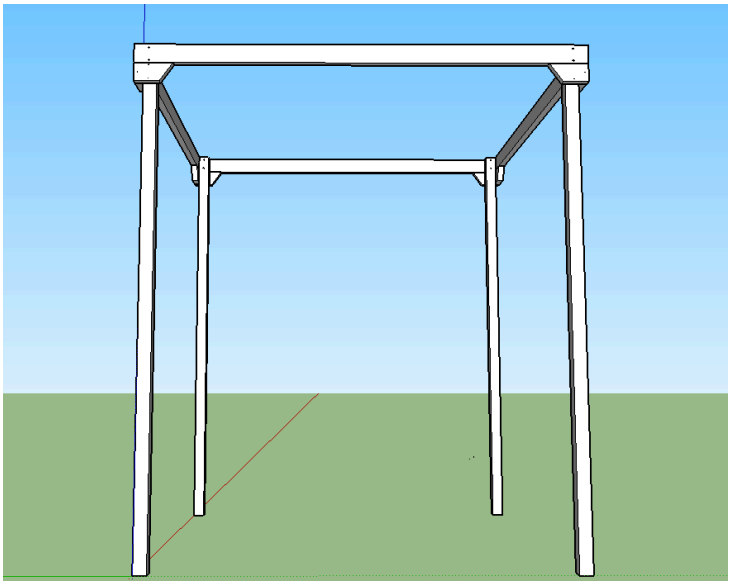
Simple DIY Chuppah Wedding Canopy
As Designed by STLChuppah.com

The Story:



As a Jewish hobbyist-woodworker, getting ready to be married, I painstakingly designed my own chuppah, selected the lumber from a boutique-like local urban-forestry lumber yard, planed and sanded the quarter-sawn white oak to a glossy finish, and hand-sawed each joint. All told, I don't know how many months the process took, but the number is probably higher than most people, particularly those planning and preparing a wedding have to spend.

This chuppah, based to some extent on my own, is designed to be simple and inexpensive to construct, using fully-planed lumber available at any hardware/building supply store, at a much lower cost than my own. This design can be easily finished with paint, stain, natural oils (linseed, olive, etc.) or anything else you can imagine to give your chuppah the look you want on your big day. Mazel tov!

Materials:

Material	*Quantity*	*Size*	*Cost Per**	*Total Cost**
Lumber	4	2x4 x 8'	$2.69	$10.76
Lumber	4	4x4 x 8'	$7.57	$30.28
Carriage Bolts	12	¼" x 6"	$0.46	$5.52
Wingnuts	12	¼"	$1.18	$14.16
Screws	20	2.5"		~$6.47 per 1lb ~$67.19 + tax

*Estimated cost only, actual costs will vary over time and by location.

Tools:

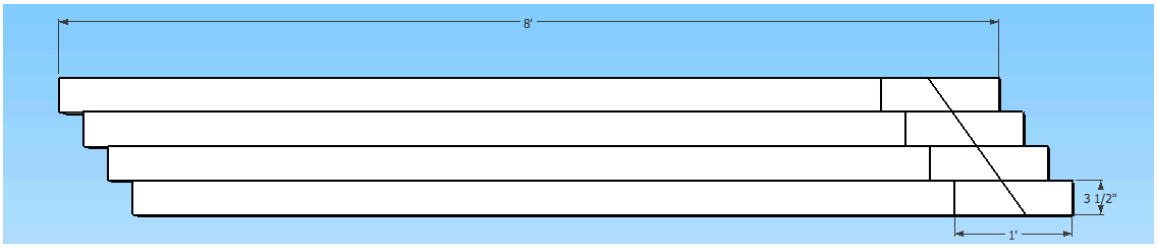
- Drill, with 5/16" (and 1/16" recommended) auger-type drill bit(s), and a Driver-Bit matching your screws (Phillips, Hex, Torx, Square, etc.)
- Saw (Circular, Track, Table, Hand, whatever you have available to cut lumber)
- Two or more wood clamps (two should be longer than 16", the rest – four more are recommended – can be as small as 6")
- Marking pencil and ruler (carpenter's square or similar recommended)

Method: (Note: If you prefer to work off images, the last page of this guide has images from the SketchUp model with dimensions)

1. Trim: Line up 2x4s at one end, clamp them down, and trim them to the same length.

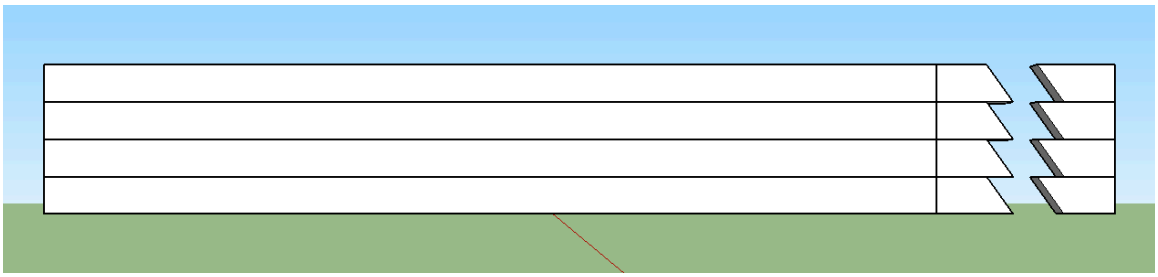
2. Mark: Mark the four boards at 6" and 1' from the edge, but do not cut them yet.

3. Layout, Mark and Make the First Cut: Remove the clamps, then stagger the boards at an equidistant spacing - the exact measurement of that spacing will change the angle of the supports, but as long as each board is spaced the same distance from the others, it won't make a large difference in the look of the chuppah – the distance shown here is approximately 2 ½" and gives an angle of approximately 45 degrees.



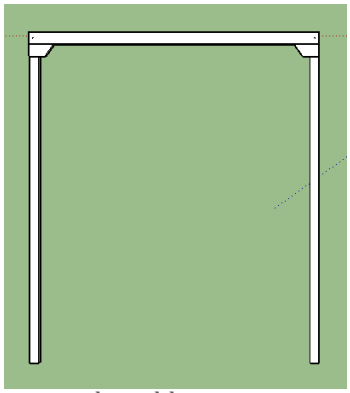
Above, Step 3: 2x4 x 8' boards marked and staggered evenly, ready for the angled cut.

4. Layout and Make the Second Cut: Remove the clamps again, and line up the boards again, similar to Step 2. Setup, and cut along your line perpendicular to the boards, to remove the remaining angled supports, leaving you with four 2x4 x 7' boards (the kerf of your saw will remove a certain amount of length – approximately 1/8" per cut is typical - but as long as the cuts are made evenly, each board will be the same length, and will match up fine).



Above, Step 4: Boards marked and lined up evenly, ready for the perpendicular cut.

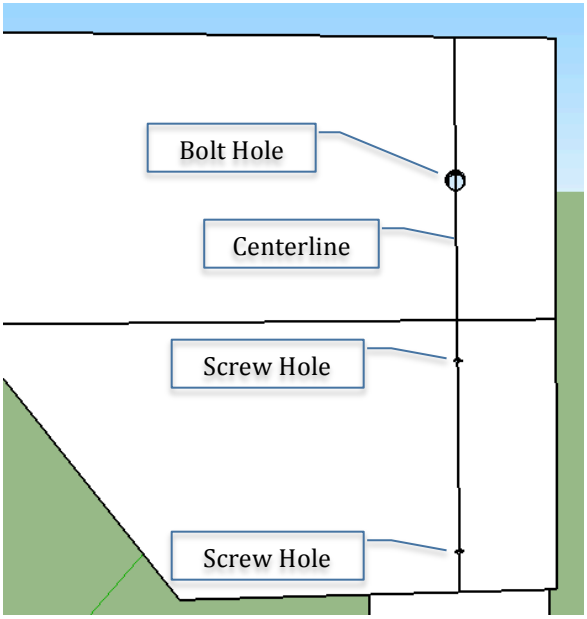
Right, Step 5: Finished Side-Frame.



5. Layout the Side-Frames: Place two of your 4x4 posts on pairs of sawhorses (in a pinch, a bunch of scrap 2x4s will work, it just won't be quite as comfortable), then place (and clamp, if enough clamps are available) two of your 2x4 x 7' boards flush with the each outside edge, and with the top and bottom of the 4x4s (the top is the board you're marking, the bottom will just help you keep the frame

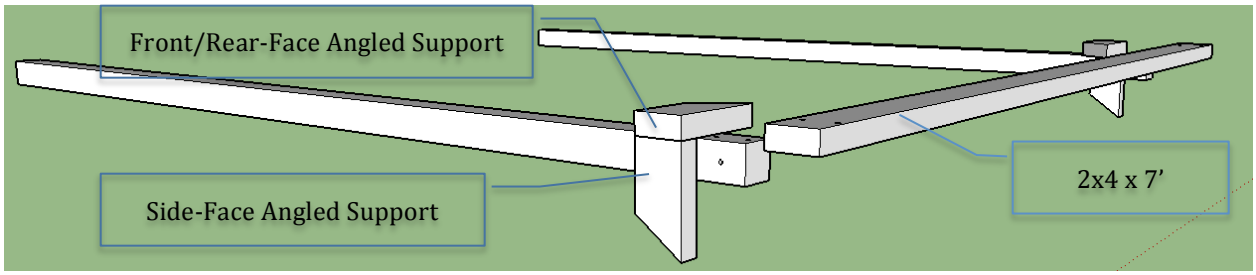
square). If you feel comfortable, you might want to move the top board a small amount (perhaps ¼") above flush to ensure the tops of the posts will not be visible, but you will have to be very precise when translating this same offset to each and every frame – it will be much easier to leave them flush. Place a matched set of angled supports directly beneath and against your top 2x4 x 7', and clamp these in place.

6. Mark and Attach Side-Frame Pieces: Using a square, or other measurement technique, lightly sketch a line along the 2x4 and support, along the centerline of the 4x4 post (approximately 1¾" from the edge). Mark two spots on this centerline equidistant from the top and bottom of the support for the screws. I would recommend driving the screws about ½" from the top and bottom of the support (much further, and you loose some rotational stiffness, much closer to the edge, you risk splintering your board), and I would also recommend drilling a pilot hole for each screw with a bit of slightly smaller diameter than your screws to also reduce the chance of splintering the edges of the support. Mark another spot on each of these centerlines, at the halfway point in the 2x4, then drive the 5/16" bolt hole through the 2x4 and 4x4 and slide the ¼" diameter bolt into it to make sure it will fit properly.



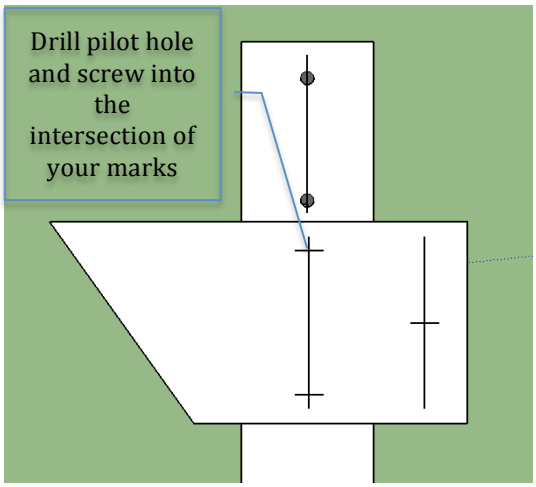
Right, Step 6: Connection hole layout.

7. Layout the Front-Frame Pieces: After both Side-Frames are laid out, and the angled supports are screwed into place, remove the 2x4 x 7' boards, and rearrange your posts to layout your Front- or Rear-Frame. The posts will now have the Angled Supports from the two Side-Frames attached to the outside faces, "pointing" downward. Place the Angled Supports for your Front- or Rear-Frame directly on top of the end grain of the two Side-Frame Angled Supports and ensure they're square with your posts. Verify this, and the other measurements by placing the 2x4 x 7' board on the edge of the posts in position, then clamp the supports into place.



Above, Step 7: Laying out the Front- and Rear-Frames.

8. Mark and Attach Front-Frame Pieces: Mark a point for a screw on the face of the Front/Rear Angled Support halfway up the board and centered on the end grain portion of the Side-Face Angled Support to attach the two, approximately ¾" from the edge. Drill your pilot holes and screw down your supports. Double check your supports for square, then mark and fasten the remaining points the same way as in Step 6, centered on the 4x4 posts.



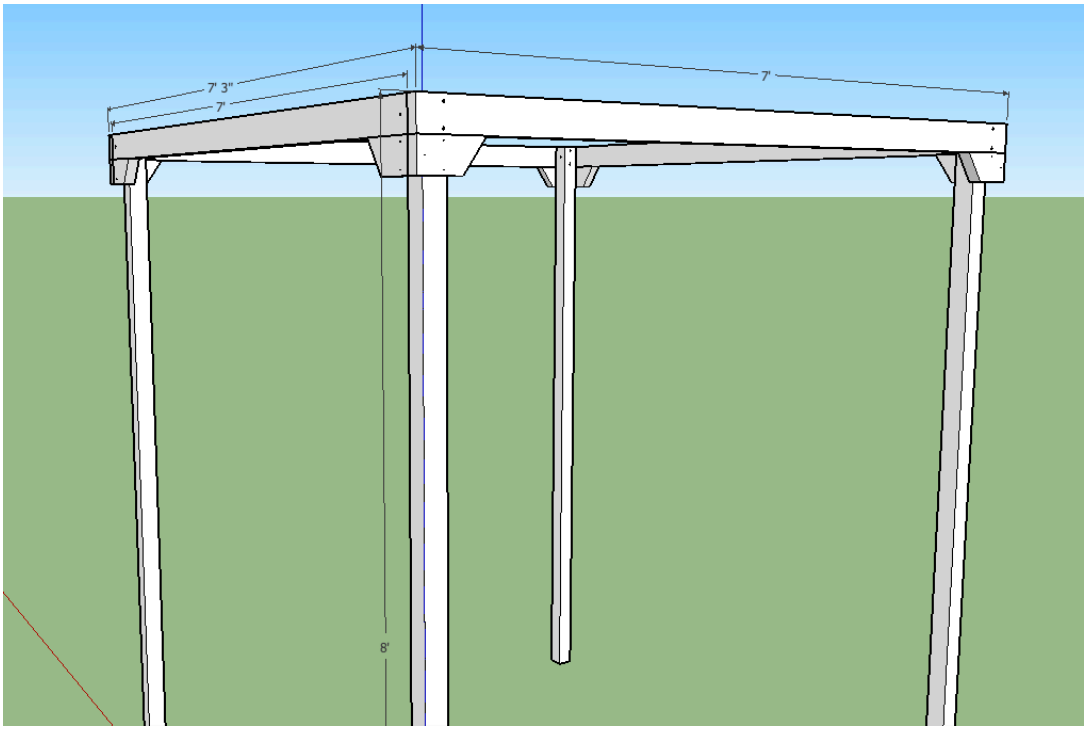
Right, Step 8: Connection hole layout.

Once complete, return the 2x4 x 7' board to your 4x4 posts, lining it back up with the angled supports, and clamp it in place on each. It may again be helpful in keeping your frame square to clamp the other 2x4 x 7' at the foot of the 4x4s. Mark the centerline of the 4x4 and cross it with a mark approximately ¾" from the top, and another from the bottom. Drill the 5/16" holes for your bolts, and run the bolts through them to check fit.

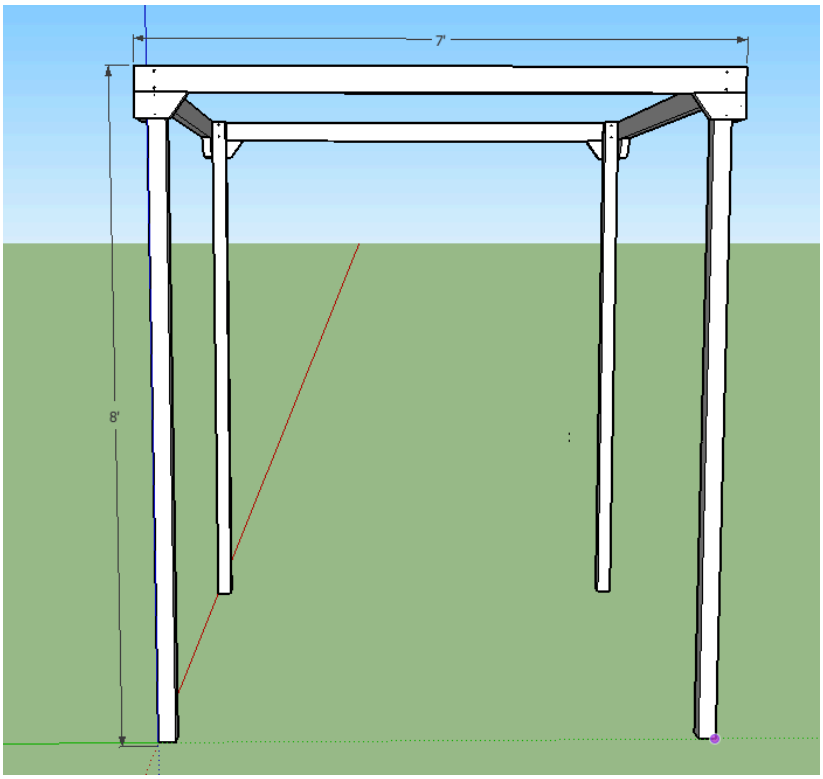
9. Repeat steps 7 and 8 for the rear frame.

10. Finish with oil, stain, paint, polyurethane, or nothing at all, and enjoy! Mazel Tov!

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to post them at http://www.stlchuppah.com!



Above: Angled view of Chuppah with approximate dimensions.



Above: Front of Chuppah with approximate dimensions.