



Mini Sessions for Volume Photographers



K Boyer Photography

Content

- [Getting Started](#)
 - [Scheduling](#)
 - [Equipment](#)
 - [Location](#)
 - [Pricing](#)
- [Finding Clients](#)
- [Preparing for Picture Day](#)
- [Picture Day!](#)
- [Last Steps](#)
- [Make More Money with GotPhoto](#)

Introduction

Mini sessions are portrait photography sessions that combine the more personalised and intimate experience of a traditional portrait shoot with a shorter time frame, allowing for a higher number of subjects like you would see in a typical volume job. In this guide we will touch on everything you need to know to start photographing your own mini sessions!

With the expert help from Kristin Boyer, owner of K Boyer Photography, with over 10 years of professional experience, we will talk about where to start, how to schedule, how to price, how to run a smooth mini session picture day, and how to upsell to make the most money out of your mini sessions!

"The amazing benefit for volume photographers to branch into mini sessions is that you already have the skills (and clients!) you need to be successful! They can be an excellent supplement to your studio's portfolio and revenue stream."

- Kristin Boyer

Getting Started

So you're ready to start hosting your own mini sessions? Here are a few things to consider:

- Seasonality. While spring, fall, and holiday-themed photoshoots are usually the most common, family portrait mini sessions can be run any time of the year!

Here are a few mini session theme ideas:

- **Fall mini sessions** for families.



Kristin's Tips!

These sessions can be marketed for holiday cards too!

- **Holiday mini sessions** not just Santa sessions!



Kristin's Tips!

Have an indoor space? Host a Christmas morning PJs session! Rather photograph outdoors? Christmas tree farms can serve as the perfect backdrop!

- **Corporate headshots** for those looking to solidify their personal or professional brand



Kristin's Tips!

Try holding 4-5 "Sip & Snap" sessions a year, which combines a corporate headshot shoot with a professional networking mixer - mimosas included!

- **Pet mini sessions** for the furry loves in your life.



Kristin's Tips!

Fur babies are like family to most people - don't leave them out of the photo fun! Pet photo shoots can be extremely successful.

- Other holidays such as **Easter, Halloween, Mother's/Father's/Grandparent's Day**

Schedule

Think about how much time you want to dedicate to each client. Remember that mini sessions are just that, mini. They're meant to be very short with little to no set up in between clients. Mini session photographers often schedule their sessions as incremented time slots back to back. For instance, a Santa session calendar might look like 15 minute slots for four hours on both Saturdays and Sundays during the month of November.

"Create scarcity to elevate the value of your sessions. Offer only a limited number of sessions to create an urgency to book!"

- Kristin Boyer

Some photographers build in a 5-10 minute buffer between appointments, while others prefer to stick with a back-to-back schedule, allowing no time in between. We suggest starting with a buffer and then moving to back-to-back once you're comfortable with the flow of each session.

If you are doing family sessions, make sure to set a limit for the number of people per session. This way you can ensure you keep to your scheduled time slots even if certain groups need more time.



Kristin's Tips!

Have your sessions limited to 5 people and require a second session time block to be reserved if there are more than that.

"I will always accommodate larger groups, but I do make sure they know that bigger lessens number of images. Oh, and furbabies count in that number!"

- Kristin Boyer

Equipment

If you are currently doing school or volume sports photography, you will need to think about what equipment you will need for your mini sessions. This also includes props!

Kristin shared her go to lighting concept for both outdoors and indoors with us:

- **For Outdoors** (natural background)
 - One light off camera for fill and catchlight
 - High-speed sync is a must!
- **For Indoors** (usually with a solid gray background)
 - One light used as a hair light
 - One light for front fill

Here are some props that are a must for every mini session:

- **A wooden crate or stool** for kids or adults to be able to sit on
 - This is an excellent trick for photographing families with drastically different heights. It can also be useful for getting siblings to pose together
- **A blanket**
 - Blankets can be used for sitting families on, propping up infants, or creating height for a child
- **A blank sign**
 - A chalkboard sign works best and allows for you to write a cute, custom message on it for kids to hold
- **A stuffed animal** (like a bear)
 - This is great for kids who might be shy and need something to hold

Here are some more theme-specific props ideas:

- **Spring mini sessions**
 - Flowers
 - Wagon
 - Picnic set
- **Fall mini sessions**
 - Colourful fall foliage (such as fake fall leaves)
 - Plaid blankets
- **Santa mini sessions**
 - Candy canes
 - Fake snow
 - Presents
- **Easter mini sessions**
 - Eggs
 - Fake flowers
 - Bunnies!



"Oh yes, I have a bunny handler. Live bunnies and children make fantastic photographs, but it absolutely has to be safely and responsibly managed for both the bunnies and the human."

- Kristin Boyer

Location

The great thing about mini sessions is that you can hold them in pretty much any location! Whether you have a studio, or a favourite park, mini sessions can be adapted for indoors or outdoors!

An important thing to think about when choosing a location for your mini session is: Where are most of your clients coming from? If you're advertising your mini sessions in a local elementary school, for example, you will want to pick a location near that school. It's an easy sell to parents knowing they won't have to drive a long distance for a short photo shoot. If you're advertising in a local paper, or around a specific town, see if you can set up in a central location like a hotel or a community center!

If you already have a studio that you hold photoshoots out of, it's no problem. Clients are already used to coming to you!



GotPhoto Pro Tip:

If you're a school photographer with no studio, you can combine your mini sessions with a school fundraiser to secure a free space!

Pricing

Mini sessions are meant to be shorter photo shoots at a budget friendly price. There's no one right answer to what your pricing should be. It's best to evaluate your particular market, location, and target clients. Another thing to consider is how much it will cost you to run these sessions.

You will also need to decide how your selling structure will be set up. For instance, will you offer all images as digital downloads for a set price, or offer package or a la carte options? This will also largely depend on your online workflow system.

Here are some suggestions to help you set up your pricing:

- Charge a session fee that includes a certain number of edited images. Additional images and prints can be purchased after the photo session
- Charge an all-inclusive session fee that includes all edited images
- Have a session fee that only includes time with the photographer. Images and prints are purchased after the photo session
- Have no session fee. All images and prints are purchased after the photo session



GotPhoto Pro Tip:

GotPhoto allows you to deliver digital downloads to your clients for free while also allowing you to up-sell physical prints, products, or additional digital add-ons.

Finding Clients

The easiest way to find clients for your mini sessions is to get in contact with your current clients! If you're a volume photographer, you already have the contact information for the families that know and love your work, so why not give them the opportunity for a more in-depth and personalised experience?

If you're unable to reach out to those families, another tried and true strategy is word of mouth. Get in touch with local families, ask your religious organisations to advertise, rent hotel space, or post on social media, asking your online community to share.

"80% of my clients come from the schools I photograph."

- Kristin Boyer

Preparing for Picture Day

You have all of your sessions booked, and your first weekend of mini sessions is coming up. Now is the time to send a reminder email to your clients with suggestions on what to wear, weather forecasts, how to find the location, and other frequently asked questions. This is also an excellent opportunity to remind them of their time slot and explain your policies for late arrivals and no-shows.

"I include a questionnaire form in my pre-picture day emails that helps me get to know the kids and parents, in case there is anything I would need to know to make their photoshoot the best it can be!"

- Kristin Boyer

Picture Day!

The big day is here! As a photographer, you know how important it is to give yourself enough time to set up, test your lighting, and adjust your settings for the rest of the day. Taking the extra time to make sure everything is set up correctly will help you ensure that you're getting your photos "right in the camera" and lessen your post-production time. Mini sessions are great because they offer photographers a profitable price-performance ratio, so you don't want to ruin that with hours of editing.

Here are some other things to consider:

- Think about lighting! If you're outdoors, the time of day is key. "Magic hour" is usually the most ideal time for outdoor sessions. Make sure to plan for everything including passing clouds and harsh sunshine. Try to choose a location that has fully shaded spots as well as sunny options
- Make sure your helpers or any additional photographers are also there on-time and educated on the picture day workflow
- Pay attention to your camera's shutter speed. Capturing those moments in between your poses are usually some of the top sellers! With movement, a faster shutter speed will help capture those authentic interactions sharply

➤ Kristin's Tips!

Kristin has gone mirrorless, using a Canon R5 with a 70-200mm lens. She sets her f-stop low (2.8 to 4) to allow for faster shutter speeds and fantastic depth of field.



Last Steps

Now that you've finished your mini sessions, you need to get the images delivered promptly to your clients. The popular delivery option for mini sessions is offering all images via a digital download link. You can choose to either share as-is or edit the images, but be sure to keep the turnaround time no longer than a week!

"I create two albums for the client - one where I'm wearing my professional photographer hat, the best images from the session. The other is where I'm wearing my mom hat, those photos I just love."

- Kristin Boyer

GotPhoto allows you to easily create client folders that have individual links for easy ordering and downloading. GotPhoto also allows you to work with partnered labs, allowing your clients to order prints and specialty items from their mini session! This is a great way to upsell to your clients and make extra money.

Once the dust has settled, be sure to take some time to review what went well and what could be improved upon for the next mini sessions you host. If you easily booked all of your spots, and your clients are happy with the pictures, it's a good idea to consider adjusting your pricing, or adding additional setting times or dates next time around.



GotPhoto Pro Tip:

Happy customers make great brand advocates! Make sure your clients are tagging your studio when they share their beautiful pictures on social media! This way, prospective clients can learn about your brand and you can continue to grow your business!

Make More Money with GotPhoto

Streamlining your workflow and finding easy ways to increase your sales are two essential components for growing a successful mini sessions business. Luckily, GotPhoto can help with this!

How? The platform's core features let you grow your business with little to no extra effort on your part, and include:

- **Individual galleries:**

By using our capture methods on picture day (QR codes or barcodes), each session and its associated pictures will be automatically sorted into a password-protected gallery that only participants of that session can access. This saves you time, which allows you to share the images with your clients even faster!

You can set up the gallery to deliver digital downloads, which will be sent directly to the customer after the order has been placed. Or, you can connect your preferred lab to your account to get photos processed and shipped to your customer or to your studio for pick-up

- **Automated emails and texts:**

Use this popular, fully customisable GotPhoto feature to let clients know when their gallery is available to view, remind them of coupons or free shipping deadlines, and notify them when the gallery is about to be archived! You choose what notifications they will receive and can adjust to your preferences

- **Various selling features:**

- Upsell. Set up your shop to incentivise higher spend with options, such as tiered discounts based on basket value or additional print add-ons to a package order
- Offer fun products. Our partner labs offer a wide range of personalised photo products that you can allow your clients to purchase in your online GotPhoto shop, including ornaments, cards, wall decor, and more!
- Coupons. Allow your customers to use the session fee as a coupon credit they can apply towards their purchase!



A special thanks to **Kristin Boyer** for sharing her insights with us for this guide!

Kristin, owner of [K Boyer Photography](#), has been capturing smiles and giggles for over 10 years in the greater Atlanta area and now North Carolina as a school and lifestyle photographer. In addition to these areas of photography, Kristin is the type to quickly stop and photograph any eye-catching moment; from water droplets in a birdbath to beautiful mountain vistas. Her goal is to capture joy and beauty in small everyday moments, and that translates into her entire portfolio of work.





Want to see the best solution **for mini sessions in action?**

Give us a call or book a free individual consultation at www.gotphoto.co.uk/consultation

Contact our Team



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