Course Objectives

As a result of this training, the students in your classes will be able

1. To know the characteristics of effective Bible learning activities, interactive storytelling, drama ministries, and helpful memorization techniques to use when working with children.

2. To feel confident and enthusiastic when facilitating Bible learning activities, interactive storytelling, drama ministries, and memorization in children’s ministries.

3. To effectively lead out in Bible learning activities, interactive storytelling, drama ministries, and encourage memorization when working with children.

Textbooks

Textbook: Each union may select their preference.

Additional textbook suggestions:


Suggested student requirements for the course

1. Attend and actively participate in each of the class sessions.
2. Read the required textbooks and class handouts.
3. Start a story file and keep on file stories that they have told.
4. Tell a story from their own experience to one child or many, evaluate their effort, and file their story.
5. In a children’s group, participate in (1) Bible learning activities, (2) drama, and (3) facilitate and encourage memorization.

Outline

Courtesy of Noelene Johnsson, the North American Division Children’s Ministries website is the source for the following sections entitled:

I. Bible Learning Activities: Teaching so that Children Remember

II. Storytelling for Children/Interactive Storytelling

III. Drama Ministry: Showing a Story to Convey a Message
(Susan Schwarz and Brenda Harrigan also contributed to this section.)

IV. Memorization Without Tears
(Additional memorization ideas for young children are taken from 52 Easy Program Ideas for Kindergarten Sabbath School, Year A, published by AdventSource, 2004.)
BIBLE LEARNING ACTIVITIES: Teaching so that Children Remember

What Are Bible Learning Activities?

**Bible**
- The activities are meant to lead children to the Bible
- The activities are designed with the Bible passage in mind

**Learning**
- Not busy work
- Meant to help children understand and remember a Bible concept

**Activities**
- Not lectures
- Learning by doing real or simulated experiences
- Create opportunities to experience something

Why Do We Need Active Learning at Church?

Students remember what they do.
- If students cannot recall information from the week before, chances are that they did not learn much. They need to be more actively involved in learning.
- The more one experiences, the more one remembers.

![Percentage of Information Remembered](chart)

Characteristics of Active Learning

Why active learning works

- **a.** Emphasis is on learning — not teaching.
- **b.** The learner processes information.
- **c.** Kids remember what they actively process.
- **d.** The results demonstrate what was learned.
- **e.** Adults debrief students on what they learned.
- **f.** Less information is covered, but more is learned.
Advantages of Active Learning

The trouble to set up BLAs is worth it because:

a. Children learn at their own speed and level
b. Learning is self-directed
c. Each person is actively involved
d. Kids have a measure of control over the learning situation
e. Children have a choice of activities
f. Nobody gets bored

Disadvantages of BLAs

a. The noise level may be a lot higher.
b. You may need materials for kids to work with.
c. You need to organize better and keep things from getting out of hand.
d. Adults who are used to being in control want to do everything.

What Kinds of Bible Learning Activities Are There?

Choose a variety of BLAs; give kids a choice.

a. Research activities–get older kids digging for information.
   - Map studies
   - Dictionary search
   - Concordance search
   - Bible search

b. Creative writing activities–children of all ages put thoughts into words, by writing or speaking.
   - Letters
   - Poems, raps, or song lyrics
   - Bible stories
   - Classroom newspapers
   - Advertising copy for faith/virtues

c. Art Activities–children of all ages express themselves through color and line.
   - Posters
   - Painted picture with caption
   - Cut-and-paste collages, using news magazines–words and pictures
   - Greeting cards
   - Picture books
   - Stamps, silhouettes

d. Craft Activities–can give children something to share as a witness.
   - Puppets
     - Paper bag puppets
     - Sock puppets
   - Models
     - Sculpture
     - Construction
   - Relief maps
   - Paper plate crafts

e. Drama Activities–children of all ages enjoy skits and role play.
   - Skits & role play
   - Charades
   - Dramatized stories
   - Interactive Bible stories
   - Puppet plays
   - Shadow plays
f. Life simulation activities—these activities help children apply the lesson to everyday life.
   • Food related activities
     < Fixing snacks
     < Preparing food for the homeless
   • Planning & designing
     < A wedding
     < A program
     < Bringing up baby
     < Designing a house
   • Budgeting, stewardship
   • Family living
   • Playing house
   • Community living
   • Interacting as community helpers
   • Trust walk, trust fall
   • Scenarios from life
   • Giving advice, roleplaying solutions

g. Games and puzzles—use games and puzzles sparingly; relate them to the lesson.
   Games involving questions
   • Involve simple recall
   • Students are rewarded for correct answers.
   Games for rote learning—to memorize a verse or passage
   Puzzles
   Codes

Choosing Activities for a lesson
How do you plan for an active lesson?
  a. Keep the focus on the theme of the Bible lesson
  b. Choose a variety of activities
  c. Gear the activities to the Bible texts
  d. Don’t just teach for facts; teach for understanding
  e. Help kids experience the story for themselves
  f. Give kids a chance to process their feelings and their response to the lesson.

Experiential Learning
Experiential learning activities, learning by doing or experiencing, help kids try out something from real life. This is the most effective type of BLA.

   • Hands on service projects
   • Involvement in church life
     < Taking part in a meeting
     < Praying, tithing, fasting
   • Witnessing
   • Life simulating activities
   • Field trips
   • Trust walks
Supervising Bible Learning Activities

What do leaders do to help children learn from activities?

g. Make kids feel included—especially those who come after an activity begins
h. Tell the name of each activity.
i. Give clear directions for the activity.
j. Provide all the necessary materials.
k. Affirm every person’s efforts.
l. Talk with children about what they are doing.

Providing Materials need not cost as much as you think.

a. Materials to keep on hand: scissors, glue, rulers, tape measure, pens, pencils, markers, masking tape, clear tape, typing paper, scrap paper, construction paper, poster board, paper plates, index cards;
   Scrap or recycled materials: yarn, string, paper clips, cloth, crayon pieces, etc.
   Natural materials to collect: leaves, bark, sticks, seed pods, seeds
b. List needed supplies in the church bulletin; mothers in Israel will see that you have what you need.
c. Materials you can substitute or make your own: poster paint, finger paint, play dough, plaster
a. Inexpensive, household materials: Lentils, beans, salt, flour, soap, foil, wax paper

Learning from Activities

Kids will learn from activities if you:

a. Act as a coach, encouraging from the sidelines, not doing the activity yourself.
b. Allow freedom for kids to do it their way; don’t micro manage
c. If possible, allow a choice of activities
d. Help the children process what they learned; **debrief the activities**

Debriefing Activities

Debriefing helps children process what they learned.

a. Talk about what they did
   • Ask the kids to show what they made or created
   • Let them tell what they intended
b. Talk about what they learned
   • Ask how they feel about the activity
   • Ask what they learned from the activity
c. Relate the activity to the Bible
   • Ask what the activity tells them about the Bible verse
   • Ask, “What might God be telling us through this story (or Bible verse)?
d. Help them apply what they learned to real life today.
   • Share what they learned
   • Act on what they learned

RESOURCES: *Creative Bible Learning Activities*, by Fred & Kelly Cornforth; AdventSource.
## Bible Learning Activities and the Learning Styles

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Experiential activities</td>
<td>Creative writing, poetry, letters</td>
<td>Dictionary search</td>
<td>Role plays and skits</td>
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<td>Competitive activities</td>
<td>Group discussions</td>
<td>Concordance research</td>
<td>Oral reports</td>
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<td>Simulations of real life situations</td>
<td>Activities that allow them to express their feelings</td>
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<td>Creating timelines</td>
<td>Science/research projects</td>
<td>Role plays, drama, charades</td>
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<td>Details</td>
<td>Personal inventories</td>
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<td>Step-by-step procedures where each step is checked by teacher</td>
<td>Reporting to whole group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rigid boundaries, exact copy</td>
<td>Reading projects, unless they are of personal interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing outlines</td>
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Prefers: Experiments, Coded messages, Making their own bulletin board display, Art and craft activities that they can adapt and improve on, Making up skits, Quizzes.

Dislikes: Busy work and predictability, Lengthy writing assignments, Editing their writing, Reading assignments, Rote memory work.

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Prefers: Dictionary search, Concordance research, Map studies, Memorization, Lectures/object lessons, Written reports, Reading assignments.

Dislikes: Role plays and skits, Oral reports, Writing poetry, Hands-on projects, Group projects.

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Storytelling for Children

A CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES CERTIFICATION SEMINAR

Telling Your Story

“Within you is the true story. Within you is the talent that will lead souls to Christ.” --Stephanie Ebanks

Telling Your Story

You can make any story your story. Here’s how:

- Put yourself into the story.
  - Imagine it happening to you.
  - Try to hear, see, feel, smell, and taste it.
- Tell what you experienced
  - As if it happened to you or
  - As if you were present and know all about it.

Why Tell a Story?

All through human history people have told their stories. Why?

The Benefits of Storytelling

Reasons to tell your story.

- To pass on
  - The faith--your faith
  - Values
  - A sense of heritage--family history
- “To say without saying”
  - To advise without giving advice
  - To show without telling

More Benefits of Storytelling

Fosters healthy development of
- Emotions
- Relationships, intimacy
- Self awareness
- Language skills--listening, vocabulary
- Conceptualization skills
- Imaginative ability
- To motivate an interest in
  - Reading, family, nature, the outside world
What Makes a Story?

Stories don’t just happen; they are crafted. Some storytellers are better than others because of the way they craft their stories.

The Components of a Story

- Introduction
- Plot
- Climax
- Conclusion

The Introduction

The first component of a story

- Answers the questions
  - who, what, where, when, why, how
- Captures the attention
- Sets the atmosphere
- Introduces the main character
  - Someone listeners can identify with
- Introduces the situation

The Plot

The plot is the second component of a story. The plot involves:

- Action
  - A problem
  - Some type of conflict
  - Action and movement build toward the climax
- The building of details
  - Creates suspense
  - Suspense awakens curiosity in the listener
  - Keep them uncertain of the outcome

The Climax

The third component of a story, the climax carries the message.

- The culmination of
  - Intensity, emotion, suspense
- The highest point of excitement
  - The turning point
- The point where
  - The problem is solved
  - The mystery is explained
  - The questions answered
  - The goal is reached

The Conclusion

The fourth and final component of the story, the conclusion:

- Follows the climax
- Releases the tension
- Focuses the action that has been unfolding
- Brings listeners back to where they started
- Ties off loose ends, accounts for all characters
- Reveals the story’s meaning
- Leaves listeners with a sense of completeness.
Choosing a Story to Tell

“The best stories let their characters speak for themselves so that the listeners may be trusted to draw their own conclusions.”--Stephanie Ebanks

Some Types of Stories to Tell

Choose from among these categories.

- **Bible Stories**
  - Use sanctified imagination based in truth.
- **Nature**
  - Factually true
  - At a concrete level for small children
  - Parables and allegories OK for older kids
- **Character building**
  - Emphasizes positive behavior
  - Provides positive role models

Types of Stories, continued

- **Stories from real life**
  - Stories of God’s leading
  - Stories to warm the heart
  - Stories worth telling
  - Grace stories
- **Object lessons**
  - Show the object
  - Tell about the object
  - Relate the lesson to a Bible text
  - Pray

Establishing the Point of View

A story is always told from somebody’s point of view. It is important to decide whose point of view and stick to it throughout the story.

Whose Point of View?

You can choose the point of view from that of:

- The main character
- A lesser character
- A specific onlooker
- An all-knowing, all-seeing presence

Maintaining the Point of View

Reveal only what is known by the person whose point of view you take.

- Describe only what that person knows and experiences
  - “Linda watched as the visitor placed the flowers in water.”
  - To Linda they smelled...
- Give the private thoughts only of that person
  - “How disgusting!” Linda thought.
Where to Find a Story

The very best stories come out of our own experience. We can tell best what we know best.

Some Questions to Inspire a Story

Ask these questions of yourself or someone else. An answer may well become a story.

- Did you ever have an answer to prayer?
- Did God ever help you with anything?
- What hard experience taught you a great lesson?
- Do you remember a war that affected your life?
- Was your life ever in danger? Tell about it.
- What was your most embarrassing/rewarding moment?

Where To Tell a Story

If you need to fill some time or teach a lesson, tell a story.

- In children’s class, club, or meeting
- For family worship
- In church
  - For the children’s lesson
  - During the sermon
  - When you want to capture attention
  - When you want people to remember your point
- For entertainment
  - At meals, around a campfire, in the car

When To Tell a Story

People will listen to a story almost anytime.

- When people are getting bored or sleepy
- When you want people to care
- At a child’s bedtime, naptime, mealtime
- To reward good behavior
  - Stories are way more healthy than junk food
- While working on a project
  - Cleaning, washing dishes, raking leaves, etc.
- While resting after an activity

Learning To Tell a Story

You already tell stories—when you are late for work, but these tips will give you added confidence and help you feel like a pro.

- Begin with stories you know
  - Stories you were told as a child
  - Family stories you remember well
  - Imitate them the way you remember
  - Tell them from a new point of view
- Identify with your audience
  - Tell a story they will relate to
- Read a story, imagining yourself in the story
  - Tell what you saw, heard, felt.

Preparing To Tell Your Story

Follow these simple steps:

- Select one main character for your story
  - Yourself or Whoever the action happened to
- Select the point of view
  - You are the teller and the main character
  - From inside the head of
    - the main character or a lesser character
  - From outside—from what you observed
- Practice telling the story from that point of view
- Tell the story
Refining Your Story

Practice your story. Refine your story.

- Look for fun phrases, repeat them in the story
- Work on the opening and close of your story.
  - Catch interest with the first sentence.
  - Close strongly while interest is still high.
- Keep your story focused on its message
  - Be sure you know what its message is.
- File your story for future use.
  - Photocopy your story.
  - Write the story out if it is an original not in print.

You are ready to tell your story when...

- You can tell it without saying, “Ah-um”!
- You enjoy telling the story
- You are confident of all the facts of the story
- You will not panic if you forget something in the story.

Telling Your Story

“The Story is not truly yours until you have given it” away.” --Stephanie Ebanks

 Techniques for Telling Stories

- Pray
  - Remember the purpose and ministry of the story.
  - Let go and let Jesus take over.
- Relax
  - Take deep slow breaths.
  - Roll your neck.
  - Shake your arms.
  - Wiggle your toes.
  - Stretch your back.
  - Now concentrate on the story.

More Techniques for Story Telling

- Check posture and attitude.
  - Stand erect but relaxed.
  - Be interested, confident, sincere.
- Tell the story
  - Don’t act out or perform a skit—you’re a story teller.
  - Don’t try to do accents.
  - Don’t change your voice for each character.
- Focus
  - Maintain your point of view

More Tips for Telling

- Don’t judge
  - The character says or does something wrong—don’t stop and moralize.
  - Let the story show the consequences of actions.
  - Let the audience judge right and wrong.
- Change your voice for effect
  - Whisper, shout, slow down, speed up to fit the story
- Use simple words you understand
- Use eye contact to involve audience
More Tips

- Dress appropriately
  - No loud colors or patterns
  - Be comfortable with your clothes then forget them
  - Wear something distinctive
    - an apron, Bible times costume, period costume
- Space
  - Sit when talking to a small group
  - Stand for a large group
  - Move closer to someone who is restless

Tips, continued

- Gestures
  - Keep hands still except for meaningful gestures
  - Avoid nervous fiddling, touching
- Facial expressions
  - Smile as you talk.
  - Match your expression to the emotion of a character.
- K.I.S.S.S
  - Keep it short, sweet, and simple.

Making stories interactive

Interactive stories involve children in the telling of the story

- Assign children to be characters in the story
  - Dress them in costume
  - Prompt them on what to say unless they know the story
  - Try to involve everyone
  - Provide props
- Involve children with verbal cues
  - When I say “pray” or “prayer,” you say, “Amen!”
  - When you hear a word used often, clap twice

Evaluating Your Performance

When the story is done, ask yourself . . .

- What do I feel best about?
- What do I not feel good about?
  - How could I have done better.
- How was the audience? If restless, was I . . .
  - Long winded?
  - Unprepared?
  - Stiff? serious? nervous?
  - Talking over their heads?
  - Speaking too fast, too soft, too slow, too loud?

Certification Requirements

To complete the requirements for Christian Storytelling:

- Study the storytelling seminar
  - Attend the seminar or
  - Read the seminar handouts
- Start a story file
  - Keep on file the stories you have told
- Tell a story from your own experience
  - Tell it to one child or to many
  - Evaluate your storytelling effort
  - File your story

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- _______. Primary Treasure (magazine). Pacific Press.
Interactive Storytelling

Active learning is considered by education researchers to be the most effective teaching technique. When interactive storytelling is used, children are involving all modalities and maximum learning can take place. Interactive Storytelling brings a delightfully fresh approach to sharing the Bible with children. You don’t have to be a professional storyteller to teach Bible stories in a memorable way. The interactive approach draws children into the Bible and brings the stories to life.

Blessings as you strive to make the Bible come alive for your children--and for you!

Act It Out - Climb into an imaginary boat and go fishing with Peter and the other disciples. Wave palm branches and shout "Hosanna!" with the crowd that welcomes Jesus to Jerusalem.

Activity Stations - Progressive story telling through 3-10 stations. Best used with stories that naturally progress through different scenarios or circumstances. Examples: Jesus and the cross, Children of Israel, Joseph or Moses.

Mask-Believe - Using masks made from large paper plates attached to tongue depressors. Children will hold the masks representing different characters in the story and can act out the story as someone narrates.

Fill in the Blank - Leave out parts of the story as you tell it and allow the children to guess or search scripture for answer. You may also use cue cards with words or pictures, pantomime or articles representing the missing story parts.

A Picture is worth 1000 words - Using a polaroid camera, take pictures of children as they act out 'freeze frame' pictures of the story. Make a book using the pictures as you review the story.

Lie Detector - Several adults or children tell their own version of the story. The children search scripture to discover the truth.

Silhouette Story - Use a large white sheet with bright light to cast shadow. Children interpret the story as the silhouette acts it out/ or several silhouettes pose for freeze frame interpretation as story teller narrates.
**Sense-able Tales** - Use touch, taste, sound, smell, sight to illustrate the story.

Examples:
- Passover--use unleavened bread, bitter herbs, spices, red paint or markers for blood, lights out for darkness,
- Loaves/Fishes--bread, fish crackers and extra baskets.
- Jonah--large box or tent to sit in while you tell the story, open can of tuna for 'fishy' smell, cooked spaghetti to feel representing the moist, uncomfortable belly of fish
- Mary’s anointing--spray perfume, or air freshener, remove shoes and put perfumed lotion on each others feet....talk about sights, smells, people that may have been in the room with Mary.

**Be There or Be Square** - Set the scene, desert, lake, mountain top, camping, tabernacle sailing, tent, etc. Children become part of the scenery, part of the story as they act out on what the storyteller describes.

**Picture Perfect** - As the story progresses, children create their own version of the story with music, pencil's, markers, clay dough or sandbox scenes. They then retell it using the art medium they have chosen.

**Pic-a-Picture** - Using a basket of pictures and greeting cards, children choose pictures that best illustrate the story they are hearing. The pictures can be used to create a story book, and the story then re-told.

**My Story** - Become the character (in dress, mannerisms and customs) and tell the story as a personal testimony. Let the kids ask you questions of how you felt or what else you may have seen or experiences.

**Wild Wardrobe** - Story teller and or children change clothes 5-10 times as the story unfolds.

**Treasure Hunt** - There are a variety of variations on this theme. Hiding articles of the story around the room and at certain intervals everyone goes on a treasure hunt OR before the story begins everyone looks for the hidden treasures, as the story unfolds the articles can be placed on the table or in a basket to represent that part of the story.

**My Story** - Become the character (in dress, mannerisms and customs) and tell the story as a personal testimony. Let the kids ask you questions of how you felt or what else you may have seen or experiences.

**Slide Show** - Prepare the week before, having students dressing up and posing for parts of the story. The following week, tell the story as you show the corresponding slides.
Food Fun - Use food to help experience the story. Lots of stories include food, bread, water to wine, manna, loaves and fishes etc. Even when there is not food used in the story....use it as an illustrator. Examples: Red sea -, prepared blue jello with gummy fish inside, as you cut it and separate imagine what the Israelites saw as the walked through the water. Brown sugar could be sprinkled as the dirt path between. After the story, time for a jello treat.

Sound-Off - Choose various sounds to represents characters/places in the story. Ask the children to make the sounds when they hear that character/place mentioned. Examples: Boo, Yeah, Hiss, Amen, Hallelujah, Shhh, Ahhh, Wow, Huh?, Whew!

Tips for telling stories to Preschoolers:

Stories for this age should be:

1. Very short--two or three minutes is usually long enough!
2. Full of action--descriptions, details are not interesting.
3. Rhythmic--rhythm, rhyme, repetition, action verbs should be plentiful.
4. Positive in approach.
5. Simple in vocabulary and concept--what do the babies understand?
6. Well illustrated--pictures, objects, actions, or facial expressions.
7. About family, home, animals, pets, Bible.
8. Cut short if the group gets restless.

When preparing a story for very young children, think: "What is the one thing that is important for the child from this story?" Build your story around the ONE THING! Forget everything else!


**Tips for Telling Stories to Older Children**

Story-telling tips for older children can be found in the Primary GraceLink Leader-Teacher guide, Year B. Section 2 of each lesson—“Bible Lesson—Experiencing the Story” uses various interactive storytelling techniques. Below is a sample “Bible Lesson—Experiencing the Story” from Primary, Year B, Third Quarter, Lesson 5:

**Bible Lesson**

**Better Than Gold!**

**Experiencing the Story**

Involve the children in an interactive story. Prompt the children who are acting out parts to speak after you say their parts.

**You Need:**
Bible-times costumes (robes, old T-shirts, etc.)

**Characters:**
Peter, John, crippled man, crowd (all other students)

**Interactive Element:**
Tell the children to listen for the following words and to react as described below:

- **When they hear . . .**
  - Money: “Can you spare some change?”

- **Amazed, surprised**
  - “Wow! Look at that!”

- **God, Jesus**
  - “Praise the Lord!”

(Have the “crippled man” sit near the front of the class.)

One afternoon Peter and John were going to the temple. (”Peter” and ”John” approach the “crippled man.”) As they walked through the gate, they saw a man with crippled feet who sat there every day. He was begging for money. [“Can you spare some change?”](The man holds out his hand toward Peter and John.)

This man had been crippled since he was a baby. He had hoped to meet Jesus [“Praise the Lord!”] so he could be healed. But by the time his friends brought him to Jerusalem, Jesus [“Praise the Lord!”] had already been put to death. Oh, how sad! How disappointing! He had felt sure that if he could see Jesus [“Praise the Lord!”] he would be made well.
Peter and John turned to look at the man. They both felt that the Holy Spirit wanted to do something special. So they stopped in front of the man.

“Look at us!” Peter said. The man turned and looked, because he thought Peter and John might give him some money. [“Can you spare some change?”] “I don’t have any silver or gold,” Peter said. The disappointed man looked away. “But what I do have, I’ll give to you. In the name of Jesus, [“Praise the Lord!”] stand up and walk!”

Peter took the man by the hand and helped him up. (“Peter” helps the man up.) It’s amazing! [“Wow! Look at that!”] The man started to walk and jump and praise God! [“Praise the Lord!”] As he walked and hopped into the temple with Peter and John, all the people came running. (The “crowd” gathers around Peter, John, and the healed man, who is jumping around.)

“IT’s the man who begged at the Beautiful Gate!” they gasped. They were so amazed! [“Wow! Look at that!”] The man was walking. This was the first miracle in Jerusalem since Jesus [“Praise the Lord!”] died. So the people wanted to get a good look.

“Why are you so surprised?” [“Wow! Look at that!”] Peter asked. “You are looking at us as if it were our own power that made this man walk. No! It was the power of Jesus.” [“Praise the Lord!”]

Peter and John told the people about Jesus [“Praise the Lord!”]. They told them how Jesus [“Praise the Lord!”] died on the cross and how He rose from the dead. They told the people to believe in Jesus [“Praise the Lord!”] and to turn from their sins. They helped many people believe in Jesus [“Praise the Lord!”]. And they kept preaching until dark.

Many people were led to Jesus [“Praise the Lord!”] because God [“Praise the Lord!”] used Peter and John to help the beggar that day. And more were added to the early Christian church because Peter and John continued to serve God. [“Praise the Lord!”]

Looking for more interactive ideas? These books from Group Publishing (Loveland, CO) will help:

- Incredible Edible Bible Fun
- Crazy Clothesline Characters
- Fun Old Testament Bible Studies
- Helping Children Know God
- Bible Hero Adventures
- Forget-Me-Not Bible Story Activities
- Interactive Bible Stories for Children (OT and NT)
### What Is Drama?

Drama is the enactment of a story by showing instead of telling.

Drama is intended to portray life and character through the speech and actions of the characters in the story.

Drama can bring order and clarity to human experiences.

### The Basic Elements of Drama

Drama tends to involve the emotions. At its best it involves both emotions and intellect.

- Feelings
- Desires
- Conflicts
- Reconciliation

### Parts of a Drama

Like a story, a drama has the following parts and more:

- Plot
- Characters
- Theme
- Dialog
- Plus—Music, props, and lighting

### Types of Religious Drama

Understanding these forms of drama can help your production be more effective.

- Skits
- Plays
- Musicals
- Monologue
### Developing a Philosophy of Drama

- God Himself employed visual presentations in His teachings. 2SM 319, 320
- Drama well done can “deepen the impression of a necessity of seeking for the favor of the Savior who has loved them and who gave His life for them.” 2 MR 236
- Skits and plays should aid and maybe even explain the way of salvation.

### Philosophy of Drama Ministry, cont.

- Drama should be a blessing to those who watch.
- A ministry will consider the sensitivities of the audience.
- Counsel with the pastor before trying it.
- Know your limitations
  - For the ministry
  - For leadership
  - For acting and production

### A Leader’s Role

“Use your ministry to witness, not to entertain.”

- Seek God’s guidance every step of the way.
- Chose a team for
  - Ministry potential
  - Drama talent
- Help the drama team sense their team ministry.
- Build on a foundation of prayer.
- Show kids how it is done; teach them skills
- Uphold excellence, keeping priorities straight

### Guidelines in Choosing Skits/Plays

Ask these questions about the script:

- Is the message true to Jesus?
- Is the effect spiritually uplifting?
- Is the message
  - Meaningful?
  - Clear?
  - Appropriate to the audience?
- Does the message fit the theme of the occasion?

### Involving Children in Drama

- Look for ways to involve everyone.
  - Understudy
  - Making scenery/props
  - Production
  - Other: ushering, advertising, music, prompter, etc
- Match the part to the child’s
  - Abilities.
  - Availability
  - Interests
- Get parental support and commitment

### Nurture Your Team

Teach them to give God the glory.

- Give kids lots of positive feedback.
- Begin practice in good time.
- Make practice fun--throw in some treats
- Help them experience success
- Value their style/contribution
- Adjust your expectations
- Make ministry the real test of success.
### Being a Witness

Witnessing is a worthy goal for a drama team, but you need to understand that witnessing...

- Happens when you least expect it
- Is God’s doing, not ours.
- Is non-verbal
- Is natural, not programmed
- Is the way you live when nobody is watching not your stage manner
- Can be phoney; can be God-blessed.

### Five W’s for Rehearsal

Ask these questions of the team at rehearsal. Help them find the answers.

- Who are you--in the play?
- What are you doing?
- Where are you doing it?
- When do you do it?
- Why are you doing that? (What message are you telling?)

### Work on Their Diction

Learning to speak is one of the by-products of a drama ministry.

- Help them use an open voice.
- Build up the child’s self-confidence
  
  - Nothing succeeds like success.
- Practice tongue twisters
- Speak slowly--overdo it before a mirror

### Acting Tips

- Stand down-stage when talking
- Face the audience
- The audience looks where the actors look
- The moving person gets more attention than someone who is static
- Full face is stronger than profile
- Generally the main character stands apart
- Only the person speaking moves
- Do a speed through line rehearsal before dress rehearsal

### Organizational Tips

Remember that your goal is ministry—not an Oscar or Emmy

- Form a committee to help you; you cannot do everything.
- Empower someone to lead the committee
- Live with their decisions, their creations--or change the leader/committee
- Be realistic with your expectations.
  
  - Boys will be boys
  - Children are children--value their style

### Costuming Tips

- Be simple
- Use what you have
- Forget about details, from a distance they are not noticed
- Go for full colors
- For Bible costumes, use bathrobes, pillow cases
- Check Goodwill stores
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Staging, Props</strong></th>
<th><strong>Resources for Skits</strong></th>
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</table>
| - You don’t have to use scenery and props  
  <Describe them in the dialogue  
  <Pretend they are there.  
- Use lightweight materials  
  <Appliance boxes  
  <Foam core  
- Store for future use | - Skituations by Steve and Cora Alley  
- Dovetailor  
- Clown Ministry (book, video) Shaffer (Group)  
- Teaching With Puppets, VonSeggen (Group)  
  (One Way Street)  
- The Minute Poster --for advertising (Gospel Light) |
More Drama Ministry Tips

Grace Reflections & Friendship

Puppet Pals
Contributed by:
Susan Schwarz

e-mail: sschwarz@cccsda.org
Updated phone number: 559-347-3042

Puppet Ministry
Contributed by:
Brenda Harrigan

e-mail: bharrigan1@yahoo.com
Phone: 256-772-3483
Grace Reflections & Friendship Puppet Pals

May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us, establish the work of our hands for us.  

Psalm 90:17

A Loving Hands Ministry  
Central California Conference  
Under direction of Children Ministries Department  
Contact: Susan Schwarz 559-291-7700 ext 269
Welcome to “Grace Reflections” Re-enactment Training Session

Do you know that every child or youth that you have contact with is a mission field, whether it be in your church, your neighborhood, or the shopping mall? Each person in this world is unique, and we must find ways to reach everyone possible for our Lord Jesus and His Kingdom in the 21st century. Our children, youth and young adults are the future of the church, and tools in God’s hands to be used in reaching others. They are looking for ministries to be actively involved in. Drama and Puppet Ministries are becoming an excellent avenue for involvement in ministry.

Keep in mind that prayer is the foundation of any ministry. Much prayer will be needed at every step of your drama ministry as well. Remember by God’s grace and guidance are we able to undertake such endeavors. These types of ministries are wonderful methods of accomplishing our objective. Not only do we minister to our own members, but they become ministers themselves to the surrounding community. The following are some ways to incorporate drama and puppet ministry into your church activities.

- Children’s Sabbath School Programs
- Special Sabbath Programs
- VBS Programs
- Pathfinder Clubs
- Retreats / Camps
- Underprivileged Community Outreach Programs
- Summer Ministry Programs
- School Programs
- Neighborhood Bible Clubs
- Shut-ins and Children Hospitals
- Parks
- Retirement Homes

The WORD OF GOD is deep enough for the scholars to swim in without ever touching bottom, and yet shallow enough for a Little Child to come and drink without fear of drowning”

We are claiming Psalms 90:17, “May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us”. The Lord constantly desires us to share with Him the joy of rescuing souls for eternity. We truly are His hands while we are here on earth. Shall we all rejoice in the Lord for His countless ways to minister to us and others.

Getting Started

- How to Begin a Ministry of Drama
  Ask some fundamental questions: Purpose, enhancing, workshops for teachers or leaders?

- Drama in Worship
  - The scriptures both from the Old and the New Testaments can “come alive” as they are shared through dramatic interpretations.
  - Communicate and educate as much as you can so that your congregation will remain accepting of your ministry.
  - Begin your drama ministry by laying a good foundation.
Drama in Education

The key concept being taught during a particular session can be reinforced through the medium of drama. Abstract concepts or feelings can become more concrete through the use of drama. Imagine being a follower of Jesus: You are in a boat crossing the Sea of Galilee, and suddenly a violent storm breaks out. Of course, as we read in the story, Jesus is calm about the situation. He is so calm, in fact, that he remains asleep at the head of the small boat. Acting out this particular scene enables a child, a youth, or an adult to become more aware of the story itself as well as his or her feelings in the midst of such a crisis. Questions could be asked of those who observed the performance as well as those who participated in it.

-Other uses of drama in the learning groups or classrooms can be role-plays, puppets, and choral readings.

- Different ways of re-enactment (examples will be given in workshop)
  - Walk thru drama, character corners or puppets
  - Choral readings, costumes with story tapes or music tapes
  - Voice or sign language

- Re-enactments Session
  - A word to the wise is to look ahead.
  - Build up a library of scripts.
  - Viewing different note the scripts, consider the following elements: the number of characters, the setting, props, the story line, credibility, the type of play—such as comic, dramatic or biblical—the level of difficulty, the language, the cost of scripts, and the performance fee.

- Selecting a Drama: Eight Questions to Ask:
  1. Is this the type of play—comic, dramatic, biblical—that suits our purpose?
  2. Is there a fee for performance rights? Is it within our budget?
  3. Is the story line interesting?
  4. Is the level of difficulty challenging, yet within our range?
  5. Is the language acceptable, appropriate?
  6. How many characters? Is it suitable for our group, our goals?
  7. What are the requirements for the set? Can we do it or adapt?
  8. How many props? How easy/difficult to find?

Gathering of Talents: Cast and Crew
- several options for casting:
  1. Typecasting
  2. Handpicking
  3. Working within the confines of existing groups, such as a youth group
  4. Double casting a large group
  5. Ecumenical approach
  6. Intergenerational (multi-age) approach

- Develop a core group of interested people.
- There may be people who have not been active in other types of ministry in the church, but would be excited about participating in the ministry of drama.
- The handpicking method may be helpful if you are producing a one-time event.
- Your group may be too large for the play you have chosen—“double cast”
- Having different age levels within the church working on a project and learning together is fantastic. If your church is large, then this is one way for people to become more acquainted with one another. If your church is small, then having an intergenerational cast affirms more of a church family atmosphere.

Scheduling rehearsals
Assistant Director

An assistant director is responsible for creating a director’s notebook. Every other page has a script attached to it and space for blocking notes (positioning of the actors). The other page is for production notes. Once the actors have their scripts memorized, the assistant director is responsible for following the script and prompting the actors during their occasional memory “blips.”

People Behind the Scenes

Crew:

Always remember that your situation and purpose will dictate how large a crew you should have. Some people may wish to take on more responsibilities. In most church productions, the technical crew will consist of a person or committee for props, costumes, and communications. List these people in your program, giving them special thanks.

Props:

Props are things that are handled by the actors as well as the setting furnishings. The prop person must read through the script and determine what props are needed, and sometimes has to make them.

Costuming:

In Biblical settings, the chasubles are ideal. They can be very simple or quite elegant, depending on the character and situation. Chasubles can also be reversible, for double use and quick changing time.

Communications:

Getting your audience to come: posters, worship bulletins, church newsletters; no more than two weeks in advance. Include not only who, what, where, and when, but also why you are offering this production, or even share some of the leaning or fun events that have occurred during rehearsal. Build your image of drama ministry in the life of the church. Put up rehearsal pictures on the bulletin board as you near your production date. Advertising outside the church? Use your local newspaper, radio, cable television public access channel—all free services to the community. Make arrangements well ahead of time. Utilize all resources & be as creative as possible.

Sound:

Recruit your sound people as early as possible so that they may be of best help to you. The audio person should carefully study the script and discover what the script calls for in terms of any sound effects. Sound effects can be made on a cassette recorder or found on a compact disc for sounds. Your local library is a good resource, as are also persons in your congregation who might have experience and knowledge in sound equipment.

There is always the question of voice amplification; work with your performers on the projection of their voices to fill the room you are working in. Assure them that they are in charge of their voice through their use muscles and energy, and there is nothing you can do to increase their volume. Be sure not to push so hard as to damage the voice. If necessary, use the microphones, but if it can be avoided, the natural voice is better.

Lighting:

The primary objective is for the audience to be able to see the actors. Sometimes, this requires a spotlight. The secondary objective is to illumine the set. This should happen naturally by the reflected light from the acting space. Any special lighting effects should not distract from the action of the play. Look around your community for lighting equipment that can be borrowed or rented. The person in charge of the special lighting should also be very well acquainted with the script and the movements of the actors.

Design for Simple Lighting System

Building a flat /stage

Giving Direction and Support:

Blocking:

- After you have carefully studied the script,
- Your acting space will be divided into nine different areas (upstage right, upstage center, upstage left, center right, center stage, center left, downstage right, downstage center, downstage left). Early stages were sloped up toward the rear wall, thus the name upstage. Whether right or left is from the actors viewpoint on stage while facing the audience.
Character Development:

As the director, you will be assisting the actors in the development of their characters. For the first rehearsals, make no restrictions on their creativity except that they must stick to their lines.

Key Goals for the First-time Actor:
1. Develop the character.
2. Be consistent and stay in character.
3. Give emotion and energy through the character.
4. Explore the lines of the character.
5. Memorize the lines of the character.

Memorization:
Memorizing lines comes more easily after the blocking and character development has been established. Some tips to help memorization are:
- An actor may wish to put a piece of paper over the script and say the covered lines while looking at the previous, uncovered line, which is called the cue line.
- Have your actors study the lines everyday, in the morning and at night.
- Sit your actors down and record the whole script on a cassette tape. Reproduce the cassette for each actor and have them listen to it wherever they go, and to recite their lines along with the cassette.
- Once the scripts are memorized, have fun with them by playing a board game while reciting the lines. This increases their concentration and proves that they can deliver their lines while doing an nonstage-related activity.

Creative Support:
If your play is one that tells a biblical story, then another way to enhance the production is to have a short Bible study session of the scripture on which the play is based. It is important that your cast have some understanding of the story they are telling.

Approaching the Performance

The Dress Rehearsal:
The dress rehearsal gives you and the cast and crew a chance to see how the production will be presented as if it were actually a performance, and it gives you an opportunity to feel some accomplishment from all of your efforts. Be prepared for a few mistakes, but NO PROMPTING OF LINES.

Performance Readiness:

Before the actual performance, you will need to warm up the cast and crew physically, mentally, and spiritually. The body is an instrument and will be in need of some light non-vigorous warming-up exercises. Strive to increase the energy level, so that everyone gives their thoughts, efforts, and energy to production. Non-stressful vocal exercises (rolling the tongue, repeating the vowels with different consonant heads ta-te-ri, i.e., ma-me-mi, etc., or hum a familiar song). The mind is also in need of a warm-up. Ask the cast and crew to close their eyes and take three deep breaths, each time exhaling slowly. Put all other pressures “on the back shelf” to pick them up only after the production is over. Remind everyone to listen and respond to each other while on stage; it can be very frustrating for an actor to deliver his/her lines only to receive a blank stare.

Establishing an Ongoing Drama Ministry:

Evaluate Your Experience of the first drama or sketches your group has done. Ask all participants to list briefly the positive and negative aspects of the re-enactment and weigh the positive and negative comments. Have each participant list their own experiences they felt. Ask a few objective individual from the audience to help evaluate as well. Form a task group to discover what changes need to occur and what elements to keep for the next re-enactment program.
Checklist for the Director:

Before Rehearsal
Pray - ask for the Holy Spirit to guide and give you wisdom for His glory only.
Pay bills for the play scripts.
Meet with crew heads one week before rehearsals.
Meet with Assistant Director and Stage Manager one week before rehearsals.

During Rehearsals
Pray with your team members
Plan publicity four weeks before performance.
Implement publicity two weeks before performance.
Take and post pictures of rehearsals.
Announce performances from pulpit three weeks before performance.
Create list of persons or organizations to thank in programs.
Develop list of correctly spelled names of cast and crew for program.
Print programs one week before performances.
Recruir childcare for performances.
Recruir kitchen crew two weeks before performances.
Meet with organist three weeks before performances.
Arrange work to be done solely by custodial staff one week before performances.
Assign dressing rooms one week before performances.
Each team member is reasonable for costumes and dressing areas.

During Performances
Pray behind the scene with team members before you attempt to minister and witness for the Lord.
Announce performances from pulpit.
Post updated announcements for cast and crew.
Clean and maintain costumes dressing areas.
Take and post pictures of performances.

After Performances
Pray and give thanksgiving for the success or possible problems, and guidance for continuing ministry.
Pay royalties no later than one week after!
Evaluate production no later than one week after!
Write thank you notes during the week after!

Some quotes taken from The Play’s the Thing by Brian Medkeff-Rose

Members of the “Grace Reflection” & Re-enactment team from the Central California Conference under the direction of Children’s Ministries Director Susan Schwarz are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debra Cantu</th>
<th>Linda Cantu</th>
<th>Joshua Carbajal</th>
<th>Ruth Coronado</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Crouch</td>
<td>Bryson Cummings</td>
<td>December Cummings</td>
<td>Kamryn Cummings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karla Cummings</td>
<td>Rick D’Ambrosia</td>
<td>Ruth Goodman</td>
<td>Aubrey Purviance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Streling</td>
<td>Ed Wagner</td>
<td>Judi Wagner</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bios for the above members will be available in the additional handout at the training session.

Blessing and Being Blessed

So many times we implement a new style of ministry within the church. We feel as if we are planting seeds in hope that we will experience a harvest. Jesus familiar parable of the mustard seed gives us hope to venture forward in faith will striving to initiate our ministry and outreach programs. As you carefully plant your seeds, a drama or two, be encouraged that the growth will occur. The inward change and growth will be measurable as your team expresses the fact that they have experienced God more fully. Even though your ministry may be unnoticed at first, celebrate the fact that there have been and will be beautiful ways in which people have been touched by your ministry.
One of the most successful ways of capturing the full attention of a child is with puppets. A puppet, in the hands of a skillful puppeteer, has the ability of taking on life-like qualities as well as a personality of its own. When done correctly, children can become captivated with a puppet and the message being presented. Imagine, having the full attention of a child while sharing the love of Jesus Christ - this is what Puppet Ministry is all about.

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE GETTING STARTED

Determine your mission and set goals.

- Ask for Divine Guidance.
- Develop a sense of mission by answering the five following mission purpose questions.
  1. Worship — How can I praise God with my ministry?
  2. Service — How can my ministry be a service to mankind?
  3. Evangelism — Who am I going to reach with my ministry?
  4. Fellowship — How can I show respect and appreciation for those I minister to and minister with?
  5. Discipleship — How can this ministry make better disciples out of me and the puppeteer team?
- Now you can establish long and short term goals. This will give your ministry a sense of direction as well as accomplishment. Always remember, the purpose of puppet ministry is more than to perform, it is to minister.
- Sufficient time must be allocated in developing this ministry.
- Be a spiritual and dedicated leader. Be mindful of those who minister with you. You are setting an example of service for the Lord. This would be a good time to examine your own life and your relationship with the Lord. "You can’t build a ministry on a truth you don’t build your own life on."
- As God leads you in this ministry, remember the words found in Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto thine own understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct thy paths.”
GETTING STARTED

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

1. Recruit passionate puppeteers. A puppet team should consist of people who are just as dedicated to this ministry as you are. Make members aware of the mission and goals of the team.

2. A team member should be physically able to manipulate a puppet. It is suggested that you choose pre-teens to adults. It is easier for older children and adults to handle a puppet. For example: Sometimes a puppeteer must hold a puppet in the air for as long as 5 minutes.

3. Choose members who are aware of the time commitment involved and are willing to make such a commitment.

4. At a meeting with both parents and team members, decide on rehearsal times and establish rules and guidelines. Be sure to insist on the proper care of puppets and equipment, as well as the safety of all puppeteers.

5. Be prepared to recruit other volunteers to be a part of your team such as an assistant directors, parents and other church members. Once you get started, you will find that there will be plenty of jobs where you will need the help of others.

TRAINING VOLUNTEERS AND TEAM BUILDING

1. Plan meaningful puppet practices. Rehearsals should include the following:
   a. Set-up
   b. Worship
   c. Announcement
   d. Warm-up exercises/development of skills
   e. Rehearsal of program
   f. Evaluation of rehearsal
   g. Put things away
   h. Prayer

Before Rehearsal

2. Know what you are going to practice prior to rehearsal time. Everything should be in place before practice begins which includes puppets, puppet stage, copies of skits and music, tapes and/or compact discs, and a cassette/compact disc player. By outlining what you are going to practice and having everything in place prior to practice time, you communicate to your team that practice time is valuable. Have members take turns as a setup crew and a take down crew. Begin and end on time and do not allow anyone or anything to interfere with puppet practice.

Devotion Time

3. Begin with devotion and prayer time. Devotion time reminds members of the team’s mission as well as helps in their own spiritual development.

4. Make prayer time special. Share and celebrate testimonies of answered prayer. As young people hear about God’s awesomeness through answered prayer, they come to rely on God for everyday needs. Allow for unspoken requests. Some members may not feel comfortable enough to share personal concerns.

5. Make announcements before rehearsal. Give members printed announcements of important things like dates, times and places of upcoming engagements.
**Practice Time**

6. Begin with warm-up and training exercises. When warming up, play a song and while it is playing have them practice some of the basic skills of puppetry. There are 5 basic skills all puppeteers should know. (See resource page)
   a. Entrances and Exits
   b. Proper hand position
   c. Lip synchronization
   d. Eye contact
   e. Posture

7. Again, be prepared. Plan a presentation that will allow all puppeteers to have a part and give them parts that will allow them to succeed. Use positive reinforcement as you look for the good things they do and use constructive criticism in helping them develop their puppetry skills to higher levels. Never allow team members to tease and make fun of each other.

8. When planning a program consider the following:
   a. Select a theme. Select materials that will be both age and culturally appropriate.
   b. Choose the materials and equipment you will need. Decide on live or pre-recorded skits, plays, and music.
   c. Always consider the skills of the puppeteers.

9. Always evaluate how everyone did before ending your rehearsal. Sometimes it is good to video tape your practice. Members will see for themselves where they need improvement.

**Ending Rehearsals**

10. Make sure all puppets and equipment are put away properly and securely.
11. Show appreciation for everyone’s participation and for doing a good job
12. Always end with prayer.

**Things to remember**

1. Once you have assigned a name and a personality to a puppet, it must keep that name and personality. Your audience will come to identify these puppets with their name and personalities. Don’t confuse them!

2. Practice without a stage curtain until 2 or 3 rehearsals prior to an engagement. This allows the leader to view the puppeteer’s body and arm position and helps reduce inappropriate behavior.

3. Assign one person to be in charge of the audio equipment during rehearsals and performances.

4. The best roles should not always go to the best puppeteer. You are working with the lives of your members. Find out what their talents are and build on them.

5. Remember your team will perform the way they practice. Make practices count!
TEAM BUILDING IDEAS
1. Celebrate team member’s birthdays with something special.
2. Allow team members to lead out in the devotional. Help them by giving them suggestions for devotionals. You can even appoint a chaplain.
3. Eat together once a month just before rehearsal.
4. Plan recreation activities together such as bowling, picnics, and parties.
5. Involve the members in an outreach activity such as adopting an senior citizen and feeding the homeless.
6. Have a prop building night where members come together and help build props and backdrops for an upcoming presentation. Ask parents to provide the food and drink.
7. Allow members to write and produce their own skits and incorporate these in your presentations.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED
To get started you will need a puppet, script or music, compact disc player or microphone and a stage. Check Resource List for suggested companies where these things can be purchased.

Puppets
1. Puppets can be purchased in a variety of colors, sizes, shapes, and forms. There are half body, full body, and human arm puppets. It is suggested that a team have a variety of puppets with mouths that can move easily. Every team member should have a puppet. If puppets can not be purchased, there are good puppets patterns that are available. Enlist church members to help create needed puppets. There is an “Adopt a Puppet” plan that is used by many churches in securing donated puppets. (See Resource List.)

Scripts and Music
2. There are many puppet scripts and pre-recorded scripts that are available for purchase and/or you can always write your own! Scripts, like all great stories, should capture and keep the attention of the puppet’s intended audience. When selecting or writing a script, consider the four main parts of a story. Does this script have an introduction, plot, climax and conclusion? Does this script in some way draw the listener closer to Christ? Is it age and culturally appropriate?
3. If possible, use pre-recorded scripts and music. If you are using your own script and/or music, pre-record it. This keeps puppeteers from having to worry about voicing and lip syncing their puppets at the same time.

Compact Disc/Cassette Player
4. You will need some type of recording device to play your pre-recorded scripts and music. Some CD players have built-in microphone systems which are great when performing for small audiences. If performing for larger groups, some type of microphone system is necessary.
Stages
5. Several types of stages have been developed for use with puppets, and several objects that are not stages can be used if desired. Stages differ in cost and versatility, and the stage ultimately selected for use by your puppet group should be tailored to your individual requirements. If finances don’t allow you to purchase a stage, you can make one using PVC Pipes and curtains. Stages made out of materials such as plywood and cardboard are inexpensive, yet produce a special effect.

ENHANCING YOUR PERFORMANCE
Performances can be enhanced with the use of backdrops, props, proper lighting and sound, and the costuming of your puppets. These things pull your theme together while adding realism to your presentation.
1. Painted backdrops can be attached to the back of a puppet stage. By making backdrops out of sheets and canvas, they can be used again and can be easily stored.
2. Props are things like worded and picture clue signs, musical instruments, furniture, decorations, trees & flowers, etc. With the exception of signs, props should be in correct proportion to the puppets themselves. All props should be made for long term use and should be properly stored.
3. Costumes make your presentations more believable. Most people puppets wear a size 3 in toddler size. Clothes for puppets can be purchased at yard sales and second hand stores. If presenting a Bible story, make bible costumes out of inexpensive fabric. Be sure to add the head pieces.

Something to think about
1. Incorporate dialog between a puppet and a real person.
2. Add variety to your presentation by incorporating shadow and black light puppetry. (See resource list)
3. Have puppeteers master and use advance puppetry skills. These skills include the use of rod arms, believable movements such as acting and reacting motions, voice characterization, human arm puppetry. Try adding choreography and props to musical numbers. These make for memorable performances. Always remember, enhancements are things that make your performance more believable. They should never overshadow the message that is being shared.
THE FIVE BASIC SKILLS OF PUPPETRY

1. Lip Synchronization
Lip syncing is the ability to move the puppet’s mouth open and close in synchronization to every syllable in a word. Always start with opening the mouth at the beginning of a syllable and closing it at the end. Keep the mouth slightly closed when the puppet is not talking. For words that are extremely long and music that moves rapidly, it is not necessary to mouth every syllable. However, it extremely important that the words at the beginning and end of a sentence are done in sync. (Your puppet should never look like it is biting it’s words.)

2. Mouth Action
When mouthing words, use your thumb to move the lower part of the mouth up and down. Try keeping the upper part of the mouth and head from moving backwards. You don’t want your puppet looking like it is “flipping it’s lid.” Keep the mouth slightly closed when the puppet is not talking. When the mouth is open wide, it gives the impression of excitement and when the mouth is closed tightly, it makes the puppet look like it’s mad.

3. Eye Contact
The eyes of a puppet should look directly at the audience. The head of a puppet should be angled slightly downward and never toward the ceiling. Realistic movements include having the puppet look at the person speaking, moving it’s eyes from individual to individual while talking, moving it’s head/eyes from an object back to the audience, and moving it’s head away as if it is ignoring someone.

4. Posture
To achieve good puppet posture, the arm of the puppeteer should be held straight up high and close to the head of the puppeteer. Another option is to hold the puppet at a right angle to the floor with the hand level. Do not allow puppets to lean from side to side or lean on the stage. Puppets should be at least 6 inches from the stage. Puppeteers should avoid the quicksand syndrome. This is when the arms of puppeteers get tired and the audience notices that the puppets are sinking lower and lower. When holding a puppet up behind the stage curtain, the puppet should be held high enough that the head and the upper body is seen. However, the puppeteer’s arm should never be seen.

5. Entrances and Exits
When entering and exiting your puppet, it should appear as if it is walking on stage. Use the whole arm to give it a natural sideward bounce while keeping the forearm straight up and down. Next, have the puppet move up gradually in about 5 even steps. Using a fluid movement, the puppet comes more fully into view. Use the same steps in reverse to exit.

Can you find common puppet mistakes?
RESOURCES FOR PUPPETRY

Puppet Suppliers

One Way Street
P. O. Box 5077
Englewood, Co 80155-5077
1-800-569-4537
www.onewaystreet.com
Puppets, scripts, tapes, music and training
Everything you need.
Color catalog available.

Following is a list of valuable One Way Street resources that will help you get started.

Puppet Director’s Notebook
By Dale VonSeggen and Jim Scott

Puppets: Ministry Magic
By Dale and Liz VonSeggan

Puppetry Stages
By Dale VonSeggan

Adopt-a-Puppet
By Mike Pierce

Reaching & Teaching with Puppets! (a video)
By Dale and Liz VonSeggan

Puppet Productions, Inc.
P.O. Box 1066
DeSoto, TX 75123-1066
1-800-854-2151
www.puppetproductions.com
Puppets, tapes, music, training
Color catalog available.

The Health Connection
Dept. 9110
55 West Oak Ridge Drive
Hagerstown, MD 21740-7390
1-800-548-8700
www.healthconnection.org
Puppets, tapes, music
Color catalog available

The SonShine Puppet Company
P.O. Box 6203
Rockford, IL 61125
1-815-965-8080
www.sonshinepuppets.com

Other Helpful Resources

Books

The Puppet Book
by Bill Hawes
Available from Puppet Productions

Religious Signing
by Elaine Costello
Bantam Books, Inc
Springfield, MO 65802

Big Action Bible Skits
By Christine Yount
Group Publishing

Just Add Puppets
Group Publishing
P.O. Box 481
Loveland, Co 80539
1-800-447-1070
www.grouppublishing.com

Instant Skits for Children’s Ministry
by John Duckworth
Group Publishing

Puppet Organizations
These organizations offer newsletters and training.

Fellowship of Christian Puppeteers
FCP Mail Center
107 Moore Allen St
Dudley, NC 28333
www.fcpfellowship.org

One Way Street
Offers newsletters and training

Puppet Productions
Offers training

Screen Play - Shadow Puppetry
on the Overhead Projector
by Jeanine Bartelt
Memorization Without Tears

Seminar Purpose
• To find a variety of fun ways that encourage children to memorize Scripture

What is Memorization?
1. Definitions:
   memorize, to commit to memory; learn by heart
   rote memory, learning by memory alone, without necessarily understanding what is memorized; learning through repetition or routine.

2. The pros and cons of rote memory
   a. Children easily memorize a song or verse by rote if they hear it enough (like radio commercials).
   b. It is a problem if they rely on rote learning, without understanding or processing information.
   c. Children can also remember after processing information a few times.

3. Remembering and recall
   a. Information is best remembered if recalled soon after they hear it.
   b. If they wait too long to recall it, they may lose part of the information.
   c. The more often students recall information, the better they retain it.

Why Memorize?
• To develop the memory--Use it or lose it
• To make Scripture part of one’s life

Children and Memorization
Children . . .
   Memorize easily
   Enjoy memorizing--if you make it fun
   Will memorize without thinking if you let them
   Give up on memorizing if they see no point to it
   Later use and value what they were taught to memorize while young
## Stages and Methods of Memorization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The preschool child memorizes . . .</th>
<th>So the teacher can . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After hearing it enough times, provided . .&lt;br&gt;You keep up their interest</td>
<td>Provide lots of repetition&lt;br&gt;Vary the repetition; make it fun. Make a game of it; have them do something different every time they repeat it (clap, snap, tap, nod, etc.)&lt;br&gt;Recite Scripture always in the same rhythm or put it to music&lt;br&gt;Stay on task for just 1 minute per year of their age, plus 1 (6 minutes for 5-yr-olds)&lt;br&gt;Make it fun--it’s fun if it makes them laugh&lt;br&gt;Give them five, say it was SUPER GREAT!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They hear it said, sung or done the same way each time&lt;br&gt;Their attention span is respected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They think it is fun&lt;br&gt;They are affirmed for their effort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the whole to the part.</td>
<td>Say the whole Scripture or sing the whole song, not phrase by phrase, not by learning words first and then music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The child primary-age and older memorizes . . .</th>
<th>So the teacher can . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From the simple to the complex</td>
<td>Teach the simplest part of the text or song first. Then gradually fill out the rest of it.&lt;br&gt;Help kids break the verse into smaller parts and understand how the parts are related.&lt;br&gt;Emphasize meaning/understanding instead or thoughtless repetition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sequence of ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But dislikes rote learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole passages of Scripture from the whole to the part</td>
<td>Get them to read the whole thing every day, saying as much as possible of it from memory, and adding a verse each day to what is memorized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With memory crutches</td>
<td>Break the verse into sections and underline the verbs in each section. Either the verb or the first word of each section can be a memory crutch.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Memory Verse Activities

**BEGINNERS**

Praise the child for whatever response he or she makes. Some children may not be ready yet to try memorizing in class. Spend one month on one verse.

**Reading from the Bible.** The child “helps” an adult read the verse from the Bible, exaggerating emphasis on key words.

**Echoes.** The child echos each phrase right after the adult says it.
**Bible verse songs.** Sing the song often in class until the children pick it up. The music aids memorization.

**Action songs.** Make up actions to sing with the song and the children will enjoy the verse more and learning it sooner.

**KINDERGARTEN**

**Reading from the Bible.** The child holds the Bible while adult points to the words and reads, even though she cannot read. Do this after each activity and story throughout the entire program. Soon, the child will complete the verse after hearing the first couple words. Prompt as necessary. Praise extravagantly.

**Tell Your Arms.** After the children begin to learn the verse, ask them to tell their arms. As they say each word, they pat alternate arms with the opposite hands. When they get the hang of this, speed it up. Vary it with “tell your shoulders” (tap alternate shoulders), “tell your head” (nod head from side to side), “tell your knees” (tap alternate knees), “tell your feet” (stand up and tap alternate feet).

**Rhythm Band.** Kids tap rhythm instruments as they say the verse. They may even march as they play and say.

**Memory Lane.** Cut out colorful foot prints and laminate them. Tape footprints on the floor, one for each word of the Bible verse, spaced to form a pathway for one child at a time to walk. Kids line up and take turns to say the verse, taking a footstep for each word they say. If they miss a word, prompt them and then let them start over.

**PRIMARY-JUNIOR**

If the memory text is read after each activity and the Bible story, the children soon memorize it and are ready for a memorization game. Do not ask them to say the verse just for the sake of saying it. Occasionally, you can ask juniors to set the song to music and sing it to the class, say it with rhythm, or make a poster or door hanger that features the text.

**Flash Card Games.** Flash cards are index cards with a single, different word of the text written on each. [The larger the group, the larger the cards need to be and the thicker the marker that you write with.]

**Scrambled Verse.** Hand out flash cards in random order. Kids arrange themselves in order of the verse and say the verse, each child saying the word they hold, then say the verse all together.

**Bible Search.** Give kids the flash cards and the reference. They look up their Bibles and then assemble the verse.

**Missing Words.** The flash cards are in order where everyone can see them. Have everyone read the verse, then remove one card. Everyone reads the verse, supplying the missing word. Repeat, each time removing one more card until there are no cards and kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

**Missing Word Snap.** Now say the verse from memory, deleting the first word and snapping fingers in place of the deleted word. Repeat, each time deleting and snapping for one more word. Works best for shorter verses.

**Bible Stepping Stones.** You need the memory verse on flash cards, one word per card. Arrange the words upside down on the floor, in order and only one step apart. The kids say the word and then step on the flash card before saying the next word of the verse. You can mix it up with the trail from the previous memory verse crisscrossing today’s trail. The kids then have to recognize today’s verse.

**Bible Memory.** You need pairs of cards, such as Bible lesson picture and a corresponding card with the verse only,
Bible lesson title and corresponding card with verse only,
Picture or words to represent an everyday situation; have a
  corresponding memory verse that speaks to the situation,
First part of verse, last part of verse,
  Memory verse beginning, its Bible reference.

To play Bible Memory: Lay the cards face down in rows. The children pick up two cards.
If they match, they get to say that memory verse and keep the pair, otherwise they
replace the cards and the person to their left takes their turn.

  Memory Toss. To review the memory verse for the quarter, you need an egg
carton and a button. In each of the hollows place a slip of paper with the reference for a
memory verse, for example, John 3:16. The kids toss the button into the carton and say
the memory verse that goes with the reference that the button lands on.

  Bible Relay. Two team form two lines, players standing side by side with their
Bibles. The teacher calls a Bible text. The person at one end of the team finds the verse
and raises one hand. Only then may the next person start searching, and so on down the
line. The last person to find the text runs to the front and the team starts saying the
verse.

  Echo Canyon. Stand in a circle. The leader reads the whole verse and then
shouts the first phrase. Each successive person echos the person before them, but less
loudly. The leader follows on quickly with the next phrase which is echoed down the line,
and so on, ending with the Bible reference.

  Jigsaw Puzzle. Write the verse on a blank jigsaw puzzle. Mix up the pieces and
time kids as they try to put it back together.

  Two Team Echo. Divide up a short memory verse into two sections. Half of the
class takes the first part, and the rest, the last part of the verse. Give the two teams two
minutes to learn their part of the text. One team says their part of the verse and the other
group follows with theirs. Do this several times and then challenge someone to stand
and repeat the whole verse.

  Add One. The kids stand or sit in a circle. The teacher says the first word of the
verse, the person to her left says the next and so on around the circle, every person
adding one more word until the verse is done.

  Add On Toss. The children stand in a circle. The teacher says the first word of
the memory verse and throws a ball (bean bag or wad of paper) to someone across the
circle. That person catches the object, says the next word of the verse, and throws to
someone else. The object is to finish the verse without dropping the object.

  Add Two. Play like Add One, except that each person says two words of the
verse.
Bible words Toss. Have the children stand in a circle and toss an inflatable globe to each other. Each time the globe drops to the ground, everyone repeats the week’s Bible words [memory verse] together.

Walk and Talk. Children choose an animal to imitate. Say the Bible words together as they “walk” around the room like their animal. (You may not want to do this every week!)

Thunder Sounds. Hold a large piece of butcher paper at the top and shake it violently. The paper makes a crackling thunder sound. Children take turns making thunder sounds while saying Bible words together.

Rockin’ Along. Sit on the floor and repeat the Bible words while rocking back and forth.

Take a Hike. Go on a walk around your church—inside or outside. As you walk, repeat the day’s Bible words.

Follow Me! Trace your shoe into colored construction paper and cut out multiple copies. Tape the footprints to the floor in a path around your room. Children follow the path, stopping at each footprint to repeat a word from the day’s Bible words.

Balloon Bop. The children stand in two lines facing each other. They repeat the week’s memory verse together, word by word. With each word, they bop a balloon from one line to the other, and say the whole verse when the balloon touches the floor or pops.

Running Thanks. Assemble the class on one side of the room. They say the Bible words, when you call out a color, and the children run to touch something of that color. Ask them what they are thankful for that is the same color. Repeat the Bible words together again, then call a new color and repeat the game.

Friendly Faces. Draw a smiley face on several paper plates. Place a cluster of “Friendly Faces” on the floor, and have the children form a line several paces away. Children take turns tossing the beanbag onto a “Friendly Face.” They say the name of a friend in the class, and then everyone says the day’s Bible words together. The friend whose name was called picks up the beanbag and tosses it again.

Smiley Squares. Make enough large paper squares for all the children in your class. Draw happy faces on half of the squares. (If there is an odd number of children in your class, add one or more adults so that every one has a partner.) Shuffle the squares, and pass them out randomly to the children. Children who receive a “Smiley Square” must
find someone without one, and tell them, “Friends love each other.” Then the two repeat today’s Bible words together.

**Shoe Clap.** Have the children remove their shoes and place them on their hands. Talk about how we can use our feet to serve God, and clap the shoes together to the rhythm of the Bible words.

**Whisper it.** Seat the group on the floor in a circle. The children take turns whispering the Bible words to someone across the circle before rolling a rubber ball across to them. Remind the children to help by rolling the ball to someone who has not had a turn yet.

**Empty or Full?** Give each child in the group a paper cup. Pass out a tissue or paper towel to every other child. Ask them to crumple it up and “fill” their cups. When you call out “Empty cups!” all those with an empty cup (no paper in it) stand up and repeat the Bible words together. Repeat the same for “Full cups!”

**Pass It On.** Cut or copy a picture for each week from a student study guide (quarterly). Place the pictures for the current lesson and previous lessons in an unsealed envelope. Hand the envelope to a child who is standing in a circle with everyone else. Play music while the children pass the envelope around the circle. When the music stops, the child holding the envelope takes a picture from it and shows it to everyone. The whole group says the Bible words associated with that picture.

**Who Is It?** Children sit or stand in a circle. One child closes their eyes while you point to someone else, who says the week’s Bible words. The child with covered eyes gets three tries to guess which friend said the Bible words. The child who said the Bible words gets to close their eyes and guess next.

**Gold Coins, Silver Coins.** Cut three-inch circles from cardboard. Spray paint half of the coins gold, and the other half silver. Place the “coins” in a drawstring bag and have children pull one coin out. When everyone has a coin, call out, “Gold coins!” The children holding gold coins stand and repeat the Bible words with you. Alternate with “Silver coins!” and conclude the game by calling out “All coins!”

**Around We Go!** Gather the children in a circle. Choose one child to stand in the center of the circle. The child in the center picks a starting place and goes around the circle while everyone says the Bible words together, pointing to a different child for each word (or syllable) in the Bible words (like “Eeny, Meeny, Miney, Mo. . .”). The child on whom the verse ends stands in the circle next.

(Thank you to Noelene Johnsson, North American Division Children’s Ministries Director, for her advice on this syllabus, and for sharing materials from her website for the Bible learning activities, storytelling, drama ministry, and memorization sections.)