



# Standing Out

**DELIVER YOUR POSITIVE MESSAGE BOLDLY AND BRIGHTLY**

by Jennifer Andrews

Sending a bright, powerful and positive message to your congregation requires the right kind of equipment. Churches across America have found that video projectors can be an invaluable tool for getting out the Word and sharing God's message with a large group of parishioners. But factors such as ambient light in the sanctuary can make your images look a little dim, dulling the impact.

How do you know how bright is just right for your church? Read on and learn more about projectors brightness and dealing with ambient light.

## **Brightness Basics—The Lumen & You**

Projector brightness is measured in American National Standards Institute (ANSI) **lumens**. How many lumens you need depends on several factors, including image size, audience size and amount of ambient light in your space. The type of technology (LCD or DLP™), contrast ratio and projection distance can also affect the appearance of brightness.

LCD projectors today typically will give you more brightness for the dollar. They also offer mega-bright options, not currently available in a single-chip DLP machine.

However, DLP projectors are able to produce higher contrast levels, which can lead to the appearance of a brighter image, when compared head-to-head with a similar LCD. DLP projectors are still a good choice for smaller venues, but for installation in a sanctuary you will likely have more options in LCD.

**Ambient light**—Light from sources that cannot be controlled, is one of the biggest obstacles for a church projector to overcome. In many church sanctuaries, this additional light enters from both outside and in through windows and from adjoining rooms within the church. Blinds are usually not an option in either case, so the projector must be bright enough to rise above these external factors.

Where you mount the projector will also have an impact on the brightness of the image. As you would probably guess, the farther back the projector is placed, the more the brightness is reduced. The image also becomes larger, potentially spilling over the screen. A long-throw lens will help offset these effects, but it does add an additional cost to the projector.

You can lessen the image washing effects of ambient light by positioning the screen and projector away from the light source if possible. Large churches with smaller attendance levels simply can dim a portion of the lights in the back of the sanctuary, and keep the lights up in the front. It's a subtle way to encourage people to move forward, and it will help eliminate some ambient light.

You may occasionally find that a manufacturer provides lumen specifications that are either optimistic or conservative. Ask a projector expert who has seen the majority of the projectors that they sell,

in action. They are a good resource for determining which projectors will shine brighter than they “spec.” The good news is that you might be able to get a brighter projector for your money.

### Balancing Budget & Brightness

A brighter projector will usually cost more money than those with lower lumen outputs. Higher—resolution projectors (XGA) are also more costly than those with low resolutions (SVGA). The goal most churches strive for is finding the right balance between budget, resolution and brightness.

For instance, we have made a handy reference sheet for you, designed to help you determine what lumen spec to look for, for various uses. We have included an average price range which will give you a rough estimate about what each type of projector will cost based on brightness and resolution.

Keep in mind that authorized resellers are often able to pass along **additional savings to church and other non—profit organizations**. Call and speak to a projector expert to learn more about these programs available from select manufacturers.

### Small Study Gatherings (two to 30 seats)

Projectors are often found in small study gatherings such as youth groups, youth retreats, missionary work, hospital or nursing home visits, and small fellowship meetings. Watch for projectors that weigh less than 10 pounds for better portability. Good features to have are keystone correction, color coded cables and auto sync for easier set up.

Suggested Lumens: 1000—1700

Average price range XGA: \$999—\$1,699\*

Average price range SVGA: \$699—\$999\*

### Small Community Spaces (30 to 100 seats)

Small community spaces often used for youth retreats, medium—sized fellowship gatherings, off—site fund raising, community outreach, baptisms, weddings and other events are places projectors are used.

Suggested Lumens: 1700—2500

Average price range XGA: \$999-\$1,899\*

Average price range SVGA: \$799-\$1,499\*

## Checklist

Here is a quick checklist of the things you may need for your church projection system, and some questions you probably would be asked during your search.

- ▶ Church AV Checklist
- ▶ Multimedia Projector: What is your seating capacity?
- ▶ Cables: How far will your projector be from your computer or video source?
- ▶ Custom Screen: Square, 4:3, or a custom size?
- ▶ Distribution Amplifiers: Are there more than 25 feet between projector and source? If so, you might need one of these.
- ▶ Projector Software: Would you rather control your projector from a computer desktop using software like Projector Pilot (from ProjectorPeople.com) or can you rely on a remote control?
- ▶ RF Remotes: Added convenience with electric screens. Works up to 100 feet. (Not suggested in multiple projector configurations).

**Useful link:** Free template downloads

<http://www.projectorsforworship.com/templates.asp>

**Images:** Brightness Guide image

<http://www.projectorpeople.com/tutorials/lumen-guide.asp>

**Product to feature:** (if you wish) <http://www.projectorpeople.com/projectors/projdtls.asp?itemid+8925&itmname+Proxima+DP8500x>

### Large Community Spaces (100 to 250 seats)

Large gathering areas used for family retreats, family entertainment gatherings, events, or smaller worship services (for lyrics and hymns) may also be good places to use a projector.

Suggested Lumens: 2500—3500

Average Price range XGA: \$1,999-\$3,999\* (dependent on feature set)

Average price range SVGA: *not recommended*

### Large Congregational Gatherings (251—500 seats)

The most common use for projectors is during the worship service or for large gatherings held in the sanctuary.

Suggested Lumens: 4000 and up

Average price range XGA: \$4,199-\$6,999\* and up (dependent on feature set)

Average price range SVGA: *not available*

If your church or gathering area has large windows or indoor lighting, you should use the brighter end of the suggested lumen output, or possibly more. If your projector is 25 feet or more from the screen, you may also need a higher lumen output.

*\*Street prices based on Projector People.com advertised prices in January 2006.*

Remember, XGA resolution projectors are a better choice when your plan for use includes viewing images on a larger screen (more than 120 inches diagonal). That is because the individual pixels from the projectors panels become more apparent as the image gets bigger.

An SVGA projector has fewer pixels, making for larger looking dots on your image. Text will also be easier to read with a higher resolution projector. Image quality will also be greatly improved if the resolution of the computer matches the resolution of the projector. XGA resolution is a newer incarnation than SVGA, making it more “future-proof.”

### **The Toughest Budgets**

Some churches may be able to simply invest in a new lamp for an existing projector. As lamps get older they eventually lose brightness, causing the picture to dim over time. Replacement lamps typically cost from \$299 to \$499.

Remounting the projector or screen away from ambient light might also help improve the look of the image.

New projectors with high brightness may also be available for less than you think. Recent improvements in projector brightness and lamp life may make it worth your money to invest in a new projector.

When it comes to the bottom line, every church is unique, and so is every audio visual solution. The good news is, projectors are brighter than ever, and cost much less than they once did. Armed with the information above, we hope you will be able to make the right choice for your next projector. ❖

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*Jennifer Andrews is the Internet communications manager for ProjectorPeople.com where she has been writing tutorials on projection technology for six years. Visit [www.projectorpeople.com](http://www.projectorpeople.com) for more information about this dynamic display technology.*