

# Adding Visuals to Your Puppet Ministry

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**INTRODUCTION** – Puppet productions used in children's ministry, including Sunday School and Junior Church, are usually an independent part of the program or lesson time. It must be remembered that puppets are the ultimate animated visual, and can be used to illustrate your lesson, review your lesson or even teach the lesson. Adding visuals to great puppet characters with homemade props, illusions, lighting and electronics (sound effects) can create an audible and visual lesson or message that maintains the attention of the children and illustrates your Biblical principle. Visuals can also be added to any other part of your program where puppets are utilized.



\_\_\_\_\_ – **The use of visuals and props establishes and illustrates the spiritual content of your lesson or message or any principle you are trying to convey.**

- A Visual is a device or means for aiding the learning process through the sense of sight. *Rom. 1:20, For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

## **CHOOSING YOUR VISUALS OR PROPS.**

- Keep it \_\_\_\_\_.
- Make sure that it is relative or understood by the age, gender, \_\_\_\_\_ or educational level of the audience.
- Is more than one visual needed? If more than one point is being made by your puppet production, each point may need to be visualized and often. Because the points are progressive, the visuals may build or depend upon each other.
- \_\_\_\_\_ objects are most often used with puppets. (Remember we are already giving life by action to the puppets; therefore, the visual is used to enhance the puppets implied life, action, and circumstance:
  - Point being made by the lesson or message. (Remember, the use of puppets is to illustrate the primary point or support the point of the lesson. Visuals re-emphasize or further explain the message.)

- The environment or circumstance being portrayed.
- The history or life of the puppet.
- The use of animated objects is rare because they can overshadow the effectiveness of the puppet.
- Puppets can also be environmentally changed and adapted to the stage by clothing and prop changes.
- It is advisable to apply a visual filter to any visual or prop to be used:
  - **OBJECT + ENVIRONMENT (POSITION) + CIRCUMSTANCE = CONSEQUENCE which is ENLIGHTENMENT/\_\_\_\_\_**
  - The teacher has done his job at this point. Now the student must decide or choose from this truth which he has received- this is APPLICATION.

**ASK THESE QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU ADD VISUALS TO YOUR PUPPET PRODUCTION - WHERE IN THE PROGRAM ARE PUPPETS BEING UTILIZED?**

**HAVE YOU COMPLETED YOUR PROGRAM PREPARATION?** (Are puppets used in the program and in the lesson?)

- Opening exercises (Giving schedule, pledges, prayer requests, etc.)
- Memory verse
- Offering
- Missionary letter or story
- Spotlight
- Message or Lesson
- Review time
- Game time

**IF USED DURING THE LESSON OR MESSAGE TIME, WHAT PRINCIPLE IS BEING TAUGHT?**

- Is this lesson part of a series?
- Is the principle being taught age sensitive and simple enough?
- Have you visualized your principle with object lessons or illustrations?

**HAVE YOU DECIDED WHERE AND HOW PUPPETS ARE TO BE USED IN THE LESSON?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ on the message
- The message itself
- \_\_\_\_\_ of the message

**HAVE YOU DECIDED WHAT TYPE OF PUPPET STAGING IS BEING USED?**

- Puppet stages are divided into three types.
  - **Thematic stage** – Puppet stages that are built for a specific theme such as a VBS theme or Sunday School campaign. (These stages are very time consuming to construct and thematically limited.)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ **stage** – A stage that can be used with any theme or lesson or program. This can be a permanent or portable

stage. It can be large or small but remember that puppets should always be sized to the stage used.

- **Portable stage** – PVC piping, Jet Sets, Folding panel stages, etc.

### **THE PUPPET STAGE** - Is the puppet stage permanent or portable?

- Puppet stages should always be generic in design if you are not teaching in a series.
- A generic puppet stage can be used in series teaching if props and visuals are added to the stage.
- Classroom size, platform height and size, ceiling height, entrance, and exits to the classroom can create obstacles to an effective program. (Downsizing does not equal less effective.)

### **EXACTLY WHEN DO YOU USE VISUALS WITH PUPPETS?**

The idea here is timing. If you present the visual too early or too late, then it will not be associated with the point being taught. Remember, you don't want the point being taught to be overshadowed by the visual being used. The message is always more important than the visual. The visual sheds light on the message. During preparation, practice when the right time is most effective to present the visual. Will it be presented before the point, as the point is made, or just after the point has been made? Again, practice and experience will determine this.

- \_\_\_\_\_ – Most teachers have access to several different kinds of visuals in their local church but choose not to use them. Don't limit yourself to a single visual, expand your battery of skills and use a variety of visuals to enhance every part of your class time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – Do not make the mistake of using the same visual each week. This will lead to boredom. No visual, no matter how good, should be overused. When using visuals, variety is the key.

### **EXAMPLES OF VISUALS USED DURING A PUPPET PRODUCTION**

- Character used to act out the Bible lesson
- Lighting for mood changes
- Sound effects
- Flannels
- Pledges with the flags
- Holding a printed song
- Verse banner
- Missionary story
- Flash card lesson
- Candy throw
- Award presentation
- Presenting objects during the lesson for the teacher

**CONCLUSION:** There is a difference between simply presenting a visual and making a puppet production with a visual emphasis. Watching your angles of presentation, lighting, and timing are all essential when making a presentation. It may be as simple as adding a hat to a puppet or as involved as a magic illusion added to the puppet presentation that brings the message to the place of applied application for the student. You are only limited by your own imagination.

**Answer Key:** Visuals; simple; environment; Inanimate; Spotlight; Review; Generic;  
Underuse: Overuse