

# Puppets

David Buckner

## Get Attention:

As with many other types of ministry tools and strategies, the very nature of puppets is simply to get the attention of people. It has been said numerous times that puppets is geared for children. Why then do adults gawk and pause as they pass a puppet stage? Just like balloon animals, juggling, clowning, or any other type of creative ministry, puppets can appeal to a wide variety of people. There are some tips to getting attention with puppets.

- Involve human/puppet interaction whenever possible.
  - Use an emcee to host the puppet show.
  - Have a human come out and play an instrumental solo that is in a song that you're doing.
  - Incorporate some interactive games with the kids watching. Have a puppet lead and a human(s) facilitate out front.
- Involve GOOD props as much as possible.
  - While practicing, actually have a prop brainstorming session.
  - Devote whole practices to making props.
  - When someone isn't in a certain song that is being practiced, they can be working on props.
  - Interactive props—balloons, bubbles, beach balls, squirt guns, and so forth
    - Example: If your group is doing Surfin' USA, incorporate some beach balls thrown out into the audience (to be collected during the last chorus). Maybe throw a beach towel out front with someone acting as if they are spending some time on the beach. Just get creative, don't limit yourself, and think outside the box.
- Good/sharp choreography is critical to successful puppetry.
  - If inexperienced in this, attain videos of other groups and learn from them.
  - Watch episodes of the Muppet Show or Sesame Street.
  - The more together the choreography is, the better chance of keeping the attention of anyone watching.
- Music choice is also critical for getting attention. Puppetry is one of the few opportunities to do oldies, kids songs, group interaction songs, and songs from all genres of music, while still getting a positive response. The one piece of advice is to establish credibility and trust by picking very familiar songs before trying to deviate into something more "focused."

## Do Something Eternal With A Moment:

As with creative ministry strategies, there will only be a short time in which to plant a seed with anyone who has stopped to watch. Puppets are also somewhat different because there isn't a direct connection from person to person. Therefore, it is imperative that some of the group be trained on "working the crowd". Using various tools and materials in order to hopefully plant a seed with someone watching is recommended for the "crowd workers".

Another way to incorporate seed planting into a puppet show is to include a short, entertaining Bible story into the show. There is a puppet character called "Sally" who has numerous ones of these stories. There are many more, but the point is to simply create the moment in which to plant a seed.

## Puppet Resources:

Above all, we will point you to the Internet.

- <http://www.puppetproductions.com/>
- <http://www.fcpfellowship.org/>
- <http://www.gftpuppets.org/stage.htm>

*And many more! Just plug the word "puppets" into a search engine and be amazed.*