How To Take Good Pictures!

Tried 'n proven tips!

From Tim Lens:

HERE ARE A FEW HELPFUL HINTS ON PICTURE-TAKING to expand on the points M&M brought out in their "Latest News Flashes—Instamatics" in Mag 37. We pray these tips will be a blessing in helping your photos to come out clearly with good contrast, to make them as useful to the Lord's Work as possible!

Charity, eldest daughter of Job & Charran. Photo by Peter Pebble; MWM.

THE CAMERA: First of all, get a 35-mm. For those of you who are used to an instamatic, don't panic! Taking pictures with even an old non-automatic 35-mm camera is really very simple, with just a very few things to remember to set, which you can learn to do very quickly.

MAKE SURE THE CAMERA IS ONE YOU CAN FOCUS—preferably, one with a rangefinder built in which shows you when you're in sharp focus, or a single-lens-reflex (SLR) type, which you can focus thru the lens. Some good compact rangefinder type 35s are: Olympus 35 RC, Konica Auto S3, Canon QL 19, Minolta Hi-matic 7S, Pentax, & others. There are many types of single-lens-reflex cameras; these are more versatile & focus closer for better close-up portrait shots—but often are more expensive & bulkier. Examine your picture-taking needs & make your choice. Many of the above camera companies also make compact cameras that are "fixed-focus" or "guess focus" cameras that closely resemble the range-finders; but these cameras are difficult to focus accurately for close-ups & should be avoided!

THE LENS: A good quality lens is very important. It should be a multi-element type, not a single-element (only one piece of glass). This helps pictures to have sharp focus from corner to corner. "Coated" lenses are also best. The above makes of cameras also make good lenses. For best results stick to well known & proven brands, not "off brands".

FILM: As M&M suggest, stick to medium-speed films of 80-125 ASA, whether for black-&-white or colour. Examples of such films are Kodak Plus-X & Ilford FP4. Faster films like Kodak Tri-X (400 ASA) should generally be avoided as the photos taken in bright light tend to come out "grainy" or "washed out" in overcast lighting.

SHUTTER SPEED: As M&M suggested, take nearly all your pcitures at no less than shutter speed of 1/60th of a second, & hold your camera steady. Even at 1/60, if you jerk the camera while clicking the shutter, you'll blur the picture. To avoid this, relax, hold the camera firmly & squeeze the shutter button gently,. If light permits, you can use a faster shutter speed such as 1/125th of a second, & open the lens one f-stop, to make up for the faster shutter speed to keep your exposure correct. The faster shutter speed will help avoid the blur due to camera shake.

THE F-STOP: The proper f-stop setting ensures that you're giving the right exposure to your film. At the recommended shutter speed of 1/60, use f/16 for pictures in normal sunlight (or f/11 at 1/125). For a hazy bright day, open the lens up to f/8 at 1/60, or f/5.6 at 1/125. For open shade or normal overcast, open the lens up still further to f/5.6 at 1/60, or f/4 at 1/125. If your camera has an automatic exposure system or exposure meter, check to see that it isn't underexposing your pictures—you may want to set the ASA setting of the meter on ASA 80 or thereabouts, even if using an ASA 125 film, to give your pictures a little more light & contrast. You may want to take a "test" roll of film with your new camera, trying different ASA settings, f-stops & shutter speeds, marking the settings down for each picutre: ie—1. ASA 100, f-16, 1/60; frame 2: ASA100, f/8, 1/60; etc., then examining your prints to see what works best with your camera.

FLASH: Get a little electronic flash, as flash bulbs & flash cubes are expensive & non-reusable, whereas an electronic flash can be used countless times. It's best to get a flash that, when mounted on your camera, has its flash tube oriented horizontally; if the flashtube is pointed vertically it often does not give enough light to the sides of your negative. Before taking a flash picture, check the flash guide on the side of the flash to see what f-stop you should be using (you need to set your f-stop according to how far away you are from your subject). Many of the little "automatic exposure" rangefinder cameras will do this figuring for you & will change your f-stop automatically for you as you focus. If your camera does not have this feature, you may want to get an "automatic"-type flash which has a little electric eye on it that controls the flash exposure.

WHEN USING THE FLASH ON THE "AUTOMATIC" SETTING all you have to do is set the camera on a certain f-stop & fire away! Just make sure that you stay within the usable distance range given for the automatic mode of the flash, which is marked on the side of the flash.

MAKE SURE TO PLUG THE FLASH INTO THE CORRECT HOLE on your camera, usually marked "FX". The other hole, usually marked "FP", is for flashbulbs & has a different timing that doesn't work for electronic flash. If you're using a SLR camera, remember that most cannot be set on a shutter speed faster than 1/60th of a second when taking flash pictures due to their shutter design; shutter speeds faster than this will result in pictures that are partially blank.

WITH INDOOR FLASH PICTURES it's usually best to have your subjects fairly close to some background wall or something that's not too dark. Flash photos where the background is too far away & the subject is left as a shining figure in a sea of black, when processed by today's automatic labs, will often come out with the subject washed out & too light, since all that surrounding dark area tends to fool the automatic print machines. An excellent way to avoid this is to get real close-up, to where the subject nearly fills the frame of the camera's viewfinder, so you don't have much background.

BACKGROUNDS: Try to keep the background that you do have in your pictures simple uncluttered & artistically pleasing. Get as close to your subject as possible to eliminate unnecessary background & try to arrange the background to avoid anything distracting or unrelated to your subject or the story you're trying to tell, or the message you're trying to portray. Remove distracting objects or change the position of your subject or the angle from which you take the picture. Light-coloured backgrounds are often good for subjects with dark hair &/or clothing, & darker backgrounds for those with blonde hair &/or light clothing, for contrast. Natural settings, such as grassy hills, sand dunes, sea & sky etc. can be good for portrait shots. Remember that it is the person & their look of love or happiness that should be the main message & the background should just complement or enhance this.

LIGHTING: Don't shoot into the light if you can help it. If you must shoot into the light, try putting a flash on your camera to give the right light on your subject so that you can still see his face, even tho' the light is behind him. If you're good at figuring, you can make the flash exposure match the background exposure so that you can get both the subject & background showing up clearly in your pictures. (This little trick is easier with a range-finder camera than with an SLR, because most range-finder types can take flash pictures at any shutter speed; whereas SLRs usually have a different kind of shutter.) The best exposure for this is to use a flash exposure that is one f-stop less than the exposure for the surrounding daylight.

PORTRAIT LIGHTING: Some of the most pleasing portrait shots come from using the soft natural light of late afternoon or early evening sunlight, or the soft lighting of open shade, rather than the somewhat harsh shadows of the mid-day sun. Bright hazy days are often good as well. Remember to give more exposure than usual for very late afternoon shots: Try f/5.6 or f/4 at 1/125 for shots taken less than an hour before sunset. (For other types of portrait lighting, exposure times are given in the section "The F-Stop".)

COLOUR PICTURES: If you want to take colour pictures for your own local ministry, PR with friends or relatives, or other reasons, Kodak Kodacolor II colour negative film is probably the most reliable for making colour prints. It may also be the most expensive as well. Many other manufacturers make very good colour films which may offer special developing & printing discounts, so one of these may be the best choice in your area. The information given above concerning exposure & content of your pictures applies to colour film as well.

IF YOU'RE TAKING COLOUR PICTURES, BE SURE TO SEND COPIES OF ANY GOOD ONES TO THE FN, as well as your black-&-white ones, as good colour ones are also quite usable & every good picture is needed! Thanks!

P.S. IN SOME COUNTRIES WHERE THE LOCAL B&W PRINT PROCESS ISN'T TOO GOOD, if you don't like the quality of the black-&-white prints you are getting, you may even find that you are better off taking colour pictures, if all else fails, as these may be sent off to an automated lab that will give better results, tho' at a much higher price. (Or learn to develop & print your own b&w! By the way, if at all possible, get your photos printed on brilliant or shiny paper, rather than matte, for better publication quality. Thanks!)

TIPS FOR AMATEURS
From a Tourist Guidebook

1. **MAKE SURE YOU REMOVE THE LENS CAP** before shooting. (If you don't, you don't get any pictures!)

2. **KEEP YOUR PICTURE EDGES STRAIGHT.** Do this by lining up something vertical in the scene with the side of your viewfinder.

3. **DON'T JERK YOUR CAMERA** or the snap will be blurred. You can avoid this by keeping one foot forward of the other & by holding the weight of the camera in the left hand so that the right is free to squeeze the shutter carefully. Practise squeezing the shutter when your camera is empty.

4. **TIPS ON USING A BUILT-IN LIGHT METER:** (a) If you are snapping a general view with the sky in it, point your camera slightly down towards the ground so that you eliminate most of the sky from the meter eye. Now set your camera according to the maker's instructions. You do this because there is more light reflected from the sky than there is from the ground & you want a correct exposure for the landscape. (b) If you want to photograph the sky (a sunset or cloud formation) or make a silhouette, then disregard rule (a) & take your reading from the sky itself. (c) If you're taking pictures in the white-washed villages of Spain, Italy, Greece etc., remember that the white walls reflect more light than the rest of the scene (beach scenes too). Your meter will read the brightness of the background & your subject will come out too dark. What you must do is always take a reading from the subject you wish to photograph. If you can't get close enough to someone to measure the light on them, place your hand 6-9 inches (16-24 cm.) in front of the camera meter eye so that the same light falls on your hand as on your subject, & take a reading from your own skin tone.

5. **IF YOU'RE PHOTOGRAPHING** fast action like skiing, car-racing etc. remember that unless you have a very sophisticated camera with very high speeds (1/500th of a second or better), you cannot stop action going directly across your viewfinder. It will be blurred. Try to position yourself so that the car or skier is travelling at an angle towards you. If you can't, pan the camera with the action as you take the picture.

6. **IN PHOTOGRAPHING PEOPLE, DON'T BE AFRAID TO GET CLOSE.** Most people don't mind, or if they do they'll simply say no. (But Moslem Arabs have a habit of getting very angry about cameras. They believe that the camera is capturing their spirit as well as their image.)

7. **DON'T KEEP FILM IN YOUR POCKET** for any length of time. Your body warmth can affect its colour balance. Keep the film in its container & keep the container where there is some air circulation. Keep colour film away from the sun.

8. **ALWAYS LOAD & UNLOAD YOUR CAMERA IN THE SHADE.** If there is none, turn your back to the sun & unload in your own shadow. This is to minimize the chance of light getting to the film & fogging it.

9. **WHEN TRAVELLING,** wrap your camera in a dry towel or shirt to protect it from knocks & from car vibration which can loosen screws.

NOTE: COLOUR FILM PRICES VARY from country to country. In Spain & France, for instance, it'll break your budget. Switzerland, Andorra & England are good places to buy film. In England make sure you go to a discount place. Boots (the chemist shops) seem to offer a good deal.

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Photos—God's Set-Ups!

A Poem by Tina Seeds, MWM Photographer:

After taking many pictures
I finally began to see
That the perfect picture's
Not in you, the camera nor in me!

A picture's like a painting
And your brush is in your hand
But to get the masterpiece you seek
You first must understand
That God's the One who sets the scene,
The action and the time
He's the stardust in the faces
that makes the photos shine

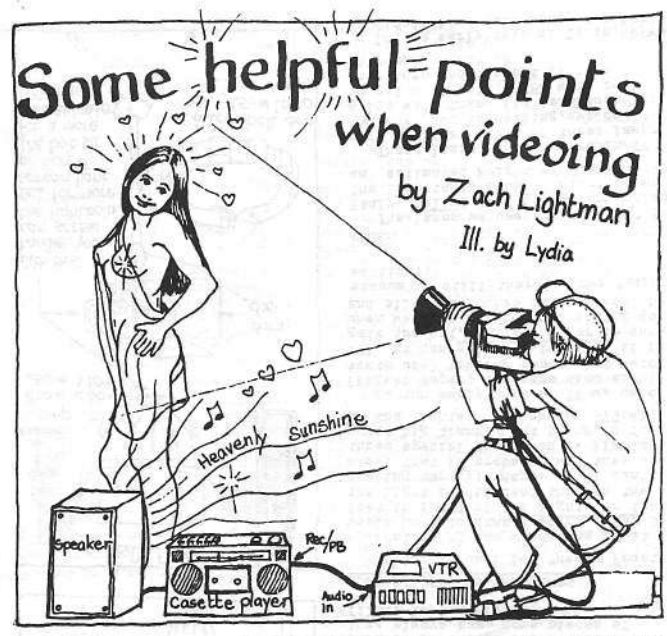
You can try to take a photo,
Say "Cheese!" & count to three,
But if it is not the will of God,
All of us will see—

Just another stack of pictures
That never said a word
Like a child that never learned to talk
He simply wasn't heard.

So take your camera in your hand
Then stop & say a prayer
And if it is the will of God
Your picture will be there!

Then remember the Letter "Pictures"
And Dad's helpful hints to you
And as Jesus said, "Greater works
Than these shall ye also do!

Happy Photo Taking! Smile!
Squeeze Don't Jerk!
Love, Tina (Amen! PTL! GBY!)



SOME HELPFUL POINTS WHEN VIDEOING by Zach Lightman March 11th, 1982

SOUND: Find a quiet place when you are making interviews. When someone is giving their testimony, good sound is the most important.

The years I worked in TV (11 years), most of the problems were not with the lighting nor with the camera, but with the sound, to find a place quiet enough with not too distracting background noises.

God created us with two ears, and with them we can pick up sound from a certain direction, even if it's noisy around us. If you hear only on one ear like our son Johannes does, it's difficult to separate different sounds when it's noisy - and so it is with the microphone too.