INSTRUCTIONS FOR CREATING ATHENS AT YOUR VBS

Paul's Dangerous Journey to Share the Truth

Group Decorating Places
Creating Your Athens Set

The Athens field-test set is simple to build but offers plenty of opportunity for you to add your creativity and for your volunteers to have a great time working together!

Be sure to watch the Decorating Places: Athens DVD that’s included in the Athens Starter Kit. You’ll get more tips and helpful advice from our design expert, Bruce Barry.

A supply list is included for each project; this is just a general guideline, since your set might be larger or smaller than the one we created for our field test.

Techniques

Scoring—Cut lightly along a line, cutting only through the top layer of the cardboard, being careful not to cut through the entire piece. This allows you to easily fold along the scored line.

Dry brushing—Put only a small amount of paint on the brush and then dab the brush on a paper towel or rag so there is very little paint on the brush. This technique prevents globs of paint in areas where you want just a little highlighting.

Cross-hatch—Apply paint with short criss-cross strokes so there are no distinguishable directional lines.

Tips

• Be sure to remove any protective plastic covering from the front and back of the foam sheets.

• Wear heavy gloves when using the hot knife.

• Wear latex gloves when using the Great Stuff foam; it’s very important to avoid getting foam on bare skin.

• When painting small areas, use plastic cups to hold the paint.

Transparency Patterns

Copy these transparency patterns onto transparency film to project the images onto foam or cardboard.
Columns

Supplies for 4 Columns

- 2 sheets (4’ x 8’) of 1” thick foam
- “Column” transparency (print the column pattern on page 15 onto transparency film)
- transparency projector
- charcoal stick, black marker
- yardstick
- hot knife with straight blade*
- heavy gloves
- paint pans, plastic cups
- small paint rollers (long-handled helpful)
- small sponge brushes
- paint:
  - white
  - Sherwin Williams 6767 “Aquarium” (aqua)
  - Sherwin Williams 6795 “Major Blue” (medium blue)
  - Sherwin Williams 6817 “Gentian” (purple)

Supplies for 4 Column Supports

- 5 boxes 14” x 4” x 68”
  We purchased ours from Uline (an online supplier); the boxes are flat, with fold lines for the flaps at the top and bottom of the boxes
- clear packing tape or duct tape
- yardstick
- black marker
- box cutter
- can(s) of Great Stuff foam
- latex gloves
- hot glue gun & glue sticks

*available at group.com
Building the Columns

1. Using the transparency from page 14 of these instructions, project the column image onto a sheet of foam, placing the projector so the column is 8’ tall. Two columns can fit on each sheet of foam. Use a sharp-tip black marker to trace the all the lines onto the foam. Bruce suggests using a stick of charcoal to trace the inner fluting lines of the column.

To ensure extra sharp, straight lines, lay the column on the floor and use a paper towel to soften the charcoal lines on the columns; then use a yardstick and a sharp-tip marker to retrace the flute lines. (The reason for starting with the charcoal to trace the projected image is that the charcoal lines can then be lightened, and you can place the foam on the floor, where you have more control to retrace sharp, accurate lines with the marker.)

3. To easily mark the curved lines at the bases and tops of the columns, cut a strip of foam or cardboard, and with a helper, bend the edge of the strip along the charcoal line and trace along it with a marker.

4. Use a hot knife to cut around the outlines of the columns. Don’t cut along the bottom lines of the columns; leave the bases straight.

5. Give the columns a base coat of white. (Even though the foam is white, the white paint gives a more even surface and a better base for painting the details.) For an easy way to paint the columns, lay them on the floor; pour a small amount of paint onto the column, and use a long-handed paint roller to spread the white paint over the entire column.
6. Use a small brush or small sponge brush to paint the column fluting Aquamarine blue. To add dimension, shade along one edge of each flute detail with Major Blue. To add highlights, mix a tiny amount of white into a cup of Aquamarine. Be sure to keep all shading on one side of the fluting and the highlights on the opposite side. Use Gentian purple to paint the area below the base of the column.

**Making Column Support Stands**

1. Tape both ends of a 14” x 4” x 68” box closed with clear packing tape or duct tape.

2. Attach the box to the back of a column, using Great Stuff foam. (Use latex gloves when using the Great Stuff.) Be careful to place the bottom of the box flush with the bottom of the column. Put heavy weights on the box until the foam dries.

3. With a box cutter, cut off an 18” length of a 14 x 4 x 68 box (14” plus the 4” end flaps).

4. Place the closed end of the 14” piece against the bottom of the tall box and column, keeping the bottom of the boxes flush. Use a large quantity of heavy-duty hot glue and packing tape or duct tape to fasten the two boxes together in an L shape. We also used a few screws on the inside of the short box, going into the taller box.

5. Stand the column upright. (If the column seems a little wobbly, place a sandbag or weight inside the opening on the short “leg” of the support stand.)

**Advice Column**

You can get four supports from one box, but you will need to create your own end flaps on the two 18” long middle pieces of the box. Just measure 4” in from one end of the piece, draw a line and score along the line on the inside of the box piece; then fold in your flaps and fasten closed with tape.
Stone Wall
Supplies for 7 Stone Wall Sections
• 2 sheets (4’ x 8’) of 1” thick foam
• 7 boxes 12” x 12” x 48”
• clear packing tape
• yardstick
• black marker
• hot knife* with straight and U-shape blades*
• heavy gloves
• paint brushes, rollers, sea sponge
• paper towels
• spray bottle of water
• Great Stuff foam
• latex gloves
• (8) 2½” nails
• paint:
  • white
  Sherwin Williams 7690 “Townhall Tan”
  Sherwin Williams 6817 “Gentian”

*available at group.com
Building the Stone Wall

1. With a hot knife and straight blade, cut 7 pieces of foam 48” long x 16” wide for the wall top.

2. Mark horizontal lines approximately 16” apart across the top of each foam piece, using a black marker.

3. Fasten both ends of each 12” x 12” x 48” box closed with clear packing tape.

4. Attach a foam piece to the top of each box, using Great Stuff adhesive. (Weight the top of the foam until the Great Stuff dries.)

5. To create a curved wall, cut a small triangular piece off of the corner of the foam on the sections of wall where two boxes meet. (See photo.) To fill in the gap on the top of the wall, place a scrap piece of foam over the gap and trace with black marker.

6. Cut out the shape with a hot knife and straight blade.

7. Use Great Stuff adhesive to attach the fill piece to one side of a wall section. For extra stabilization, push nails at an angle through both pieces of foam. (Don’t attach the fill piece to both wall sections or you won’t be able to move your wall easily.)
8. Use a U-shaped blade with the hot knife, and make shallow cuts along the horizontal lines of the top foam pieces of each wall section.

9. With the straight blade, cut “chips” into the edges of the foam top to create a natural stone texture.

10. Paint the boxes and the foam tops in Townhall Tan; let dry.

11. Mist the top and sides of each wall piece, and brush on a small amount of white paint. Blot the surfaces with a sea sponge, using a “pouncing” motion, so that you don’t have a solid color or any paint lines. If the walls have too much white (especially on the boxes), you can blot on more tan paint with the sea sponge.

12. To add dimension and shading, brush Gentian purple paint into the grooves of each wall section top, and use a dry paper towel to soften the edges of the purple. Also paint a strip of purple on the sides of the boxes, just along and under the wall ledge, and blend with the paper towel.
Scene Cutouts

Supplies for Scene Cutouts

- Scene Cutout Transparencies 1-7
- transparency projector
- 7 sheets (4’ x 8’) of 1” thick foam
  (if you have large scraps of foam from your other projects, you won’t need whole sheets)
- black markers
- hot knife with straight blade*
- heavy gloves
- small paint brushes, small sponge brushes,
  3” and 4” chip brushes, sea sponge
- spray bottles of water
- Athens logo (available in the Giant Decorating Poster Pack* or on the Athens Clip
  Art & Resources CD in the Athens Starter Kit*)
- spray adhesive
- foam core or thin cardboard
- paint:
  Sherwin Williams 6795
  “Major Blue” (medium blue)
  Sherwin Williams 6803
  “Danube” (medium dark blue)
  Sherwin Williams 6804
  “Dignity Blue” (dark blue)
  Sherwin Williams 6704
  “Hep Green” (lime green)
  Sherwin Williams 6719
  “Gecko” (grass green)
  Sherwin Williams 7690
  “Townhall Tan”
  Sherwin Williams 6817
  “Gentian” (purple)

*available at group.com
Scene Cutouts: Houses and Cliffs

1. Transparencies 1-5: Project the transparency images onto sheets of foam.
   • For transparency #1, place the projector so the image fills the 48” height of the foam horizontally.
   • Transparency #2, 40” high
   • Transparency #3, 48” high
   • Transparency #4, 48” high
   • Transparency #5, 30” high.

2. Trace the lines of the image onto the foam, using a black marker. (You don’t need to draw the bottom horizontal line; the bottom of the sheet of foam will be the bottom of the cutout.)

3. Cut out each piece with a hot knife and straight blade.

4. Paint each cutout, using these photos as a guide. Be sure to paint the edges of the cutouts, also.

5. As a shading technique for the green sections, paint the lower part of each section in a darker shade and the upper part in a lighter shade. Mist the sections lightly with water. With a large dry brush, pull the darker color up into the lighter color, and use light cross-hatching (small X’s) motions to blend the two shades.
Scene Cutouts: Cutout Support Stands
1. Make supports stands for cutouts #1-#5, which will be placed on the floor. Cut a piece of foam about three-fourths the height of the cutout. (Use scrap foam from other parts of the project.) Place the support piece on the back of the cutout, with the bottom edges flush with each other.
2. Place strips of clear packing tape or duct tape to hold the support stand; putting tape on only one side of the stand will allow it to “hinge” closed so you can move it and store it easily.

Scene Cutouts: Boat and Island
1. For transparency #6 (the boat) and #7 (the island), it’s helpful to hang your backdrop and project the images onto the backdrop; then decide the appropriate size of each image in relation to the size of your backdrop and to each other. The idea is to make the island smaller so it appears to be further in the distance and the boat a little larger so it will look closer to shore. Position the projector so the images are the size you want. Then put a sheet of foam in place, and use black marker to trace the boat and island.
2. Cut out the images with the hot knife.
3. Paint the images as shown in the photos.
4. After painting the boat, draw the detail lines with black marker so they will stand out.

Scene Cutouts: Athens Logo
1. For the Athens logo, use the logo available in the poster pack or take the clip art CD to a printer and have the logo image printed to a larger size.
2. Use spray adhesive to glue the logo to a sheet of foam core; cut around the outline
Backdrop & Finishing Touches

Supplies for Backdrop & Finishing Touches

- Athens Coastline Wall Hanging*
- pipe frame
- clamps
- zip ties
- fishing line
- duct tape or packing tape
- artificial (or real) trees and foliage (optional)
- uplights
- water effect lights (optional)

*available at group.com
Finishing the Athens Set

1. For real decorating ease, hang one or two of the fabric wall hanging backdrops available from Group. The backdrop has precut buttonholes across the top. (Watch the Decorating Places DVD to see how we hung our backdrop for the field test set, using a pipe frame, clamps, and zip ties.)

2. Attach fishing line to the island cutout (#7) and boat cutout (#6). Also place several loops of duct tape or packing tape on the back of each piece. Hang the cutouts from the top of the pipe frame with the fishing line, and press the tape loops onto the fabric backdrop to keep the cutouts in position. The island should be above the boat so the perspective is of the island in the further distance and the boat coming closer to shore.

3. Arrange the houses and cliffs cutouts (#1-#4) and the rock cutout (#5) in front of the backdrop.

4. Place the wall sections in front of the cutouts, curving three sections on one side of the single center section and three sections on the other side.

5. Place the columns in front of the wall.
6. To hang the Athens logo above your set, use fishing line attached on each side of the logo and fastened to the ceiling or a light bar or duct pipe.

7. Add artificial trees and foliage.

8. Use uplights hidden among the foliage to highlight your set. For a really spectacular effect, add a water light that shimmers on the sea.

Your awesome set will help welcome families as they step back in time to meet the Apostle Paul in Athens!
Scene Cutout #1
48” high
Scene Cutout #2
40” high
Scene Cutout #3

48” high
Scene Cutout #4

48” high
Scene Cutout #5
30" high
Scene Cutout #7