

50 Free or Cheap Resources for Ministries

Miscellaneous Useful Resources

1. www.teamviewer.com – Ever need to access your home or office computer while you are away? Team Viewer is who I'd recommend. You can login from either another computer or your smart phone and control your computer remotely.
2. www.openoffice.org – Microsoft Office is expensive. If you don't have it, there's an awesome open source and free office application called Open Office. It has its own version of Word (called "Writer"), Excel (Calc), Powerpoint (Impress), and Access (Base). What makes this truly great is that it can open and save normal Office documents.
3. Google Drive and Google Docs – If you need to edit files and don't have Microsoft Office, this is another good alternative. This option is available to anyone with a Google account. The major bonus here is that you can open and edit Word and Excel files from anywhere with an internet connection. Google Drive is a cloud server option similar to Dropbox, and allows you to share your files with others with a simple shared link.
4. [Evernote](#) or [OneNote](#) – You are getting two resources for the price of one here (both are free ☺). Both applications are great for taking notes, and can sync your notes between your desktop, your laptop, your tablet and your phone. Personally I prefer the organization style of One Note, but I know many that love how flexible Evernote is. Both applications allow you to save pictures, videos, PDFs and whole web pages as notes. These are both great options for people that need to stay organized (which includes just about every children's ministry leader and volunteer I've ever met...).
5. www.getpocket.com – I haven't focused much at all on phone and tablet apps, but this is probably my alltime favorite phone app, and it's perfect for busy ministry leaders. I constantly come across articles online that I'd love to read, but don't have the time to give. With the pocket app, you can click a little button in your browser, and the article will get added to a queue on your phone automatically. It's so slick, and keeps me from wasting so much time on Facebook.
6. www.goodsearch.com – GoodSearch is a search engine that donate a penny to your non-profit organization every time someone uses the search engine. Getting set up with GoodSearch is totally free. While one penny doesn't sound like much, if you get a whole church of people using it for all their normal everyday searches, those pennies really add up. Skyview has raised several hundred dollars in camper scholarships purely through GoodSearch.
7. www.goodshop.com – GoodShop is similar in concept to GoodSearch, except here, when you go to online stores through GoodShop, and then purchase something online, that retailer will donate between 1% and 10% of the sale to your non-profit. This is a much faster way of raising money, and just about every major online retailer participates.

Design

8. www.ColorBlender.com – Give this website a color, and it will give you 6 colors that compliment it. This is a great place to go when you need to design something and have no clue where to start, or even what colors to use.
9. www.stripegenerator.com (Slide 2)– This does exactly what you think it does, generate stripes. If you want to create a striped background for a design or web project, this website gives you some really great looking stripes in seconds, and it is super easy to use.
10. Adobe Creative Cloud (Slide 3)– Photoshop is a phenomenal program with infinite possibilities. It's what I use to design every brochure and website I build, and I'd recommend any ministry that wants to be taken seriously to start using this program too. 5 years ago, if you wanted to use Photoshop, you'd have to pay \$500 to \$800 for the privilege. Now, you can purchase a monthly subscription to use the latest version of Photoshop for \$10.00 a month! If you are interested in Adobe's other applications, like Premiere and After Effects, these can also be found in the Creative Cloud for much cheaper than it would cost to buy it. You can check out their plans here: <https://creative.adobe.com/plans>
11. GIMP (Slide 4)– If you want to go *even cheaper* with your graphic design application, you can use a free program called GIMP (download it here: <http://www.gimp.org/>). GIMP acts very much like Photoshop, but it is open source and freely available. To be honest, I find that GIMP feels a little clunky after having used Photoshop for the last 10 years, but it can definitely get the job done if you are in a crunch. GIMP can even open Photoshop files, which is really handy.
12. <https://creativemarket.com/free-goods> (Slide 5)- Creative Market is a really top notch online store for designers. What's even better is that they give away excellent free stuff all the time. And if you like their Facebook page, you can double what you get from them free, every single week. I've found tons of great backgrounds, Photoshop actions, brushes, fonts and more here.
13. www.brusheezy.com – Photoshop Brushes act like stamps that you can use in your design. Some brushes are more abstract and recreate the look of watercolor, chalk, sponges and other real world artistic tools. Many other brushes imitate the shapes of objects like animals, plants, buildings, people and more. They provide a super easy way to make your design look more professional, and Brusheezy.com has a ton of awesome free Photoshop brushes.
14. www.iconarchive.com (Slide 6)– Ever wanted an icon or logo for a project? I use this site all the time because it offers thousands of excellent icons for just about anything you can think of. Whether you need a sharp looking Facebook icon or an icon for your church ministry, this is a great place to start looking.
15. www.thebestdesigns.com (Slide 7)– I'm not that creative. Most of my best designs are just ~~stolen~~ inspired from work that I see elsewhere. TheBestDesigns.com is an excellent site to go and grab inspiration for your next design project. This website features websites, but even if you are designing a flyer or sign, it still can give you great direction for color combinations, font ideas, and more.
16. www.designinspiration.net – This is another great place to get some ideas about your next design. You now have no excuse for producing something boring. Warning, this site is super addictive... it's hard to get away once you start scrolling through design ideas.

17. www.google.com/fonts - Speaking of fonts, Google's font library is completely free and completely legal to use in any way, shape or form that you choose. There are tons of really excellent fonts to choose from. You can even use their fonts on your website.
18. www.cgtextures.com – This website is all about backgrounds. You can find just about any background texture you can imagine, from rusty metal to green grass to faded wood planks. All you need is a free user account to get started.
19. www.wordle.net (Demonstration)– Give this website a chunk of text, and it will give you a clever design using that text. The bigger the word, the more common the word in your chunk of text. At the very least, this site is a ton of fun, but you could definitely use this site to produce t-shirt designs, poster designs, and more.
20. www.digitalartsonline.co.uk/tutorials - This website is packed full of excellent Photoshop tutorials. If want to learn how to use that new cheap Photoshop, this is a great place to start.

Photography

21. www.digital-photography-school.com (Slide 8)– This is an *excellent* place to learn the basics of photography. There are articles and examples on just about every kind of photography in existence. If you want to get better at taking pictures of kids in your ministry and capturing those events well, this is where I'd go. I'd also recommend signing up for their weekly newsletter. It's super helpful and is full of really great information.
22. www.pixabay.com – Photos for your projects can be tough to find, especially if you want to keep it strictly legal and don't want to spend a ton of money. Pixabay satisfies both of these needs and really offers an excellent selection of resources. If you need a background or an object for a flyer, check out their resources first.
23. www.flickr.com (Demonstration)– Flickr is a massive repository of photos from all around the world. All you need to do is search for Creative Commons Commercial photos, and you will find photos that are completely legal to use in your next project (design project, Power Point background, etc.).
24. www.morguefile.com – Every photo at morguefile.com is available for your use. I find the selection isn't as good as Flickr, but it sometimes nail exactly what I need.
25. images.google.com – Google's Image search is also a great place to find photos, but not every photo is commercially available. You want to be careful not to use a photo or part of a photo that has a copyright being applied. To find the copyright free photos, search for a photo, click the Search Tools tab, and then click "Not filtered for license" and choose "Labeled for Reuse". The photos that show up are copyright free and available for you to use.
26. www.photosynth.net (Demonstration)– It's become pretty easy to create panoramic photos on newer cameras and phones. Photosynth takes this ability to the next level. Take pictures from all around you, give them to Photosynth, and it will create a 3D space you can look around in. This could provide a great way to show potential new families your church facilities.
27. picasa.google.com – Maybe you don't need all the power and complexity of Photoshop. Maybe you just need to edit a photo, and move on with life. Picasa is the perfect program for this. Picasa allows you to organize your photos and make quick edits to your photos, like cropping, changing lighting and more. It's super easy to use, and costs nothing.
28. www.cgsecurity.org/wiki/PhotoRec (Slide 9)- Ah! I just took a ton of photos of kids at the AWANA grand prix, and now my SD card says it has an error, and there are no photos! What can

I do? There are actually several great programs out there, but PhotoRec is the very best in my opinion. It is super lightweight, and has produced the best results in my own experience. It's not the most user friendly option, but if you read how to use it for about three minutes, you should have a good chance of recovering your photos.

Website Resources

29. www.wufoo.com (Demonstration and Slide 10)– This is hands down the easiest way to handle online registrations and online payment. If you need to set up a sign-up form for your next children's event, Wufoo forms can be built in just a few minutes. If you need online payment, Wufoo integrates with lots of different merchant providers like Paypal. Wufoo offers an introductory free service, but you'll need to buy a subscription to access their online payment features. There are no contracts, and no minimum terms. I'd recommend purchasing just as many months as you need, and downgrading when you don't need it. You can either link directly to a form, or add embed code to your website.
30. www.mixlr.com (Slide 11)– If you've ever wanted to record and stream your church service for free, this is the tool to do it. Simply create an account, download the app, and connect your audio, and you are all set. Mixlr provides code to allow you to easily embed your service on your website. And if you find that you need more than the free hour per day they offer, you can buy three hours for \$5.00, which is a huge bargain in my opinion.
31. www.dropbox.com (Demonstration of Photo Galleries)– This isn't a new resource at all, but if you aren't using it, you are seriously missing out. This will replace the need to burn files to disk, use a flash drive or email multiple attachments. Dropbox is a free service that allows you to share files and folders with other people. You can sync your files and even create photo galleries in seconds. There are some other cloud services offered by Google, Apple and Microsoft, but Dropbox is still my favorite for its ease of use and intuitive functionality.
32. www.zapier.com – Zapier is all about automation. Basically it takes different web services and ties them together automatically. So, for example, maybe you'd like all of your email attachments to automatically get added to a folder in your Dropbox. You could set up a "Zap" to accomplish this. Many of their zaps are free, and the number of companies and applications they can connect is pretty mind-blowing. If you need two or more web services to "talk" to each other, check this service out.
33. www.mailchimp.com – Email Newsletters offer an excellent way for you to connect with parents and send event announcements. MailChimp's free email newsletter service is a great value for the money (\$0.00). You can set up contact lists, build really sharp looking email newsletters and see who's actually reading your email messages. This is more convenient than trying to send email from your Gmail account, and makes you look professional at the same time.
34. www.getfirebug.com – If you are at all interested in getting into the nuts and bolts of your website, and working with the code, the Firebug tool is invaluable. Firebug is an add-on for the Firefox browser, and it allows you to inspect web pages, edit code, simulate updates and troubleshoot website issues.

Video

35. www.animoto.com (Demonstration)– You no longer have an excuse to put together boring slide presentations. Animoto has been around for a few years now, and it provides an awesome, cheap way to display photos and videos. Create an account, give Animoto your photos, videos, music and any captions, and let it do the rest.
36. www.videoblocks.com – If you need high quality stock video for cheap, this is where I'd suggest you look. Their library would work equally well for promotional videos and video backgrounds on presentations. They even have quite a few After Effects templates if you want to make your work look really cool. VideoBlocks offers free trial periods all the time. So you could very likely get all the media you want without paying a dime.
37. www.audioblocks.com – This is the sister site to videoblocks.com, and offers stock music and stock sound effects. The selection is decent, and just like videoblocks, you can often get music for free if you wait for their trial periods to come around.
38. www.archive.org – If you are looking for old vintage film clips to use in your next video project, this is a great place to check out. Archive.org is a huge repository of audio and video files that have been released into the public domain. I often use this site for finding old historical and public service announcement PSA's.
39. www.freesound.org (Demonstration)– If you need sound effects, this website has got you covered. There are thousands of different sound effects for just about any project you can think of. If you get creative, you could even create a game using sound effects from this site (think "Guess the Animal" or "Which Sound Doesn't Fit?").
40. www.youtube.com/my_live_events - Want to create a live stream of an event going on at church? Want to allow families on the road or those who can't travel from home to still take part in your church service? Youtube's relatively new live streaming feature fits this bill perfectly. With a camera, a computer, a Youtube account and an internet connection, you can broadcast your next event or church service for free to anyone who tunes in online.
41. DVD-to-Video Conversion – I'm not advocating illegal copying of videos for the reason of selling or distributing them. This is more for the intent of showing a video clip in your ministry. First, I'd recommend using MakeMKV to pull the DVD files off the DVD. Second, use the program HandBrake to convert your MKV files to more manageable MP4 files. From there, you can easily include a video clip without having to rely on finding the right spot on a DVD.
42. gracewaymedia.com/Free (Slide 13) – Graceway Media gets used by tons of churches, but it's still worth mentioning here. Graceway produces really excellent video backgrounds, video introductions, sermon intros and much more. On top of that, Graceway creates matching design packages, allowing you to produce whole presentations based around a central theme. If you aren't much of a designer or video editor, but want to look sharp anyway, Graceway is an excellent option.
43. GoPro Cameras (Possible Demo)– GoPro cameras are little tiny cameras that you can mount just about anywhere. They are rugged and can take quite a beating, but are still great at shooting high quality video and stills. In your children's ministry, you could strap a GoPro onto one of your kids during a big group game to grab some video, or shoot a time lapse during a children's

ministry event. A new GoPro just came out this past week, so if you go looking for older generations on ebay, you could snag a really great deal (i.e. less than \$100).

44. www.videomaker.com – This is a one-stop destination for anything video education related. This site includes video production how to tips, equipment reviews and film critiques. The guys running the site know their stuff, and they have the gift of communicating what they know in an informative, helpful way. This site will help you get better at video.
45. www.swank.com – Some of my favorite times with other Christians have been when we have watched movies together. Swank.com is a film public performance licensor. Basically, if you want to show a movie at your church or church event, you can purchase licensing for a very reasonable price, and show the movie without worrying about whether you are within your rights to do so or not. Swank's library is not exhaustive, but tends to lean more heavily towards family friendly and children's movies. It's definitely worth checking out for your next church event.

Audio

46. www.spotify.com (Demonstration at the Beginning)– Spotify gives you access to nearly every song ever recorded or performed. It's similar to the Pandora music service, except you have full control of what's playing. Spotify is a really excellent option for creating background music playlists for events going on at church. If you do use this for background music, I'd recommend purchasing a monthly subscription, and eliminate commercials.
47. audacity.sourceforge.net – Audacity is a free, open source audio recording and editing program. If you are interested in recording sermons at your church, and you want to do it on the cheap, this is the program I'd recommend using. It is pretty bare bones, but it will allow you to edit your audio and export it to MP3 pretty easily.
48. www.musicsevices.org – If you are ever interested in performing a Christian song, including a Christian song in a video or selling your version of a Christian song, Music Services is your go-to Copyright managers. This company will license a Christian song to your organization to use for a very reasonable price. For example, to use a Steven Curtis song in the background of a video you show in church would run about \$25.00.

In Conclusion...

49. www.skyviewranch.org – Skyview Ranch is a Christian Camp located in Millersburg, Ohio. It's where I got my start in my media career, and they would *love* to serve as a resource for you and your ministry. They will come to your church, run games, bring animals, teach God's word in a fun way and take care of your next Children's ministry event. Or if you want to get away, you can go to their 175 acre ranch and ride horses, slide through underground tunnels, roast marshmallows over a giant bonfire and go swimming in their lazy river pool. In either case, they want to take care of you, and I can't stress enough how much they love serving local churches.
50. www.numinousmedia.com (Slide #14)– I LOVE LOVE LOVE helping ministries with their media needs. I answer questions for local ministries daily, and have had the privilege of serving many churches with new websites and other design needs. You can email me anytime at ryan@numinousmedia.com, or you can give me a call anytime at 740-438-8851. I'd be glad to answer your media and tech questions.