

DIGITAL PROJECTORS IN TODAY'S CHURCH



Over the last few years, the increase in the number of churches using digital projectors to display worship music, sermon outlines or video clips has been staggering. In an effort to improve visual quality, churches have successfully begun making the transition from overheads to digital projectors. This is an excellent application of this new technology and, done properly, eliminates the distractions created by the use of overhead transparencies.

OVERHEAD VS. DIGITAL PROJECTORS

Overhead transparencies have been notorious for creating distractions during worship. They are easily placed off-center, too high or too low, occasionally placed upside down or moved the wrong way. And don't forget those big hands on the screen! Transitions from one transparency to another have been awkward at best. The placement of overhead projectors in itself has been responsible for much of the distraction. Typically, they are required to be set up on the floor, near the front of the room, in between the overhead screen and the viewing audience or congregation.

WWJD (What Would Jesus Do)

New technology tends to scare people, and this is especially true in the Christian Church of today. Questions arise regarding the appropriateness of using this new technology in a church. Would Jesus or his disciples have used a projector if it were available in their day? Digital projectors are often viewed as worldly due in large part to their use in the business world, but is this a fair assumption?

If we look at the life and times of Jesus, we see that he was an innovative communicator. When he spoke to people or individuals, he often chose to speak using parables, word pictures or stories. Often he would incorporate props such as seeds, a stick to draw in the dirt or a child held in his arms. He related to people at their level and recognized the increased impact and retention level that visual messages produced. He successfully used the media of the day to communicate his message to the people (including rowing out on the water to clearly



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speak to the crowd on the shore). Today we have technology at our disposal to further enhance the spread of the gospel.

VISUAL MEDIA

Today, the educational media of choice is almost entirely visual (computer, internet, television, etc). Visual media has affected the way we learn, play and think. It can be found almost everywhere. We have learned to think in much more visual terms than ever before. Projectors provide the ability to reinforce the spoken message with an appropriate image or picture and in recent years churches worldwide have begun to incorporate video projection into their worship services. In fact, studies indicate that while most people cannot remember a sermon even one day after it was preached, a message reinforced with visual media dramatically increases retention.

In many ways, video projection systems are accomplishing visually what sound systems pioneered acoustically many years ago. Just as sound systems in today's churches allow us to clearly hear the spoken word, video projection systems are conveying or clarifying key points of the message. Video projection is forever changing the method of communication in today's church. And just as computers (or technology in general) drop in price almost daily, so too does the video projector, making it increasingly affordable for churches of almost any size.

ENHANCING YOUR MESSAGES

Remember that a digital projector is nothing more than a tool. When used effectively it can reinforce, strengthen or even clarify a message or point. Keep in mind that it works most effectively when used to enhance or clarify a message. It should not be used to entertain the congregation. This can actually distract from the message being presented. Ultimately, we attend church for spiritual growth and the projector should be used to enhance or create that environment, not detract from it.

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A CHANGING WORLD

Technology is rapidly changing the world around us and is quickly accelerating the spread of the gospel. Used properly, God's word can be presented in a powerful new way that maximizes people's ability to learn. However, when incorporating anything new, we must be careful to walk the fine line of living in the world while not becoming part of it.

IN SUMMATION

If you are planning the purchase of a projection system for your church, you are about to begin an exciting journey and you will need to make certain you get off on the right foot. It is important that you assemble a visual media team suited for this ministry which is not unlike any other ministry in your church. It requires much more than a state-of-the-art projector; it requires a dedicated team of people. Also, take special care in choosing the right hardware and software to run this system. A well defined plan will reduce or eliminate problems as well as save you time and money in the future. Be sure to develop a reasonable graphics budget for your system. It is surprising how many churches will spend thousands of dollars on good projector systems and then display poor quality, distracting graphics through them.

At ImageVine we are dedicated to helping you seamlessly introduce this new ministry into your church. We do not sell hardware or software on this site but provide an online shopping mall filled with professionally designed graphics, helpful free articles, tips and resources to help you in your media ministry.