

Instructions for using a virtual background on Zoom

First, make sure you have a photo on your computer that you want to use for your background. I downloaded a nice picture of our sanctuary at my church. Some people have used pictures they got on the Internet from places that they cherish. Keep in mind, though, that you're trying to create a sacred space if you're using Zoom for worship, so choose accordingly.

Then, log onto Zoom. You can use a link for a meeting that's not going on when you're doing this. You'll see a screen that says "Please wait for the host to start this webinar."

Below it, you'll see a box labeled "Test Computer Audio." Click on that.

That brings you to a Settings menu. On the left-hand side, you'll see a bunch of tabs. Click on "Virtual Background."

You'll see yourself, with your current background (where you're sitting." Below that, you'll see "Choose Virtual Background." If you click on "None" that gives you NO virtual background – it will be what the camera sees right now. It may give you an option or two , but you're going to want to upload your picture, so click on the little + sign that is parallel to the "Choose Virtual Background" label. That will give you access to the pictures on your computer.

Find your picture (it's usually in a folder labeled "Pictures") and click on it. That will add your picture to the menu of pictures you can choose as a Virtual Background. It will also put that up in the video of yourself you're looking at right now.

If you like it, just close that window and it's all set. If you don't, you can either click "None" and you'll be back to your real-time background where you are now, or you can click on another picture among your Virtual Background options.

Pro tips: try it out before you do something live. If you have poor internet connectivity, and many of us are experiencing slow internet speeds right now, it will look odd and may be more distracting than useful. Don't wear green, because the application is projecting an image on a green screen and the clothing that is green will simply disappear, and you'll look like a disembodied head.