



# Puppet Theater

## Purpose

To train students to teach children biblical principles using puppets. Participants learn valuable team-working skills in their preparation and presentation. Great opportunity for participants to gain self-confidence in public presentations.

## Event Participation

Performances will be held in the following divisions. The team must participate in the division of the oldest member. Students may participate on only one puppet team. Students in grades Pre-K-2 may participate on third grade or older puppet teams.

- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5
- Grade 6
- Grade 7
- Grade 8
- Grade 9
- Grade 10
- Grade 11
- Grade 12

## Event Rules and Guidelines

1. A team may consist of no more than 12 members.
2. Puppet shows must adhere to the announced Convention theme and teach a biblical message. The message being taught is more important than the performance.
3. No team is to use the name or use any sign that would identify its congregation.
4. Each grade division will participate in a different room.
5. Representatives from each congregation should report to the registration area on Friday morning to obtain a performance time for each team, if not already received by email, and to verify that the required number of judges will be present at the judges' meeting. NOTE: Special requests for performance times will be considered by the Puppet Theater Coordinator, but are not guaranteed. Please provide the reason for the request when submitted. Only requests received by the posted convention registration deadline will be considered. Times will be sent to the Puppet Theater coordinator for each group that provides an email address in the convention registration system. Otherwise, they will be sent to the Team Leader.
6. Teams CANNOT practice on stages at the convention. Team captains can inspect their performance room, but cannot alter the stage setup. Report any problems to the puppet coordinator.
7. The puppet team must be at the performance room at their designated performance time. Failure to be at the room on time may result in disqualification.
8. The timekeeper will announce teams to perform by letter designation at the time of performance.
9. After announcement, each team will have a total of 12 minutes to set up, present puppet show, remove all equipment, and exit the room.
10. The stage area must be left as it was found (i.e. four chairs in front area, walkboard in rear area, and curtains back in place). A penalty of two points will be deducted from each judge's sheet for failure to do so.
11. The team captain or adult leader must state "we are clear" or "clear" as the final team member exits the room, and the timekeeper will stop the stopwatch. When the last person exits the room, the time will be stopped - regardless of whether the clear statement is made or not.

12. The timekeeper will give an oral warning at the 10-minute mark of the performance – meaning there are only 2 minutes left without penalties.
13. The puppet show (actual performance) must be a minimum of five minutes. Groups will be penalized two points for one to 30 seconds under five minutes; four points for 31 to 60 seconds under; etc.
14. Adult leaders may assist in set-up and take-down. However, all adults must clear the stage area during the performance.
15. Electronic devices may be used for special effects. However, students must use their voices for puppets. Pre-recorded script dialogue will not be permitted. Instrumental music **MUST NOT** be used for “church” or “religious” songs. It is recommended that musical instruments not be used even for secular songs. However, groups that choose to have musical accompaniment for secular songs will not be penalized. Special effects must not overshadow the message.
16. All special effects (lighting, sound, etc.) must be controlled by team members rather than adults. The lights in the performance rooms **CANNOT** be turned off during any part of a performance. This is because not all rooms have independent controls, and the judges need to be able to see to make notes and score the performances. One narrator per puppet team may be used but must be in the same age division as the team. The narrator may stand to the side or front of the stage or may choose to be behind the curtain using a puppet.
17. All stage props **MUST** be within the dimensions of the stage or attached to the stage. No attachment should extend more than 12 inches beyond the frame of the stage, and must be attached to the frame at all times. No electrical power cords (extension cords) are allowed to extend from wall outlets to the stage/prop area.
18. Public address systems will not be provided or allowed. CD players may be used but will not be provided. They must be battery-powered.
19. Four standard chairs will be provided in the front stage area and a walkboard (measuring 2” x 10” x 8’) in the back stage area. These items may be removed if a team does not wish to use them; however, they must be returned when the team is finished. Any adjustments, such as these, must be made during the 12-minute show time.
20. Any congregation having three or more participating teams must provide at the convention site a stage and walkboard built to the specifications outlined later in this section. Indicate in your group’s online registration how many stages you are willing to bring to convention. **PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR STAGES ARE BUILT TO THE SPECIFICATIONS IN THIS Event Rulebook.** If possible, build an adjustable stage that can be used for either the younger or older teams. The national puppet coordinator will be in contact with those congregations to make arrangements for setup at the convention site.
21. Puppeteering is not part of the worship service.
22. The target audience for Puppet Theater is children.
23. Refer to the Evaluation Forms section of this rulebook to see the forms that will be used by the judges in this event. This will help the student in preparation for the event to see exactly what the judges will be looking for.

## **Judging**

1. Judges must be knowledgeable of the rules for this event. Each congregation **MUST** supply at least one judge per team. Register the judges in the convention registration system. Judges should be selected from those who are not directly working with a puppet team because team (Red, Blue, Green, etc.) performances are simultaneous.
2. Each room of participants will have a minimum of three judges. A separate timekeeper will be in the room when a sufficient number of judges are registered. Otherwise, one of the judges will also serve as the timekeeper.
  - Judges may not score their own team.
  - Judges must use the official score sheet provided.

3. Score sheet terms explained:
  - Creativity – Using original ideas, costumes, effects, teaching methods.
  - Based on Convention Theme – Play must be based on the announced convention theme.
  - Biblical Message – Does it teach a biblical message?
  - Animation – Does the movement of puppets' mouths match the dialogue? Do the puppets have good position? Can the puppets be seen or are they sinking too low? Are puppeteers hidden, or do you see tops of heads? Are the entrances and exits done smoothly? Do the puppets look natural?
  - Sound quality – Are the puppeteers speaking loudly enough to be heard? Are the words clearly enunciated?
  - Special effects – What is the quality of the props? Do the props and special effects enhance or detract from the play? Are the special effects excessive and take away from the Bible message?
  - Teamwork – Was the set up and take down smooth? Was there excessive noise or activity behind the stage not relating to the play? Do puppets relate to each other during the script (looking at who is talking, etc.)?
  - Overall Impression – Appeal, impression, biblical message.
  - Penalties – Each team will have a total of twelve minutes for set-up, show, and take-down. Groups will be penalized two points for one to 30 seconds over 12 minutes; four points for 31 to 60 seconds over; etc. The "message" or show must last at least five minutes. Groups will be penalized two points for one to 30 seconds under five minutes; four points for 31 to 60 seconds under; etc. Self-identification will be penalized 10 points. Special effects that detract from the message will be penalized 10 points. Risqué or inappropriate language or inappropriate humor will be penalized 10 points.
4. For more information on serving as a judge, check out the informative videos on our website here - <https://www.lads2leaders.com/training/>

### **Suggestions**

1. Remember team effort. Teamwork is important – leaders must work together as a team.
2. The biblical message should be clear and not lost in the theatrics.
3. Practice the complete program, including set-up and take-down.
4. Everyone has a job and must realize the importance of his/her responsibility.
5. If more than one team is competing in different divisions, it would be advisable to have puppets for each team. Problems may result if two teams sharing the same equipment are scheduled at the same time. There is not a guarantee that special schedule requests can be honored.
6. It is best not to make props exactly the width or height of the stage. Some stages may vary slightly. Make props with hangers large enough to go over a 1-1/2" pipe and thick curtain.

### **Awards**

1. Team awards will be presented to the first, second, and third place winners in each division.
2. All participants on the winning teams will receive individual awards.

## Building a Puppet Stage

### Basic Parts List:

- Puppet Stage
  - 10 “T” connectors for 1 ½ inch PVC pipe
  - 8 90° elbow joints for 1 ½ inch PVC pipe
  - 8 10-foot long pieces of 1 ½ inch PVC pipe
- Bases
  - 6 10” x 10” x 1 ½” wood blocks
  - 6 Galvanized floor flange for 1 ½” PVC pipe
  - 24 1 inch #12 flathead screws for securing flanges to wood blocks
  - 6 1 ½” PVC pipe-threaded coupling
- Walk Board
  - 1 10-foot long 2 x 10
- Curtains
  - Dark material (must not be able to see through curtains) that is 60 inches wide by 20 yards long.

### Cuts to be made to PVC pipes:

- Pipe #1 – Cut two pieces 49” long each, and one piece 17 ¾” long
- Pipe #2 – Cut two pieces 49” long each, and one piece 17 ¾” long
- Pipe #3 – Cut two pieces 43 ¾” long each, and two pieces 14 ½” long each
- Pipe #4 – Cut one piece 106” long
- Pipe #5 – Cut one piece 115 ½” long
- Pipe #6 – Cut one piece 106” long
- Pipe #7 – Cut one piece 85” long and one piece 30 ¾” long
- Pipe #8 – Cut one piece 85” long and one piece 30 ¾” long
- From the scrap pieces, cut eight pieces that are 2 ¾” long each

### Dimensions for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Puppet Stages

The cuts listed above and the instructions on the following pages are for stages for 5<sup>th</sup> grade and older teams. Stage height for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades is reduced by 12”. Front tier will be 3’ 6”; middle tier will be 5’; and back tier will be 6’ 6”. To account for this difference, if you intend to build a stage for the younger kids, make the following adjustments to the cuts: Pipe #1 and Pipe #2 – change 49” pieces to 37” pieces (2 front and 2 middle posts); Pipe #7 and Pipe #8 – change 85” pieces to 73” pieces (2 back posts). All other cuts and instructions will be the same. The dimensions for the front curtains and the back, side curtains will be reduced by 12” each to 42” and 78”, respectively. The middle and back tier curtains will be the same measurement for both size stages.

It is highly recommended that groups build adjustable stages that can be used for any age team. To do this, build a stage to the dimensions listed above for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade teams. Then purchase six (6) straight PVC couplers to join two pieces of 1 ½” PVC pipe. Since the length of the couplers may vary, we will not provide specific lengths for the additional pieces of PVC pipe needed to raise the stage to the height required for the older teams. Cut the pieces so that when inserted into the coupler and then added to the legs of the stage, the entire stage is raised by one foot to the height shown on the drawing that follows these instructions. It is recommended that screws are used at the coupler joints for added stability. For adjustable stages, the curtains should be made to the longer specifications. They can either be pinned up when the stage is shortened or left long.

#### Assembly Notes and Suggestions:

- Use 1 ½" PVC pipe for stage.
- Make sure that all cuts are square to ensure accurate dimensions. Either use a power miter saw or a miter box and hack saw.
- Glue the joints where the 2 ¾" pieces were used to keep from losing the small pieces when stage is disassembled. It is recommended that the other joints not be glued so that stage can be easily disassembled for transporting. Screws or holes with pins at the joints will make the stage more sturdy during use.
- After initial assembly, use a permanent marker to mark the location of each vertical post (front right; middle right; etc.). Also, to aid in re-assembly, number each side of the joints that are not glued so that they can be matched up easily.
- Please note that the middle, vertical posts will not line up with the other two because of the offset from the 90° elbows.

#### Assembly Instructions:

- Attach the floor flanges to the center of the wood blocks. Screw the pipe-threaded couplings into the floor flanges to form the bases for each vertical post.
- Lay out the bases on the floor as shown in the diagram. Insert the 49" pieces (four totals) into each of the front and middle bases. On top of the front pipes, place "T" connectors with the long side parallel to the front. On the middle pipes, place "T" connectors vertically with the bottom of the "T" facing toward the front.
- Into the outside of each of the two fronts "T" connectors, insert a 2 ¾" piece of PVC. Onto those pieces, place a 90° elbow with the opening facing the back.
- Insert one of the 106" pieces into the inside openings of the front "T" connectors.
- Insert a 43 ¾" piece into the opening of the 90° elbow on the front corner and the T connector on the middle post. Repeat for other side.
- Insert a 14 ½" piece into the top of the "T" connector on the center post. On top of that piece, place a "T" connector vertically with the bottom opening of the "T" facing inside. Repeat for the other side.
- Insert the 115 ½" piece between the "T" connectors on top of the center posts.
- Insert 17 ¾" pieces into the top openings of the "T" connectors on top of the center posts. Place a "T" connector on top of each of these that is parallel to the sides.
- Insert the two 85" pieces into the back bases. Place a "T" connector on top of each of these with the long side parallel to the back.
- Insert the second 106" piece between the "T" connectors on top of the back posts.
- Into the outside of each of the two back "T" connectors, insert a 2 ¾" piece of PVC. Onto those pieces, place a 90° elbow with the opening facing the front.
- Insert a 30 ¾" piece into the back of the "T" on top of the middle post and into the opening on the 90° elbow. Repeat for other side.
- Into the front of the "T" on the top of the middle post, insert a 2 ¾" piece. Onto that, place a 90° elbow with the opening facing inside. Into the elbow, insert a 2 ¾" piece. Onto that, place another 90° elbow with the opening facing to the back. Repeat for the other side.

#### Walk Board Instructions:

- Cut an 8 foot length from the 10 foot board. From the remaining two feet, cut three pieces that are 6 ½" long each.
- Place the three pieces under the long board (one at each end, and one in the center) and secure with 3" wood screws.

Curtains:

- Dimensions for the cuts to the material to make the curtains are as follows (these dimensions allow for a 5 inch casing to go around rails and hem at bottom and sides):
- Front curtain – 60 inches tall by 233 inches wide. It will wrap from the middle post on one side around the front to the middle post on the other side. It needs to be one solid piece, no gaps. You will need an opening in the casing at each corner where the “T” connector will connect to the front vertical posts. Leave a gap in the stitching rather than cutting the material.
- Middle curtain – 42 inches tall by 131 inches by wide.
- Back curtain – 43 inches tall by 120 inches wide.
- Two back, side curtains – 96 inches tall by 47 inches wide. They need to go from the back vertical post past the center post and around the top, curved pieces. You will need an opening in the casing at the joint where the “T” connector will connect with the middle vertical post. Leave a gap in the stitching rather than cutting the material.

