

Tips for entering our video contest

What's a PSA?

A Public Service Announcement is a media message designed to raise public awareness and change behavior. There are numerous approaches to PSAs. Consider searching “best public service announcement videos” online to view examples.

Sometimes shorter is better

Don't feel like you have to use all 90 seconds. Some of the best PSAs are much shorter. The key is to have a very clear message and to make your delivery compelling.

Be original

Resist the temptation to use images, video clips and music created by others (especially if it is not fair-use or you have not purchased a license). Show us what you can do with original images and original video.

Immigration topic

Immigration is a broad topic. Choose one aspect to focus on. Your message could be informational, emotional, frightening, hopeful, etc. Some possibilities are to:

- tell your own story about migrating or working with people who migrate
- look at the situations that cause people to migrate or the loss that occurs when people leave their home country
- explore the treatment of migrants in their new country
- show how migrants contribute to the community
- encourage people to welcome immigrants as our faith calls us to do

Your video does not need to reference the Sisters of Mercy, or the Mercy Critical Concerns, but it should reflect the spirit of the Mercy Community in regards to support for people who migrate.

Voting topic

Voting rights are a core principle in any democracy. Exercising this right in a thoughtful manner is the action of a faithful citizen. Choose a specific focus for your video. Your message could be informational or inspirational. Possible areas of focus include:

- the importance of voting
- the faith and Mercy values that should influence our choices at the ballot box
- sharing the experience of a first-time voter
- the racial discrimination that often plagues the voting process
- information about voting or registering to vote

Your video does not need to reference the Sisters of Mercy, or the Mercy Critical Concerns, but it should reflect the spirit of the Mercy Community in regards to voting. ***Please Note:** As a nonprofit organization in the United States, the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas does not support specific candidates or political parties. Videos that support candidates or political parties will not be eligible for consideration for the video contest.

Tips for producing a great video

Planning

What is the story you want to tell? Brainstorm ideas, then [storyboard](#) or script your plan. Good storytelling keeps viewers interested in your video.

Image Quality

Focus, lighting, frame composition and image stability all contribute to image quality. Careful attention to these details will help you produce a video that people want to watch.

Sound Quality

Not all messages are conveyed visually. Sound is an important component, and not all video cameras are good at recording audio. Paying attention to volume and background noise can help improve sound quality. Subtitles can assist when in places when speech is not clear. If you use them, make sure subtitles are clear and easy to read.

Orientation

Consider producing your video in portrait mode. Since we are interested in videos that can be posted on social media, and will likely be viewed on phones, portrait mode can be a better choice than landscape, which looks better on a computer screen.

Editing and Transitions

Choose essential scenes. Editing to hold the viewer's interest while keeping under 90 seconds and selecting appropriate transitions to move from one scene to the next will keep your video flowing.

Online Resources

Search out online resources that explain the video production process. Watching videos that others have created, and that you like, is another way to get ideas for your video.