09.18.03 Easy Background Graphics for Worship Projection

Making beautiful graphics and backgrounds for your worship presentation software isn't as hard as you might think! For your convenience, the article "Graphics, Google & Worship" from the 09/09/03 issue of the WorshipIdeas.com newsletter is at the end of this eBook, and will show you how to locate free images on Google.com. Take these simple steps and create a still video image background for your service this Sunday.

>Download the free PhotoPlus 5.5 from Serif Software and install. You get what you pay for, but this free program has some powerful features.

http://www.freeserifsoftware.com/serif/ph/ph5/index.asp

>Create a master slide. This slide will be a template for you to create your worship image. Slide dimensions for computer monitors are:

> **width**=720 pixels
> **height**=540 pixels
> **resolution**=72 pixels
> **background**=white

>Search for free images on Google.com that might serve as an appropriate background for your Sunday service (read the article at the end of this eBook for directions.) Save the image to your hard drive. Make a folder on your computer called "WorshipImages" so you can quickly find your images in the future.

I'll demonstrate with the image I found by typing "fall leaves" on the Google image search. I saved this image file to my hard drive, naming it "leaves." I then opened it in PhotoPlus 5.5. Now, let's size the image to fit our master slide.

In PhotoPlus 5, editing the "leaves" image (it's on top, and your white master slide is under it), click the "Image" tab to bring up a menu. Look down and select "Image Size." First change the resolution to 72. Then change the width of the "leaves" image to 720 and the height to 540.

Make sure you UNcheck "Maintain aspect ratio" at the top of the box. When the image is resized, it will stretch a bit, but this won't matter with this particular image.

Now copy the image, and bring up your white master slide (selecting it will bring it to the front so you can edit it.)

Click >Edit >Paste >As New Layer, and the re-sized leaves image will appear on and cover your white master slide.

Your image is now made up of two layers: the white master slide layer and the new leaves image layer. On the right of your screen is the Layer Manager box where you can select each layer to edit it.

>Note on aspect ratio: let's say you have an image of someone's face, and it was 200 pixels wide by 500 pixels high. If you CHECKED "Maintain aspect ratio" the image would be forced into the size of 720 by 540, and the face would be distorted. Here's how to fix this:

Select "Image Size" and with "Maintain aspect ratio" CHECKED, then make the resolution 72. Then make the width 720. Copy the image, then switch to the white master slide. Paste as new layer, then click the move tool. The image is too big for the white master slide, but you can adjust it by using the Move Tool on the left side of your screen.

>Make different versions of the leaves background slide - for general purpose and lyrics background. You now have 2 layers - the leaves image and the white master slide.

First, export this image as a jpg, naming it something like "leavesslide.jpg." This will be a solid background you can use in your software. Make sure you EXPORT the image, NOT save it! Saving the image saves it in editable form which PhotoPlus can manipulate, while exporting creates the finished slide.

leaves slide

Next, notice how you can change the opacity in the layer manager (box on the right side of your screen). Select the leaves image layer (not the original white master slide layer) and change the opacity to 25%. See how faint it is? Perfect for a background for dark colored song lyrics. Export this image as something like "leavesback.jpg."

**leaves background for
dark colored lyrics**

Here's how to make a darker leaves background to use with white or light colored lyrics. Select the white master layer. On the left side of the screen, click the Flood Fill Tool. A Color box on the right side of the screen should have different tabs - Color and Brush Tip. Select the Color tab (Color Mode - RGB), and enter:

R=147
G=47
B=71

A nice, dark red will result. With the Flood Fill Tool selected, and the white layer selected, click the image and it will fill with the dark red color. Because the leaves image is still 25% opaque, the whole image has taken on a deep red. This background could be used for white or light colored lyrics.

**leaves background for
light colored lyrics**

Example: Steven (Mr. PowerPoint at my church) created his own image of a chain for our pastor's sermon, titled "Freedom! Christ Setting Us Free." Although Steven has the professional (and expensive) Adobe Photoshop software, you can try something similar with your free PhotoPlus. (By the way, although Adobe Photoshop costs hundreds of dollars, you can often find Photoshop's little brother, Photoshop Elements, for under $100. Photoshop Elements has many of the same powerful features of the full Photoshop version.)

Steven manipulated a generic image of chains by adding a blue background and making the chains image opaque. He used this slide for the sermon points. Then painting out a link at the top of the image, he created a slide for the sermon's final point - freedom in Christ. He made the third song lyrics background by making the chain image even more opaque.

>**More easy tricks:**

>**Color blends.** Go back to the Flood Fill Tool. See the little skinny bar next to it with a downward arrow? Click that bar and you'll be able to select a box that fades from black to white. Go to the Color box on the right side of the screen and you'll see your red box covering a white box. Click the white box to select it, and enter:

    R=97
    G=123
    B=0

This results in a deep green. Now, using the black-fading-to-white Flood Fill Tool, click at the top of the image and draw a line down the center. This should make the leaves fade from red to green, top to bottom. You can click from top to bottom, corner to corner or side to side.

color blend

>Announcements: click "Text Tools" on the left bar. Now click on the leaves image. A box will pop up and you can enter text. Play with different fonts and sizes, but be careful to stay away from weird, gimmicky fonts. I typed "Fall Festival!" using the font Bernard Condensed at 125 points. Clicking "enter" inserts the text into the image. Using the Move Tool on the left side bar allows you to grab the text and center it. Setting the opacity to 75% makes the text blend better with the image. Not bad for a free program!

>Scripture: select a favorite verse and find an image to support the theme. For the "leaves" slide I've selected Ecclesiastes 3:1. I entered the verse into the text box, just like I did above with "Fall Festival." At the top of this text box you'll see margin options - flush left, center and flush right. I selected flush right, found a classy font and broke up the verse into phrases by hitting the enter key so it would look good on screen. I positioned the verse using the Move Tool.

I chose a yellowish color but it was too bright, so I made it 90% opaque. Notice how I left a margin. Then I created the reference, made the text 20 points smaller, made it 70% opaque for contrast and positioned it under the verse with the Move Tool.

verse slide with good font

Notice my other choice of font. I like this font better, but there's a problem - see the last two phrases - the stems of the letters look cluttered. You don't have the flexibility to fix this spacing problem with this free program, so I used the other font instead.

verse slide with awkward font

09/09/02 Google, Graphics & Worship (WorshipIdeas.com newsletter)

http://www.google.com

The Google search engine has to be one of the highest achievements of the human mind. Just think about it for a moment... type any topic you can think of into the search field and you're on your way to almost unlimited knowledge. How does this apply to worship? Read on, but first, a brief background.

Google (a twist on the word "googol," a math term for 1 followed by 100 zeros) was only five years old on September 7, and has quickly become a vital part of the Internet. The website performs 200 million searches each day - more than 2,300 every second in 88 languages. Surpassing Yahoo, Webcrawler, Lycos and other weaker search engines, Google now conducts 75% of all Internet searches with a unique, powerful and fast searching method. Google returns your searches based on website popularity, ranking results by the links to them from other websites.

If you don't use Google, start now - make it your browser's homepage. I can find things on this search engine I can't find on others. I consult it almost daily for all kinds of worship activities, like:

1. Graphics for presentation software and sermon illustrations. Google has an incredible graphics search feature. It's legal to use images you find in a worship setting (although you may NOT use the images outside of worship, like in bulletins, postcards, flyers, newsletters, websites, etc.)

The US copyright law of 1976 contains a clause that allows for churches to use still images in the context of worship. It's in section 110, subsection 3. Here's a link:

http://www.copyright.gov/title17/92chap1.html#110

Also, this law only applies to the United States, not to those of you in other countries.

Try this: go to Google, click the "images" tab at the top and you'll go to the images search page. Type "fall leaves" (WITHOUT quotes) and up will pop thousands of images. As of 09/08/03, the first two images on the results screen are excellent. They're also identical, but notice the second one is a larger file. Go with larger files - the larger they are, the higher the resolution, and the better the image will look on your projection screen.

Next, clicking on one of the samples will take you to a split screen. The top portion will have the image, the bottom portion will have the page where the image originated. Clicking on the top image will often result in a larger image appearing in your browser. If a larger image is available, right click it and save it to your hard drive for later use.

Wouldn't this nice image of leaves look great on your screen as a background for song lyrics? Try lightening it for use with lyrics in a photo editing program, and keep the original for a rich video backdrop.

The possibilities of Google's image search are endless for sermon topics, holidays and other special events. Use different phrases: "communion" and "Lord's supper" bring up different pictures. Need an image for advent? Try "advent candle" or "Christmas candle."

You'll find good images and some not so good images, and occasionally you'll find a fantastic image. Keep looking and keep trying different phrases.

2. Praise song lyrics. Yes, I have CCLI's SongSelect so I'm legally covered, but sometimes I'm just too lazy to login and retrieve the lyrics I need for PowerPoint!

3. Song searches. Ever have a few lyrics floating around your head but don't know the song title or artist? Try typing those lyrics, in quotes, in Google's search field. For instance, the other day I had the words of some hymn in my head, but couldn't remember the title. I typed "Thy tribute bring" into Google's search field and the seventh result matched the hymn I was looking for: "Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven."

Google's great for locating obscure CDs, too. I heard a different radio version of "Shout to the Lord" that I loved and tracked it down, through Google, to an obscure recording by Aaron Benward on a artist compilation CD. Type in the name of your favorite band or artist and their website will probably show up.

A note on quotes: they refine your search. Typing in "You are Holy" without quotes produces results that contain the words "you," "are" and "holy." These common words bring up way too many results that aren't what I'm looking for. Using the quotes will find instances of the >exact< phrase "You are Holy," the title of a popular praise song. Typing this phrase with quotes yielded the lyrics I wanted at the bottom of the search page.

Other handy uses:

1. Popup blocker. I hate popups, and since I do so much searching on the Net for lyrics, images and other worship stuff, they've become quite a nuisance. Google's new toolbar fixes that, with an excellent popup blocker. It installs for free on the PC Internet Explorer browser. To date it has blocked 368 pesky ads from my computer! The toolbar has other nifty features, like an imbedded Google search field at the top of your browser window. Download your free Google toolbar here:

http://toolbar.google.com

2. Google Answers. Although this feature doesn't necessarily relate to worship, it's so unbelievable I had to tell you my experience with it.

In addition to writing this newsletter, I also enjoy building my websites from scratch. Every year I like to update them with a new technology. At the beginning of this year I tried integrating something called CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) into my HTML code.

If you've ever built and uploaded a website for the first time, you know what a hair-pulling experience it can be! However, with CSS, I pulled out a few more hairs than usual, and just could not figure it out completely.

Then I discovered Google Answers. Google has somehow assembled a team of experts on every topic you can imagine, including web design (not to mention arts, sports, news, computers, health - you name it.) I typed in my specific question about CSS and paid a small fee of $10.00 (fees vary.) Within a few hours, some expert from somewhere completely solved my problem - a small price to pay to have a monumental problem explained that was keeping me up at night!

http://answers.google.com

>Bottom Line: Use Google to make your life easier.

Additional comments:

WorshipIdeas subscriber Bob Castelline wrote me to clarify something I said about using high resolution graphics on your church's projection system:

"Along with leading my praise band at church, I'm a professional photographer and graphic designer. High resolution is necessary for PRINTED images, but on-screen images aren't enhanced at all. Your display monitor/projection/screen is only capable of displaying 72 pixels per inch (now if you're using HDTV, this doesn't count... 99.9% of the world isn't using HDTV for church). So if you use a high-resolution image for an on-screen display, the computer will downsize it to 72 dots per inch. In reality, this hurts you, because it slows down your system unnecessarily and uses a lot of memory.

"However, there is an exception to this rule. If the physical size of the low-res image isn't as large as you'd like it, you're better off with the hi-res image. For example, if you download a low-res image and it's only two inches across, and you want it to fill your whole screen, you're going to sacrifice a lot of image quality stretching it out to fill your screen. In this case, you'd want the hi- res image."