



# Starter Stage Designs

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Written by Jonathan Malm

Stage design isn't complicated. Sometimes you just need that little boost to get started. Use these five options to make an easy first stage design. We made it inexpensive and easy for you to recreate these awesome looks on your church stage. But first...

## **A Blank Slate**

Start with a blank slate by clearing your stage of any clutter. Making your stage as clean as possible will help your stage design stand out from the background.

## **Blackness**

You can paint your back wall black or add a black curtain on your back wall to really help your lit stage designs pop. You don't have to, but the cleaner the better.

## **Safety First!**

Remember, safety first. The coolest stage design loses all its glitz and glamour when it catches on fire or falls on someone. You want your band, congregation, and building to escape your stage design endeavors in one piece.

When in doubt, check with your fire marshall or some construction folks to make sure everything is safe.

Check out Rosco's flame retardant spray if you're worried about something catching on fire.



Example Design by Noble Mosby

## Option 1: Light Towers

To get the light tower look, start with a material called corrugated plastic. It's like plastic cardboard. There's a brand-name called Coroplast that you can get from Home Depot, sign shops, or plastic manufacturers for between \$10 to \$20 per sheet. Sheets generally come in 4'x8' sheets in a variety of colors. Natural or Clear are translucent colors and work well for the light tower look.

Mark every 1-foot on the short sides of the Coroplast sheet. Then use a razor blade to score (don't slice through the whole sheet – just the first plastic layer) one side of the Coroplast between the marks. This should leave you with three, 8-foot slices. Now, you can fold the sheet into a square and tape the sides together.

Then, light it with Christmas lights, LED lights, or any other type of light. (Be sure that the lights you use don't produce too much heat that could melt the plastic or potentially start a fire.)

### **Materials:**

Corrugated Plastic  
Clear Packing Tape  
Lighting

### **Approx. Cost:**

1 Tower: \$10-\$20  
Lighting: Varies



## Option 2: Bubble Wrap Panels

Start by purchasing a roll of bubble wrap from an office supply store (try [esupplystore.com](http://esupplystore.com)). While you're waiting for that to arrive in the mail, build a frame for your bubble wrap. You can make the frame any size, but 4'x8' is a good place to start. (You can also just hang it between two poles or fix it to your back wall if you're lazy.)

Once the bubble wrap arrives, simply staple or tape a sheet to the front of your frame. You can then shine a colored light on the front or back. The bubbles catch the light and give you a great texture for your stage. Screw that to your wall or hang it from the ceiling with some chains. Just resist the urge to pop all the bubbles before you're done using the set.

Also, beware plastic melts easily or can even catch on fire if hot lights are too close to the frame. Safety first!

### **Materials:**

Bubble Wrap Roll  
Lumber – 2x2's  
Light Fixtures

### **Approx. Cost:**

1 Panel: \$10-\$20  
Lighting: Varies



Example Design by Josh Scott

## Option 3: Cardboard Box Wall

How's this for simple? Buy quite a few square cardboard boxes from a company like ULine.com. Get either brown or white 1'x1'x1' boxes (they cost less than \$1 each). Stagger-stack about 100 of them and tape them to each other using duct tape.

This gives you the huge cardboard box wall. Then you can light it however you want! Or if you don't want to go the lighting route, you can paint them! Grab your favorite color(s) and give it some pizzazz.

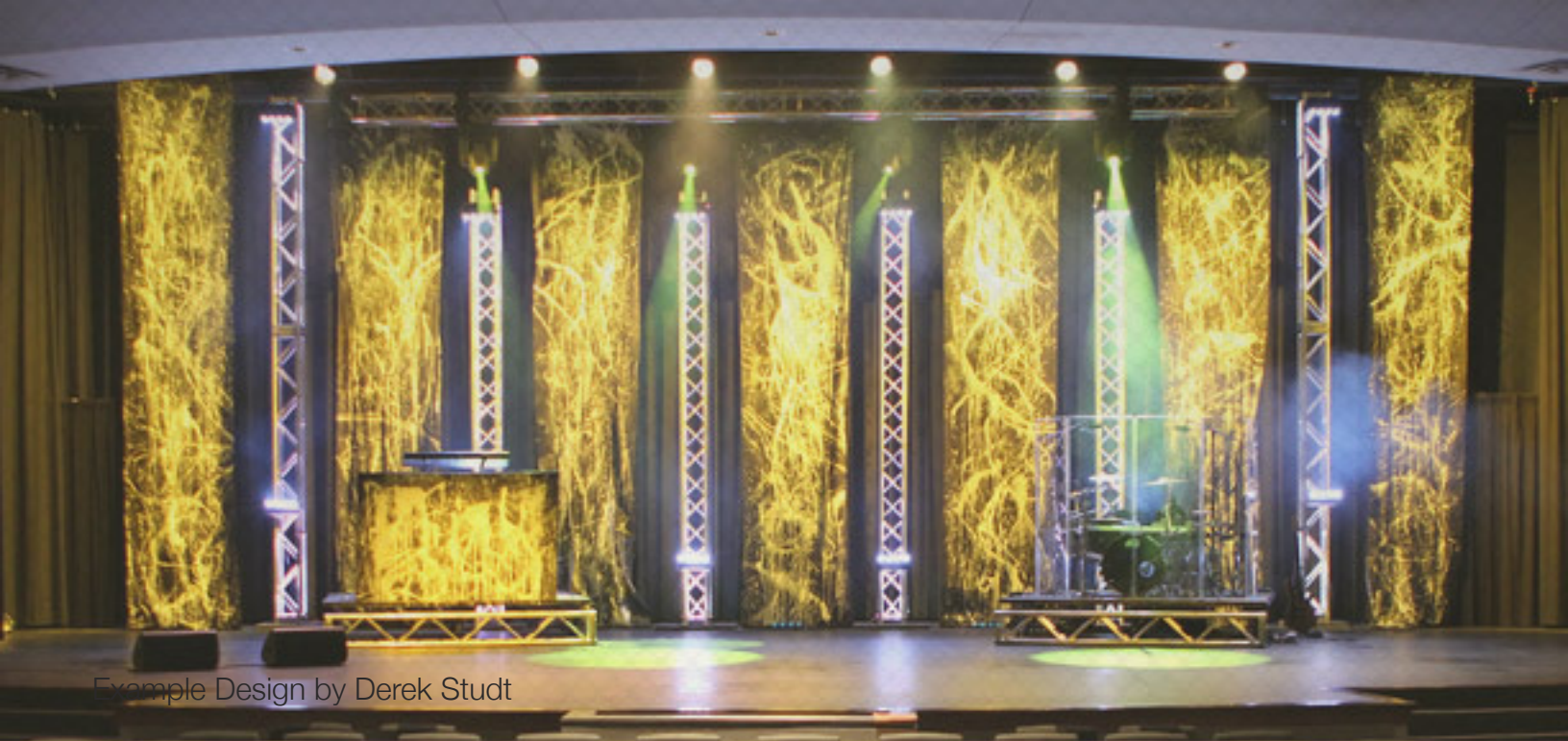
Be sure to keep people from climbing the wall or putting anything hot near the cardboard. Again, safety first!

### **Materials:**

Cardboard Boxes  
Duct Tape  
Light Fixtures

### **Approx. Cost:**

Box Wall: \$100  
Lighting: Varies



Example Design by Derek Studt

## Option 4: Landscape Fabric Drops

Visit your local Home Depot or Lowe's and pick up some Weed Block or landscape weed barrier fabric. Measure the distance between your ceiling and the surface of your stage. Then cut the weed block into strips that will hang on your back wall – top to bottom.

Take the strips outside, lay them on the ground, and use your broom to spread white paint on the strips. Don't completely paint over the black. You're just wanting the texture. After they've dried, bring them inside and hang them up. You can use wire ties, duct tape, or anything else to hang them.

Light them up with par cans or LED lights and you have some sweet grunge texture on your back wall.

Note: Safety first. And this design works best on a black walled stage or in front of a black curtain.

### **Materials:**

Weed Block  
White Paint  
Large Broom  
Light Fixtures

### **Approx. Cost:**

\$30 Per Drop  
Lighting: Varies



Example Design by Andrew Hunt

## Option 5: Wood Slat Walls

This stage design is a perfect option if you don't have LED or par can lighting – though it works well with stage lighting as well.

Simply purchase some beautiful 2x4's at your local Home Depot or Lowe's. Line them up on the ground with a small space between each board (1 inch works well). You can then drive screws into a 2x4 on each side of the stack. This will hold them in place.

Once you have your wood slat walls, you can stain them or leave them natural. Simply attach them to your back walls or create stands so they will sit on the stage in front of your back wall.

Be sure to secure them so they won't fall on kiddos or band members that might get the urge to climb them. Safety first!

### **Materials:**

Lumber - 2x4's  
Screws

### **Approx. Cost:**

\$60 - \$140

Most of the designs in this e-book are based around good, colored lighting. The most versatile and inexpensive option for color-changing capabilities is LED lighting. LED lights take very little power and produce very little heat. Here are a few lighting options for you, depending on your budget.

## Conventional Lighting

Conventional lighting fixtures are essential to your lighting system. They give general white light for faces and visibility.

### **ETC Source Four Leko (\$300)**

These lights are for sharp, focused light – much like a spotlight.

### **ETC Source Four Par EA (\$200)**

Par cans are for a less directed light. These are great for simply throwing unfocused light on your stage.

### **ETC Source Four CE Fresnel (\$300)**

If you're using video cameras and need seamless coverage across your entire stage, you'll want to look into a Fresnel. These fixtures are the industry standard for theater, TV, and film lighting.

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# Color Changing Light Options

## **Good Option: Irradiant LED Par 64 Short (\$200)**

These can be a little on the loud side and do not have a high refresh rate (flickering on camera).

## **Better Option: Elation Pro OPTI-RGBA (\$400)**

If you're doing anything with video cameras on your stage, this fixture is a great option because it's "flicker-free".

## **Best Option: Chauvet Pro COLORado 1-Tri Tour (\$600)**

This is one of the brighter fixtures you can buy. It does flicker, though. So it's not a great option if your services rely on live video.

# Moving Lights

Moving lights, when combined with haze or fog, can add a lot of life to your light show. Here are a few options:

## **Irradiant LED Move (\$650)**

An LED lighting fixture that moves. You can control it from a board so you can aim and re-aim it anywhere you want during your service.

## **The Chauvet Q-Spot 160 LED (\$600)**

This fixture allows you to mix colors instead of sticking to 7-8 colors.

## **Elation Design Spot 250 Pro (\$1800)**

This is a brighter fixture but with less color options.

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This e-book is meant as a design reference. By using the ideas in this e-book you accept full responsibility for complying with all local safety standards and will not hold ChurchStageDesignIdeas.com liable for any misuse or accidents that may occur.

Lighting Information Credit: Jeff Poole  
Stage Design Information Credit: Jonathan Malm  
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