

Transform your church into a colossal and colorful Southwest canyon!

12-Plate Cactus

What you'll need:

- 12 small, ribbed paper plates
- 2 paint stir sticks
- hot glue gun
- spray paint
- white paint
- Quill Stamper (see separate instructions)
- dropcloth
- gloves

What you'll do:

Step 1: Hot glue the paint sticks together, overlapping 3-4 inches.

Step 2: Lay out 3 plates in a straight line touching each other.

Step 3: Hot glue all around the edge of each of the 3 plates. Lay the joined paint sticks across the plates in the glue so that just 2-3 inches sticks out from the bottom plate.

Step 4: Create cactus "petals" by adding plates to the top of the 3 plates glued to the stick (a bit like a lid), with the faces of the plates toward each other.

Step 5: Hot glue 3 sets of 2 plates to create cactus petals. Lay the 3 petals out in a clover pattern.

Step 6: Add 2 dots of glue to 1 of the petals and attach the other 2 to it. Let dry.

Step 7: Add a dab of glue to the lowest plate in the line of 3. Flip over the trio of petals and add to the line of 3 plates. Let dry.

Step 8: Spread a dropcloth on the ground. Spray paint both sides of the cactus.

Step 9: Add quills by dipping the Quill Stamper into white paint, stamping, rotating the bristle, and stamping again.



Quill Stamper

You'll need this for several of the decorations.

What you'll do:

Step 1: Cut a single broom bristle.

Step 2: Divide the bristle into 3 strands.

Step 3: Bend the 3 strands so they go in different directions (creating something that looks a bit like a bird foot).



Bloomin' Barrel Cactus

What you'll need:

- 9 inexpensive, thin, ribbed paper plates
- stapler
- hot glue
- spray paint
- gloves
- white paint
- 2" paintbrush
- Quill Stamper (see separate instructions)
- scissors
- tissue paper



What you'll do:

Step 1: Fold 9 plates in half with bottom side together (bend backward, not into itself).

Step 2: Staple 2 folded plates together on the ridges, so the edges meet and the folds are touching.

Step 3: Continue stapling the plates together at the ridges, creating a circle.

Step 4: Hot glue can be used at the center to create a tighter circle.

Step 5: Spray paint the circle of paper plates on a dropcloth.

Step 6: Add white paint to the edges with a paintbrush.

Step 7: Add quills by dipping the Quill Stamper into white paint, stamping, rotating the bristle, and stamping again.

Step 8: Cut 4 layers of tissue paper into a 4" square.

Step 9: Pinch the bottom of the square and separate the tissue paper to make petals.

Step 10: Place the tissue paper in the center of the top of the cactus and hot glue in place.

Decked-Out Desert Crew Sign

What you'll need:

- Crew stand base and pole
- Monumental Crew Sign mounted on foam core
- zip ties
- scissors
- Desert Sand Plastic Backdrop*
- paper plate and cardboard cacti



What you'll do:

Step 1: Cut a curvy shape out of Desert Sand Plastic Backdrop large enough to cover the Crew sign base.

Step 2: Cut a slit in the center of the Desert Sand shape for the pole to fit through.

Step 3: Place the shape over the Crew sign base. Insert the pole into the Crew base.

Step 4: Cut slits in the mounted Crew sign.

Step 5: Insert a zip tie into the slits, and fasten the sign to the pole.

Step 6: Zip tie paper plate and cardboard cacti onto the pole. Trim any excess zip tie.



Knee-High Cactus

What you'll need:

- marker
- utility blade
- cutting mat
- straight edge or paint stirring stick
- 8 white or bright-colored chenille wires
- gloves
- paint (2 colors per cactus)
- dropcloth
- two 2" paintbrushes
- cardboard
- tape measure
- cactus template (download from group.com/vbsTools)
- Quill Stamper (see separate instructions)
- white paint



What you'll do:

Step 1: Cut 1 cactus shape out of cardboard. You choose the size.

Step 2: Trace the cactus shape onto another piece of cardboard to create an additional cactus, then cut it out. This will result in 2 identical cactus-shaped pieces of cardboard.

Step 3: Use the lighter color paint to paint both sides. Allow to dry.

Step 4: Place the paint stick in the center of the cactus to mark the center.

Step 5: Use the darker paint to add a U shape.

Step 6: Add texture details with the darker paint color, using a dry brush technique.

Step 7: Add quills by dipping the Quill Stamper into white paint, stamping, rotating the bristle, and stamping again.

Step 8: Measure the length of your cactus. Mark the halfway point.

Step 9: Using a paint stick as a guide for the utility knife, cut a groove in the middle of one cactus from the top and stopping halfway. Cut a groove in the middle of the other cactus from the bottom and stopping halfway.

Step 10: Slide the two pieces together. You may need to tweak the cuts if they don't slide together.

Step 11: Add chenille wire quills by folding the wires in half and poking them into the edges of the cardboard.

Step 12: Use 2 chenille wires for the top of the cactus.

Painted Desert Yucca

What you'll need:

- marker
- cardboard
- poster tube
- utility blade
- cutting mat
- #8 1" self-drilling lath screws
- power drill
- gloves
- paint
- dropcloth
- 2" paintbrush
- yucca leaf template (download from group.com/vbsTools)



What you'll do:

Step 1: Cut 6 or 7 identical-shaped leaves out of cardboard (different sizes but same shape). Our tallest leaf was 20½" tall.

Step 2: Paint the leaves a solid color on both sides. Let dry.

Step 3: Add leaf details by dry brushing contrasting color on both sides. Let dry.

Step 4: Score the middle of each leaf to allow the cardboard to bend.

Step 5: Cut a 4" piece from the carpet tube.

Step 6: Add yucca leaves one at a time to the outside of the 4" poster tube by attaching with screws.

Step 7: Insert the last yucca leaf into the tube.

Step 8: Paint over the screws.

Silly Succulent

What you'll need:

- one 4" and six 9" inexpensive ribbed paper plates
- stapler
- spray paint
- white paint
- small dowel or chopstick
- gloves
- 2" paintbrush
- Quill Stamper (see separate instructions)
- hot glue gun



What you'll do:

Step 1: Pinch a plate at the bottom and staple the plate at the pinch. Do this to 1 small and 4 large plates.

Step 2: Staple 2 of the large paper plates together.

Step 3: Use 2 plates stapled together as the bottom piece of the cactus. Staple other pinched plates onto the edge of the doubled plate. Continue stacking and stapling plates together, creating a cactus shape.

Step 4: Spray paint the entire cactus. Let dry.

Step 5: Add white paint to the edges using the dry brush technique. Do all the sides.

Step 6: Add quills by dipping the Quill Stamper into white paint, stamping, rotating the bristle, and stamping again.

Step 7: Hot glue the small dowel or chopstick to the bottom plate.

Simple Saguaro

What you'll need:

- Crew base and pole
- Jointed Cactus
- Desert Sand Plastic Backdrop
- scissors
- zip ties

What you'll do:

Step 1: Cut a curvy shape out of Desert Sand Plastic Backdrop large enough to cover the Crew sign base.

Step 2: Cut a slit in the center of the Desert Sand shape for the pole to go through. Place the shape over the Crew sign base.

Step 3: Unfold the Jointed Cactus.

Step 4: Lay the pole on top of the cactus.

Step 5: Cut two slits in the cactus, one near the top and the other near the middle. Insert a zip tie into the slits and fasten the cactus to the pole.

Step 6: Trim excess zip tie.

Step 7: Insert the pole into the Crew base.



Spikey Saguaro

What you'll need:

- carpet tube
- 8" cement tube
- #8 x 1" self-drilling lath screws
- drill and bit
- paintbrush
- paint roller
- paint roller pan
- paint (dark green, light green, yellow)
- dropcloth
- gloves
- tape measure
- jigsaw
- safety glasses
- needle-nose pliers
- white bristle scrub brush
- Great Stuff (2 large cans)
- newspaper
- painter's tape



What you'll do:

Step 1: Start by making the cactus arms. Measure up 12" on a 38" carpet tube and make a "starter" hole.

Step 2: Use the jigsaw to cut out a smile shape in the tube where you made the starter hole. Save the piece you cut out.

Step 3: Bend the carpet tube to close the smile. Then attach the extra piece with screws to keep the bend.

Step 4: Decide where you want to place your cactus arms. Cut 2 big ovals into the side of the tube, about 4" wide but longer so the carpet tubes can angle up.

Step 5: Attach the cactus arms to the cement tube with screws.

Step 6: Seal off the opening of the 8" tube by creating an X with painter's tape. Crumple up some newspaper and create a rounded top.

Step 7: Do the same process with the carpet tube arms.

Step 8: Use Great Stuff to make vertical lines on the tubes, one side at a time. Allow to dry. Flip and repeat.

Step 9: Paint the entire cactus a dark green. Add light green highlights with a roller so that just the ridges of the cactus grab the light green.

Step 10: Add yellow paint using a dry brush technique.

Step 11: Use needle-nose pliers to pull white bristles out of a scrub brush. Poke holes in the foam, and then place bristles in groupings of 2 to 3 all over the cactus.

Surprising Saguaro

What you'll need:

- cardboard
- 3-ounce paper cups
- hot glue gun
- utility knife
- scissors
- projector
- cactus image to trace (group.com/vbsTools)
- marker
- brown lightweight craft paper
- spray adhesive
- dropcloth
- 3-4 Tissue Paper Grass Mat* (more if your cactus is larger)
- stapler and staples

What you'll do:

Step 1: Project the cactus image onto cardboard and trace a cactus. Cut out the cactus shape with a utility knife, then trace it on another piece of cardboard so you have 2 identical cacti. Cut out the second cacti shape.

Step 2: If your piece of cardboard is not tall enough, cut cactus arms and attach by using a "brace." Hot glue the braces to the back side of the arms. Make sure the arms line up on both pieces of cardboard.

Step 3: Place and glue cups to one of the cactus cutouts. Leave space in the center when placing cups, so a Crew sign stand can be inserted to stand it up.

Step 4: Stack the remaining cactus cutout on top of the cups, and glue to secure.

Step 5: Use spray adhesive to attach pieces of brown craft paper over the cardboard and sides to create a solid brown 2D cactus.

Step 6: Staple Tissue Paper Grass Mats to the cardboard (a bit of the brown shows though; this helps give the cactus depth).

Step 7: Put the cactus on the Crew sign stand.

Note: Our cactus was 5½' tall by 27" wide.



Step 1



Step 3



Step 4



Step 5



Twilight Vista

What you'll need:

- Starry Night Plastic Backdrop*
- black paint
- paint roller and pan
- chipboard (sold at home improvement stores to protect floors during construction; same as main set monument rock structures are built from)
- cardboard boxes (could be as tall as the shortest part of your silhouette)
- utility knife
- Monumental silhouette pattern (download from group.com/vbsTools)
- marker
- scissors
- tape
- Cool Connectors*
- hot glue gun
- paint stirring sticks (2 sticks per 3' of cardboard)
- yellow spray paint
- gloves
- can lights

What you'll do:

Step 1: Draw the silhouette pattern on the back of the chipboard.

Step 2: Flip it over. Paint the chipboard black. Let dry.

Step 3: Cut out the silhouette pattern. (Save the piece that is trimmed away.)

Step 4: Build a cardboard box and use packing tape to hold it closed.

Step 5: Cut the box in half the long way to make 2 halves.

Step 6: Cut the corners on the top and cut off the flap. (Tip: Scale the boxes to the size of the silhouette.)

Step 7: Lay out the painted silhouette. Line up the boxes at the bottom.

Step 8: Attach the silhouette to the boxes with Cool Connectors. (Tip: The Cool Connectors ensure it will stay together.)

Step 9: Press Cool Connectors from the chipboard side into the box, in all four corners.

Step 10: Hot glue 2 or 3 paint sticks together.

Step 11: Use paint sticks glued together to add stability and to keep the cardboard from bending down.

Step 12: Use the trimmed cutout of the original silhouette as a spray paint template. Put a few pieces of painter's tape on the back of the silhouette, and gently stick it about a foot down from the top edge of the large Monumental Silhouette.

Step 13: In soft, quick bursts, lightly spray with yellow spray paint creating a sunlit effect on the silhouette.

Step 14: Tape the Starry Night Backdrop together with the purple edges together. The flap is down.

Step 15: Hang the Starry Night Backdrop.

Step 16: Use can lights to backlight the Starry Night Backdrop

Step 17: Place the silhouetted boxes in front of the Starry Night Backdrop.











