6 WAYS TO MAKE A STAGE BACKDROP

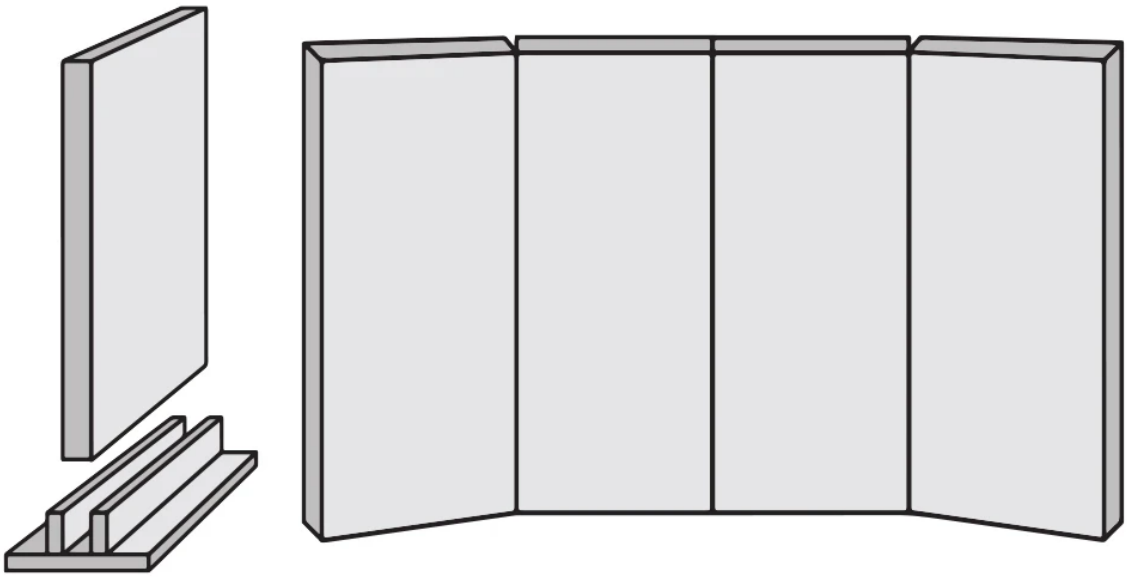
Whether your ministry meets in a single classroom, a large theater with a stage, or that DIY video studio you made to help you through the pandemic, we all want our spaces to look good, right? If your space looks thrown together or run down, it can distract the kids and teenagers in your group – which completely defeats the point of your large group teaching strategy.

One simple way to keep your ministry space looking fresh and interesting is to **create a backdrop that's easy to update when you start a new teaching series or need a new look.** There are countless ways to create versatile backdrops for your rooms or stages, but we love the following six methods because they're so easy to update. To figure out which backdrop is right for you, here are some things to think about:

- How much budget do you have to work with?
- How often do you want to update your backdrop?
- How much time do you want to spend updating it?
- How often does it need to be torn down and set up again?
- Where will you store your backdrop when it's not in use?

Once you've got answers, it's time to choose a backdrop!

1. FOAM BOARDS

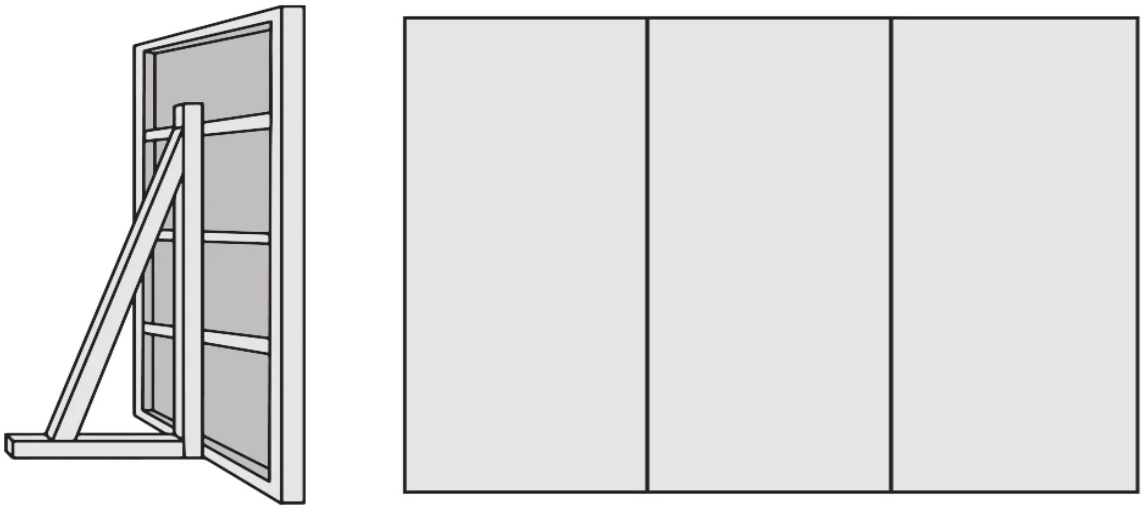


Did you know your favorite hardware store sells foam insulation boards? They usually come in 4' x 8' panels (with varying thicknesses) and are lightweight, cheap, and super versatile. They can be painted, spray painted, covered in fabric, stuck with push pins, or covered in adhesive textured wall panels. They even come pre-scored, so they're easy to snap apart into smaller sizes (although we recommend using a craft knife to score them first to ensure your snapping is accurate). We suggest panels that are 1" or 2" thick, so they stand up on their own without bending or snapping. There are plenty of ways to make these boards stand upright, but here are two methods we like:

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- A WOODEN STAND: 3 pieces of wood, some nails or glue, and a bit of paint will get you a simple stand to keep your foam boards upright. Check out the illustration above for a visual — but keep that slot for the boards snug, so they don't tip over! The boards are foam, so they'll squish into place.
- AN ACCORDION FOLD: Place 3 or more boards next to each other, with a small amount of space between them, so they have room to fold. Use duct tape to bind the boards together and then stand them upright, adjusting the angle of each board until it stands upright on its own.

2. PLYWOOD PANELS



If you're up for some basic carpentry, you might try making a few freestanding wall panels with plywood and lumber. These panels will be much more durable than the foam boards, but they'll also be heavier and more difficult to make, move, and store. Like the foam boards, they can be painted, spray painted, covered in fabric, or covered in adhesive textured wall panels. Plus, you can nail things to them and hang objects from them without fear of them tipping over.

Because these plywood wall panels will be heavy, it's important that they're built carefully and securely and that they're properly weighted, so they don't tip over. If you're new to carpentry, we suggest asking someone in your congregation who's familiar with carpentry to build these for you.

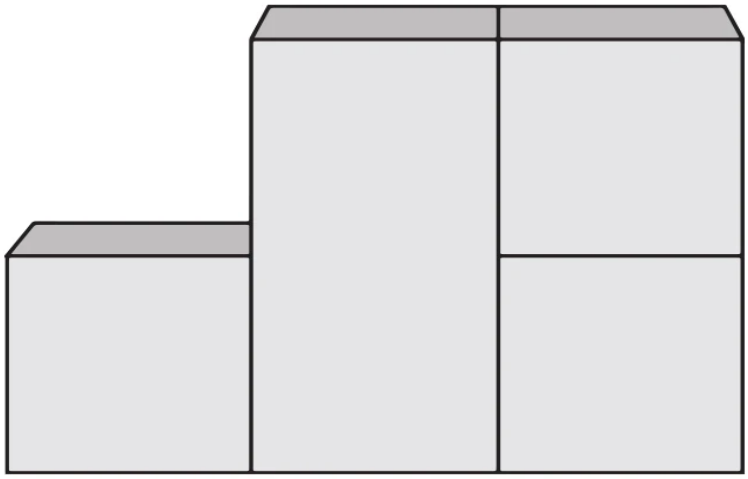
We're not exactly carpentry experts either, so we'll let someone else give you a tutorial on how to build these so you can see what you're in for. Here are a bunch of tutorial videos on how to make these. They're often called theater flats or stage flats since they're typically used in productions.

3. CARDBOARD BOXES

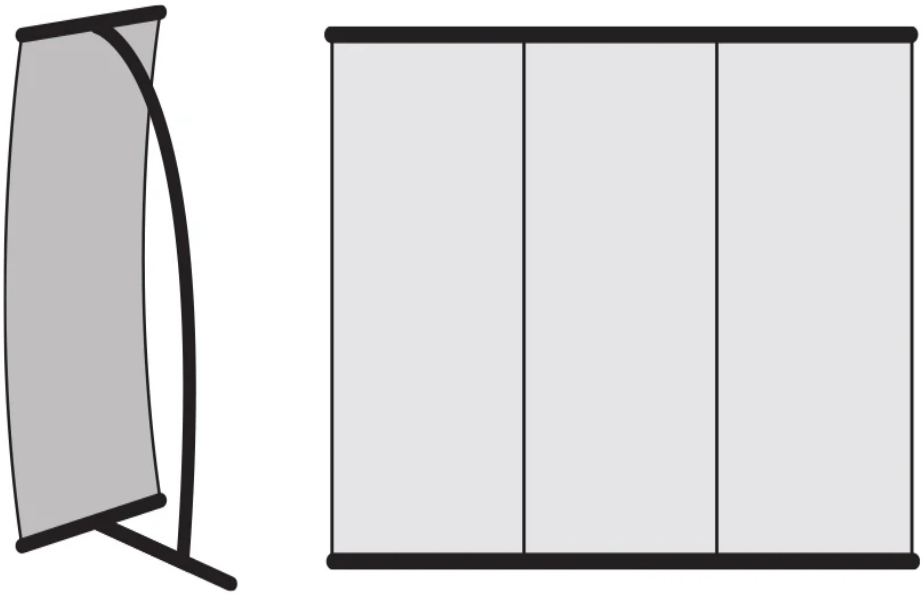
Yes, cardboard boxes! They're free, light, and versatile. They can be painted, spray painted, covered in fabric, wrapped in wrapping paper, and stacked to build anything from a wall to a cityscape, classic 8-bit video game characters, or a stack of oversized Christmas presents.

Refrigerator boxes are your best bet for a tall backdrop, but don't be afraid to experiment with boxes in different sizes and shapes. Keep repainting or re-wrapping them until they fall apart — then go get some new ones!

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4. VINYL BANNERS

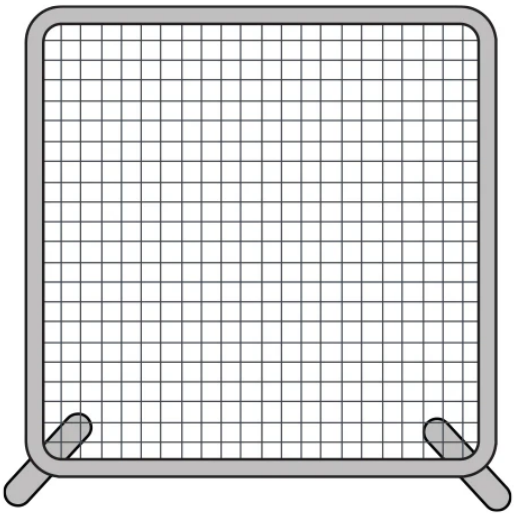


Because of the cost, you probably don't want to print vinyl banners for every teaching series you do, but banners can be a great solution when you need a backdrop that you plan to reuse or leave standing for a long period of time. Print your backdrop design on the banners, stretch them out on banner stands, and you're done!

These banners are lightweight, durable, and easy to set up and tear down, so they're great for portable churches and multipurpose spaces.

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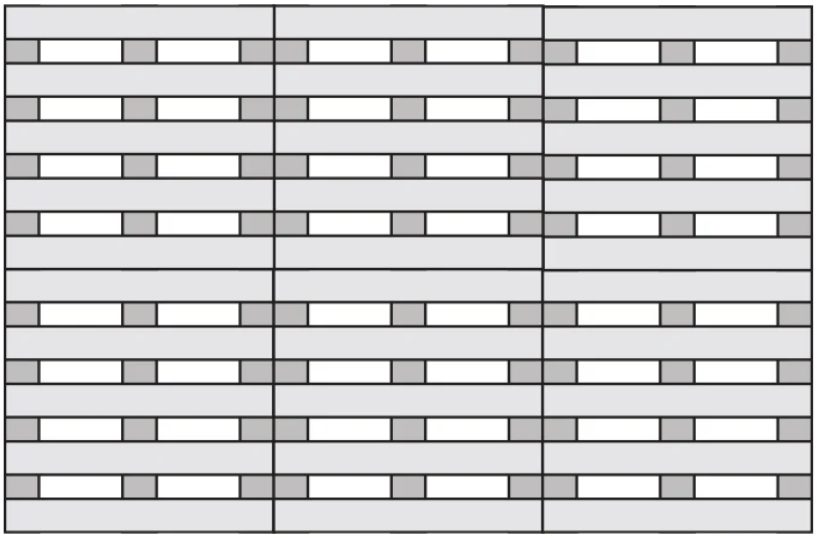
5. WIRE FENCING



Wire fencing is a great solution if you'd prefer a semi-transparent backdrop rather than something large and solid. From it, you can hang lights, banners, and decorative objects and easily change your look without spending a fortune or tons of time creating something new. You can purchase pre-made grid units on Amazon, but if you'd like a more custom size, you can make your own instead.

Your local hardware store should sell a variety of wire or metal fencing in different shapes and thicknesses. While you might be able to find a large framed section of fencing in the size you'd like, it's more likely you'll need to build your own frame with two-by-fours and stretch the wire fencing across the frame. If you're not particularly skilled at building things, ask someone in your congregation or community who is handy to build this for you. You get an awesome wire fencing unit, and they get to participate in your ministry. It's a win-win!

6. WOOD PALLETS



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Okay, okay, okay — we know. You might be sick of wooden pallets. At some point, it seemed like every pastor on planet earth was preaching in front of a stack of rustic pallets. But that doesn't change the fact that they're awesome! Pallets are durable, stackable, and free! You can paint them, wrap lights or garland around them, and nail things to them without spending money on materials. Just drop by your favorite grocery store and snag a stack from the area next to the dumpster. Oh, but if you plan on stacking these, ensure they're stacked and mounted securely. You don't want these falling over on anyone!

Okay, there you have it! Now you've got six ways to build your own stage backdrop for your ministry — in a way that's affordable, flexible, and totally doable.

And hey, if you're using Grow Curriculum for your youth or kids ministry, these backdrop ideas will work great with the decor ideas we provide with each teaching series! Check your Environment Guide for each teaching series for decorating ideas. And if you want to learn more about the Grow Annual Environment Strategy, check out this article for a walkthrough!



For even more resources like this one, try a free trial of Grow Curriculum and Annual Strategy for your children's or youth ministry. It's everything you need for a more strategic year of discipleship, teaching, environments, events, volunteers, and families!

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