the information from their curriculum, translate that information into their own kid "language," then hear the information again when they say their lines in the video. They're hearing the most important information over and over again, which is great when you're a kid like Darren.

DARREN: Hey!!!!

DENICE: Just think of this time as an investment. You're giving your students the time to hear it, discuss it, digest it, and apply it.

JAYME: Which helps your kids REMEMBER IT so they can USE IT! This is really important in life — especially if you're a kid like Darren.

DARREN: MOM, HELP ME!!!!!!!

JAYME: The last thing you should think is that making a video is easy. Buzz, WRONG — it's hard work!

DARREN: Especially when you have kids that keep messing up their lines, or getting off topic, or acting a little crazy, or picking on other kids..... (gives a dirty look to Jayme)

DENICE:or you have to deal with equipment malfunctions. That's when you need the most important thing on this list — a long, hot, bubble bath when you get home!

DARREN: A bubble bath? Seriously?

DENICE: What you don't need are costumes. Just let the kids be themselves — or someone else!

JAYME: (As Eugene) I told ya, Denice, we need to get this presentation movin'!

DARREN: (As Babs) Deniiiiiiice, you need to listen to your father!

DENICE: My FATHER???!!!

DARREN: (As mountaineer) I'm an expert at huntin', fishin', trappin', and survival skills.

JAYME: (As Eugene) I just love that coon-skin cap! Where did ya get it? Wal-Mart? I used to be a greeter there!

DARREN: (As mountaineer) No sir! I made it all by my lonesome!

DENICE: Give your students the freedom to be creative. Just make sure you set boundaries before and when their creativity goes too far.

JAYME: (As Eugene) Denice, when would we ever go too far, huh?

DENICE: Remember — bubble baths, lots and lots of bubble baths! OK, so let's give them some sort of timeline.

DARREN: First, you'll need to choose a topic for your video. You could do apologetics, a kid or teen rosary....

DENICE:a promotion for church camp, PSR classes, Vacation Bible School, fund-raising projects, or what you learned in PSR this year...

JAYME: a documentary of the history of your church, the life of a patron saint, or the passion of Jesus Christ....

DARREN:or how-to's about the sacraments for those receiving them for the first time, such as First Reconciliation, First Communion, or Confirmation.

JAYME: Wow — I wish we could have watched a video about that stuff. That would have been very helpful!

DARREN: I know, I know — especially for a kid like me. (Thumbs-up and goofy smile)

DENICE: Next, you'll need to write a script. Remember — you'll still use your curriculum. Make a brief outline of what needs to be in your video.

JAYME: Next, you need to teach a concept, then ask your kids, "How do we want to say this in our script?" Take their ideas and write them into a script on a laptop.

DENICE: As you work, do "read-throughs" with your kids. When you hear the script out loud, you may want to make changes. Make sure you have a good introduction and conclusion.

DARREN: There's several steps before you ever start shooting. When you're done with your script, you need to get approval from your DRE or your local priest.

JAYME: Once you get their approval, it's a good idea to get approval from parents. They need to know what you're doing with their kids.

DENICE: Remember, if mama ain't happy....

A-TEENS:ain't NOBODY happy!

DARREN: Then you need to make a plan of what you're going to shoot where. We suggest printing out your script, then writing locations in the margin.

JAYME: Once you do that, you'll need to make a list of set-ups, or every scene that will be shot in a particular location, and what you need to set-up the scene, like props, cue cards, or equipment.

DARREN: For example, we wanted to shoot scenes in our church, rectory, school, and football field.

JAYME: So we made a list of what we needed in each location, so that we could shoot every scene in a particular place before we moved to another location. This saves a lot of time!

DENICE: After you have figured out your set-ups plan, get permission to use locations. If you want to use your school, ask school administration. If you want to use a specific house or outdoor location, ask the owner. We suggest asking in an email or text, so that you have a written record of getting permission that has a date and time stamp.

JAYME: But remember — shooting the video may take several class periods. The longer the script, the more time you'll use.

DARREN: And you have to plan to do several takes of the same scene. Kids will mess up their lines from time to time. Even adults do that, right Mom?

DENICE: Yes — what's your point?

DARREN: OK, moving on!

JAYME: Anyway, once you have shot all your scenes, it's time to edit the scenes into one, continuous video. We suggest doing this outside of class, or having one or two students doing the editing while the others participate in class.

DARREN: You can use music and sound effects during this process. There are free music and sound effects banks online. Just make sure that you check copyright law before you use it in your video. Most of the time, if your video uses short excerpts of songs or sound effects as a parody or for educational, non-profit purposes, you'll be fine.

JAYME: Don't forget to include credits at the end of your video. It's also important to cite books or materials you used, and include thank-you's to those who let you use locations and props.

DENICE: Now it's time to PARTY! You need to have this fun time with your students. You have all accomplished a huge project, and you need to celebrate.

DARREN: We had a cast party with our priest to eat pizza, brownies, and ice cream. Then we showed him the video!

JAYME: Our priest loved our video! After our cast party, parents came to view the video. Then we asked them to sign permission forms to let the video become public.

DENICE: The most important thing you need to remember is to ALWAYS be aware of internet predators. If you use names of the kids, use only first names. Don't refer to the name of your church, school, or city. Make sure that kids don't wear spirit wear or family reunion shirts, which reveal their last names or where they attend school.

DARREN: Be aware of the information that you reveal in the credits. Be vigilant, and PROTECT YOUR STUDENTS!

JAYME: Yeah, 'cause we deserve to be protected!

DARREN: And they deserve being protected from us! Wait a minute — that didn't sound right.

DENICE: OK, now that they know the how's and why's of making a video, let's show them some common mistakes that we that made in our video.

DARREN: These are mistakes that a lot of people make when shooting a video. You can fix these errors before they happen when you know what to do. Many times you can do it without expensive equipment.

JAYME: One mistake we made is that we shot a scene in front of a very busy background.

(ALL watch scene — “best cheeseburger”)

DARREN: The background distracts the viewer from the actors. Shoot scenes in front of simple, yet interesting backgrounds, or in locations where the background adds to the meaning of the scene.

JAYME: Another mistake we made is poor audio quality.

(ALL watch scene — “color-by-number”)

DARREN: This is corrected by using external mics that are close to the actors, either with a boom mic or clip-on mics. We used a subtitle during editing to fix the scene.

DENICE: Another audio mistake happened while we were shooting outside.

(ALL watch scene — “Jayme in car”)

JAYME: The wind makes it hard to understand what I’m saying. Use a special microphone sock to cut the noise of the wind, or use a portable screen to block the wind on three sides.

DENICE: Poor lighting or overhead lighting is a common mistake when shooting a video.

(ALL watch scene — “Expert / raccoon”)

JAYME: We shot this scene in the shade of a tree, which made shadows on Carlee’s face. If you don’t have access to lighting equipment, you can use white boards to reflect light onto an actor.

DARREN: Boards with a shiny surface reflect light better. Use a foam display board, or attach clear contact paper on a cardboard one. You can also use aluminum foil as a reflector.

JAYME: Another lighting mistake is backlighting.

(ALL watch scene — “Scooby Doo”)

DENICE: The backlighting from the doorway makes it difficult to see the actors. Shoot the scene at night, choose a different location, or use front lighting to diminish the effects of backlighting.

DARREN: We did do many things right. First of all, for panned shots, we set the tripod on a flat music stand, then turned the stand to follow the action. The shot was SMOOOOOOOTH.

JAYME: We also used small dry-erase paddles for cue cards. You can’t see our eyes moving back and forth, so it’s hard to tell that we were reading our lines.

DENICE: The props we used were things we brought from home, made from simple materials, or were bought on sale.

JAYME: Saving our mistakes was the best thing we did. We turned several of them into a blooper reel, which is really funny.

DENICE: The best thing about this type of project is watching your students watch themselves in the video. They love it, and they are very proud of their video when it’s done. Just remember, in all the missed lines, craziness, and hard work, you’re bringing God to your students.

DARREN: So you see, making a video is something you can do on a tight budget, with very little equipment. You can even make videos with children younger than teens.

JAYME: If you need help, all you have to do is email us at this address (flax.denice517@yahoo.com). We’d be happy to assist you in any way we can. After all, we’re....

ALL: (Superhero stance) The A-TEENS!

