

The youth ministry infomercial offer you can't refuse

If you've ever met Pat Sprankle and Sean Comber, you know they are both creative and innovative. Pat's the youth minister at St. Louis in Clarksville and recently was honored with the Cardinal Shehan Award for his service. Sean is a college-aged young adult who has been a major contributor in recent years with Archdiocese of Baltimore youth and young adult multimedia presentations.

Recently, the two got together to create a really cool video for St. Louis youth ministry in the form of an late-night infomercial. It's both funny and informative. And, it comes at the low, low price of free. Sean was kind enough to answer some questions about how the video came together. Check out his answers below and watch the video.

Matt: How did you come aboard the project?

Sean: Pat Sprankle and I were talking around Christmas time about doing a new video for the St Louis CYM program because their old one was nearing the end of its life cycle and it was time to make some changes. To answer this question, it was simply being at the right place at the right time and having a conversation.

Matt: Where did the idea come from?

Sean: We wanted something that would be fun to watch and grab attention, while still getting across important information. In my mind this could only lead to a cheesy infomercial where the product being sold was the program.

Matt: What got you pumped about doing something like this?

Sean: I really loved the concept of this video. Everything about this video was fun for me. It's fun to write something so crazy and it's fun to go into editing with the thought, "How can I make this absolutely insane?" The idea that I can get away with cheesy 50s music and kids cheering when the offer is doubled, was incredibly fun for me.

Matt: How long was the shoot and at what locations?

Sean: The shoot was back in March and took place at St. Louis Parish in a classroom that is used as a multipurpose room. My crew arrived at around 2:30 p.m. and left around 10:30 p.m.. We also visited a few CYM activities and shot interviews.

Matt: How did you guys get everyone in it to go along with it?

Sean: This was pretty easy. For the interviews we can simply tell people that we are shooting a promotional video and the general reaction is excitement. For the main characters, however, after talking about the idea and script, everyone seemed to be very interested in what we could pull off.

Matt: How did you pull off the infomercial look?

Sean: A lot of the infomercial look came from the writing of the script. There are certain catch phrases that need to be a part of the video to make it look like a infomercial such as: "But wait, we'll double the offer," "That's not all" and "Money back guarantee." All this combined with good acting, cheesy music and backdrop and the before and after shots make it really seem like an infomercial.

Matt: What program did you use to do the editing and sound?

Sean: All the video editing is done in Adobe After Effects and Premiere. All sound is edited in Pro Tools.

Matt: Did you use any green screen?

Sean: This video is almost entirely green screen. With the exception of the interviews and the before and after shot, everything was shot on a green screen.

Matt: Did you have to do a lot of takes with the cast?

Sean: Yes. We did a total of three runs of the script getting close shots, mid shots and full shots. Additionally, within each run we did at least four or five takes for each scene.

Matt: How happy are you with the finished product?

Sean: I was very happy with how the finished product ended up. I was very pleased to see that all the jokes landed and the concept worked. Additionally I am pleased to see that the general consensus for the video is positive and everyone involved seems to be very happy with it.

Matt: What's your favorite moment in there?

Sean: I love that we were able to do the obvious before and after shots with shaky footage and desaturated video turning into smooth vibrant footage. This was especially fun for me and really makes it into the stereotypical infomercial.

Matt: Why is being involved in youth ministry, including as a young adult, so important to you?

Sean: I have learned a ton from being involved with youth ministry and I have been given a lot more opportunities to make myself known and be of use in the archdiocese because of youth ministry. I would not have been given the chance to make this video if I had not already know Pat Sprankle through other youth ministry related events. Youth ministry has opened more doors that I could have ever hoped for.