

PUPPET PROPS, SCENES AND STAGING

Taught by Jason & Howard & Debbie Caldwell (Seeing Truth Ministries)

INTRODUCTION: Puppet staging is a necessary evil for the purpose of hiding the puppeteers. But, since it is needed, use it to enhance your puppet production. This can be a simple curtain or an elaborate thematic stage.

What meets your needs is decided by asking a series of questions. Once answered,

use only what is completely necessary to fulfill your goal. Your stage may be a full production or a simple curtain with one visual prop. Remember that the staging and props are used only to accent the puppet play and that the play has a pre-decided purpose or goal.



1. SET UP

A. How are the puppets used for the particular program?

- * Spotlight on the message
- * The message
- * Song service
- * Memory verse
- * Prelude to a program (Giving the schedule, opening exercise)
- * Offering
- * Missionary letter time
- * Review time
- * Prize give-away
- * Game time

B. How much time is required for your puppet stage setup?

- * Is set up time required?
- * Is it to be permanent or portable?
- * Will it have to be taken down before the lesson or at the conclusion of the lesson or message?

C. How much space is available?

- * Classroom size
- * Platform size?
- * Is the platform elevated?
- * What is the ceiling height?

D. How will puppeteers enter and exit the puppet stage unseen?

- * Is there a side entrance?
- * Will you have to use a prayer time for the puppeteers to exit?

E. How many puppeteers will fit behind the stage?

F. Will sound equipment be used or necessary?

2. STAGE TYPES – Meet your specific need.

A. _____ STAGE – VBS, Children’s Crusades, special Sunday school campaigns or Junior Church campaigns. A puppet stage can be constructed for a chosen theme.

B. _____ STAGE – A stage that can be used with any theme or lesson or program.

C. _____ STAGE – PVC Piping, Jet Sets, Folding Panel Stages (Plywood)

3. STAGE CONSTRUCTION, PLANS AND MATERIALS –

There is a limited list of ideas for building puppet stages even online. Using your imagination and borrowing a local carpenter’s skills will always help.

A. Draw the plans: Thematic, Generic or Portable. Sizes should be decided in 4 foot increments and under 8 feet tall.

B. Construction: 2X2 with luan ¼ inch plywood.

C. Painting:

* Freehand

* Overhead image

* Computer generated with projector

4. _____ IS BEST – We must remember that the puppets are the central focus. Staging, scenes and props accent the program.

A. A generic portable stage will work most of the time if you can add a prop or scene to set the story for the puppets. Sometimes it can be as easy as adding a costume to your puppet.



B. A thematic stage should be self standing and is preferred with multiple entrances for the puppets. Adding a three dimensional look often adds to the stage and allows different views for the puppets to interact with the class or congregation. Give thought to your classroom or auditorium, so that everyone will be able to see the puppets.



5. PROPS – Rocking chair, flowers, a bale of hay, trash can, mail box, artificial fruits and food items, etc.

CONCLUSION: Accent your puppet characters with proper staging, scenes and props. Good staging can ice the cake of your puppet program and open up a whole new realm of reality.

Answer Key: Thematic, Generic, Portable, Less

