

At first I got off to a rough start. In researching the best ways to set up bokeh shots and the proper equipment to use, I got a little discouraged. Among the most commonly recommended lens were: 50mm F/1.8, 50mm F/1.4, 85mm F/1.8, and 28-105mm F/3.5-F/4.5. I first tried to use my 18-55mm F/5 lens and had quite some trouble.

My first attempt at taking some shots resulted in a handful of blurry blobs of light and colors. I could tell that I was on the right track but not quite there yet. I realized that given the recommended lenses to use, I should probably go with my longer lens 55-200mm F/4. I also took the time to critique what I had done. I realized that the farther away the light source, the better. I had chosen a light source that was only about 20 feet away from the camera. I initially worked with one bright light source, and decided that I needed to use several smaller light sources. During my first attempt I also shot using the Aperture priority mode in order to chose the most open aperture possible. The camera always chose to overcompensate by slowing down the shutter speed to let in more light, which actually let in much more light that I really wanted.

With all of this in mind, I chose to do things much differently for my second attempt. I chose to use my longer lens 55-200mm F/4. I set up the camera about 35 feet away from the light source. This time, I chose to use a small Christmas tree that I had in storage that is strung with white lights. I set the camera to Manual mode in order to use the widest aperture while setting the shutter speed a little faster than the camera desired. This helped sharpen the lighted discs and keep from overexposing the shot to more light than wanted for my theme. Almost instantly, I was able to get the shot I was hoping for. I found that adjusting the the focal length of the lens changed the size of the light discs and played with this a good bit to get a variety of sizes. I also added in the lens covers from my kit and took shots with the various shapes they provided.

Overall, I'm very happy to have a set of initial shots with shaped light figures and colors. In moving forward, I plan to play with focal length to test the barriers of sizes of the blurred light figures. I also plan to possibly manipulate my images with color tinting. I also hope to apply my new knowledge in order to obtain a series of shots in which a human-like figure is focused in the front of the image with a blurred background of light discs – much like the one included in my proposal.