



TORTURED *for* CHRIST THE FILM

How to project films: for beginners

Essential tips about showing a film in non-cinema venues

If you've never shown films before, the technical side of things can seem a very steep learning curve! Showing a film in a place that wasn't designed as a cinema originally can present many challenges and even if you already have the equipment, set up is not always easy.

Many churches have great equipment to show visuals and audio and have great experience with doing this through worship and events throughout the year. But if you don't have this, the following advice might come in useful.

If you are showing a film in your home, it will be much more straightforward. Just remember to ensure you have enough room and the sound is good enough. You may need to let your neighbours know, as a larger group tends to need a higher than usual volume level.

Basic checklist

- The film will be supplied on a standard DVD. Can this format be accommodated?
- Does the venue have a good quality projector?
- Does the venue have a good quality large screen/s?
- Is the screen/s blocked by any columns/installations/furniture?
- Does the venue have blinds to block out/minimise natural light? Or can you show the film in the evening after dark?
- Does the venue have a good quality sound system with adequate volume?
- Will a trained person be there to operate the system?
- Does the venue have a computer?
- Can you test all equipment a week in advance to make sure the film and equipment are working?
- Can you carry out a sound check?



The guidelines below offer a background to things to consider when planning a screening.

Essential equipment

The screen: There are many choices about what to project on to. If you're screening indoors, you can install a fixed projector screen, but many people prefer to use a folding screen that is transportable and easily constructed. You will need to think about the size of the screen and its height, which you will need to consider in tandem with the projector.

The projector: When you're working out which projector to choose, pay attention to throw distance: this measurement tells you how far away you can position your projector and what size of image you can expect. The other key factors are the contrast ratio and the lumens count. A higher contrast ratio count will allow you to perceive more detail and see more subtle shades. Lumens is a measurement of how bright the projector lamp is. Both of these factors will allow you to project in conditions that aren't completely dark and offer an advantage over home entertainment systems. Most modern projectors also allow you to be versatile about where you position the projector.

The sound: Sound is one of the most complex areas of projection, but can make all the difference to your screening. If, for example, dialogue can't be heard, it can be disastrous. Think about where you can position speakers; whether you need them to be freestanding; whether an existing PA system is appropriate for film screenings; whether stereo or surround sound is best for your space; and whether there are echoes or dead spots in the space. You may also need to think about using a small mixing desk.

The player: You have a lot of different options about what device to play the film from. It will need to connect to the projector, so check they are compatible. Many people screen from laptops, which allows you to be versatile, but can also come with complications (battery life, on screen notifications displaying to the audience, output resolution etc). Others prefer to screen from a DVD player or Blu-ray player. (Blu-ray players are higher resolution and can play DVDs as well as Blu-ray discs.)

Tips for all screenings

Position the projector as central to the screen as possible.

If screening in rear projection (where the projector sits behind the screen), position the projector as central to the screen, at a distance back from the screen, as possible.

Calibrate the sound properly to the individual acoustics of the room, whether it be on a mixing desk, or through a calibration mic on a processor.

When positioning speakers, the left and right channels should go an even distance on each side of the screen. The centre channel could go below or just above the screen depending on the situation and your surround left and right should go at the back of the room, at the left and right.

Keep the projector in a cool, well-ventilated space.

You need a constant airflow going through the projector and over the lamp, otherwise it may overheat and shut down, and even cause damage to the bulb.

Get the right advice before purchasing or using equipment.

Always be prepared!

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