

**So You Are A Member
Of The Church**

Puppet Ministry

**A Guide For Youth
Puppet Ministries**

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any fame we may gain individually.

PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE: Bad odors are distracting.

LEARN THE SCRIPT: To be effective in puppet ministry, each puppeteer must know the script or the routine. It is impossible to lip sync a song or to participate in puppet skits if the puppeteer does not know the script. You must familiarize yourself with every aspect of the script to communicate the gospel truth effectively.

LEARN TO USE RODS: Take the time to learn to use rod-arm puppets effectively. There is nothing worse than a puppet with an unskilled puppeteer working the rods. When they happen: arms bend backwards and other movements are awkward.

USE PROPS: You should use props, scenery and other aids as much as possible to help tell your story. It also gives newer members of the team a chance to participate in the process.

HAVE FUN: If you don't enjoy puppetry, don't do it! It is hard work! It's even harder if it's not fun!

Preface

This little guide is useful to anyone who is a member of the puppet ministry in the African-American church.

It is designed as a teaching guide for puppet ministry leaders who are instructing young people about their roles as members of the puppet ministry of the local church.

Paragraph styles do not follow the usual rules but are broken into separate complete thoughts to avoid overwhelming some youth who may be less than enthused about large blocks of text.

The notes are intended for churches of the Baptist faith, but may be used by evangelical groups of varied denominations who promote a drama ministry among African-American youth.

These notes can serve as a guide, but are not written in stone. As always, the Holy Spirit and local custom take precedence.

You Want To Be A Part Of The Puppet Ministry, Why?

When you were a child, you watched a puppet presentation at church or found yourself captivated by Big Bird or other characters from Sesame Street. You were glued to the television set as you wandered into a world of imagination that made the puppets you watched seem real even though you knew they were not! From that time forward you were hooked on puppets. You were attracted to the big ones and the little ones. Even the ones with funny looking faces and strange sounding voices captivated you as well.

When you became a Christian the Holy Spirit stirred this interest within you. You enjoy giving speeches, readings, performing skits and interpretations. It took you some time to figure it out, but now you know that this is your gift FROM God to be used FOR God as you grow in the truth and knowledge of your creator. At some point you decided that you would like to participate in the puppet ministry. Now you have a chance to learn the ministry of puppets as a youth, as you prepare for adult service.

This answers the question, "Why do you want to

practice the more time it takes. Somehow participants seem to wait until time is running out to get serious.

GIVE IT EVERYTHING YOU HAVE: The Puppet Ministry has been set apart with the sole purpose of bringing glory to God. This is a servant ministry and we always work "behind the scenes". The Puppet Team theme verse is Colossians 3:23 (NIV) - "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord., not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

KNOW LOCAL CHURCH CUSTOMS: Every church has customs and sacred things and places that must be respected by the drama ministry members. For example, some churches do not allow rehearsals in the sanctuary. Others have taboos about moving certain items of furniture or performing productions in certain areas of the church edifice. Observe the customs of the local church. This will help you to effectively get the message of your ministry across to the audience.

toys. They are the tools we use to minister with, and they are expensive. Rough or careless handling of the puppets, props, stage or any equipment may result in suspension from the team.

NO ATTITUDES: puppetry is fun but it is also stressful. Behind that curtain, it's easy to get on each other's nerves. Leave your attitudes (Bad ones) at home. There is no place in the puppet ministry for bad attitudes; life is too short and the space behind the curtain is too small.

DON'T BRING VISITORS TO REHEARSAL: Please do not bring visitors to rehearsal without prior permission of the directors. Visitors must abide by the policies of the puppet team. Parents are always welcome at any time, however.

PRAY BEFORE YOU BEGIN: Never begin a puppet ministry presentation without prayer. If you are ministering for God you will need his help. If you are just putting on a show, then don't call it "ministry."

START ON TIME: One bad mark we have from our slave history is that we start everything late. Let your presentation start on time.

participate in the puppet ministry? It is not "to be seen!" or "So I can show everybody how good I am!" or even "because it is fun!" It is not to "play" with all of the fun puppets. While all of those are real reasons that some offer, the only reason you should want to participate in the puppet ministry of your church is to praise the Lord.

As a member of the church puppet ministry, you have become a part of an exciting area of service in the church. In bible times, dancers, singers, musicians and others who participated in the liturgy of worship, took their tasks seriously and devoted their lives to their areas of service. As a puppeteer you are a part of your church's youth puppet ministry. Just as the believers of the bible dedicated their lives to their respective areas of service, you should do the same.

The Puppet Ministry Is Important!

As a Christian Puppeteer you are part of an important ministry of your church. While you do not stand in a pulpit or serve as a pastor, never-the-less you preach a sermon through your puppet skits. Your words and movements, blending in with others or standing alone, helps to tell the "Good News" long after the service is

over.

You should remember that you are part of a ministry team. Your task is to use your talent in any way that is needed to help get the gospel message across to those in worship. As part of a team, you must do your part to cooperate, blend, offer ideas and actively participate in the ministry of drama in your church.

The Puppet Ministry is a way to praise God!

As a Christian Puppeteer, you must always remember the reason why you perform which is to offer praise to God and help minister to others through puppetry. As a young puppeteer you are following a pattern that began in Bible times. Early believers met frequently as they sang, danced and listened to stories about God's greatness as told by their parents and religious leaders..

The Bible Encourages Use of Story Telling In Worship

The bible has many accounts of singing, music and liturgy. The Old Testament commanded each fam-

Tips For Christian Puppeteers

REHEARSAL: You should attend all puppet rehearsals. Be sure to be on time for devotionals. The ministry itself is a worship and should not be undertaken without asking God for guidance. Be prepared to remain at practice until it ends.

GET IN SHAPE: Everyone begins puppeting with WEAK arms. It takes a lot of strength and endurance to be a puppeteer. You not only have to have strength to hold that puppet up above your head, but it takes stamina and skill in order to make that puppet talk, sing, move around, or play the piano. Exercise and keep in shape.

WORK YOUR PUPPETS: There are a lot of technical aspects to puppeting such as manipulation of the mouth, proper positioning inside the puppet head, entrances and exits, body and arm position, and coordination is very important. All of these things can be mastered with patience and practice.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR PUPPETS: Puppeteers are expected to act responsibly at all times. As a puppeteer you must remember that puppets and props are *not*

God (edification); 2) He or she communicates in a way that encourages others because of the greatness of God (exhortation) and 3) He or she communicates the need to be comforted and reassured of the love of God. (comfort). Anyone who speaks or communicates in any of these ways is doing what 1 Corinthians 14:3 describes "prophesying."

That means a Christian puppeteer is a person who uses the gift of prophecy or communication to minister to others. The Christian dramatist exercises a gift of the spirit, that when used properly, helps others to understand and appreciate God better.

They Don't Do That At My Church

While Puppetry and its many forms is an acceptable teaching, preaching and worship form in many religious circles, there are still many churches in our community that have reservations about its use. Most of their reservations concern the possibility that the liturgical message may be lost as worshippers are awed by the spectacle of the puppets themselves. Each congregation is led in this respect by its pastor. All members of any congregation should follow the lead of their pastor in this matter.

ily to teach its children the laws and commandments of God. In addition, each family was told the story of their Exodus from slavery to freedom. Thus, by biblical mandate, families became official story tellers commissioned to tell the story of God's goodness to the people.

The bible encourages the use of dance, music, songs and verbal story telling to praise God and to teach his laws and commandments to the people. Puppetry is a means to tell a story. The story that is told in Christian puppetry is the story of God's work in our lives.

Look at how Moses told each family to become story tellers:

Psalm 150 (Living Bible)

Deu 6:6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

Deu 6:7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Deu 6:8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

Deu 6:9 And thou shalt write them upon the

posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Thus, each person was charged with the responsibility of telling the story through a variety of means, one of which was verbal communication alone or in conjunction with other ways of communicating.

The story of God's goodness was told through stories of God's greatness or stories set to music or stories accompanied by dance. The purpose of each story telling episode was to praise God.

When Jesus came He commanded believers to go throughout the entire world and to teach, preach and baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.

In Matthew 28:19 Jesus said, *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

The command was clear, Go, Teach and Reach men for Jesus. Story telling, as well as dancing, singing and musical instruments can be used to praise God.

All of these combine to form what know today as the Church drama ministry.

What Is A Christian Puppeteer?

What is a Christian Puppeteer? How does that differ from a secular or worldly puppeteer? A Christian puppeteer is one who participates in a storytelling activity for the express purpose of teaching, preaching or witnessing to others about the truths of the Christian life or to glorify God.. Some Christian puppeteers may use secular themes to demonstrate these truths. Others are clearly liturgical in nature. Liturgical refers to public worship services and ceremonies in the Christian Church. Liturgical puppetry is a form of worship in which the story that is told conveys meanings important to the understanding and appreciation of God.

It is a spiritual gift

Believers receive many gifts from God. Gifts are to be used to glorify and praise God. 1 Corinthians 12 list several categories of gifts, one of which is the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 12:10) A person who prophesies is one who communicates with others one of three things on behalf God: 1) He or she communicates the need to build themselves up a readiness for

