

Trying to write a puppet script?

Some guidelines for writing puppet scripts-

1. Have your aim clearly before you. Many Christian script writers fail to execute their aim and end up producing a nice story with no Christian content.
2. Many people these days have little or no concept of sin, right and wrong etc... so pre-evangelism might be attempted by doing stories teaching these concepts which can be built on later in a mission or Sunday school context.
3. Serialised stories are good in that they tend to instill regularity of attendance in your audience and provide more opportunities for the children to learn about God.
4. Do not save your moral to the end. Preferably write the script so that there is no narrator (unless he/she is a character in the play) and the moral is woven into the play, or the point of the play is self evident.
5. A long puppet speech is three sentences. A long sentence contains more than ten words.
6. Dialogue between puppets, a sentence at a time, is better than a monologue.
7. Write scripts so each scene opens and closes with one or two puppets only and never have more than four on stage at once. There are obvious logistic reasons for this.
8. Write a script that generates action in the puppets. Puppets that stand in one spot thrashing the air with their arms and making lots of noise are really windmills.
9. For added realism, include in the script descriptions of what the puppets are seeing, smelling, touching, and hearing. Instead of "Hello, Elijah", "Hello, Ahab" have "Hello, Elijah, It's hot today". My clothes are sticking to my body with sweat."
"Yes, Ahab. And how do you enjoy the dust that stings your eyes and grinds in your teeth?" This substitutes for the fact that puppets do not perspire and blowing dust cannot be shown on the puppet stage.
10. Similarly, puppets have to describe to others or the audience their thoughts and emotions which cannot be illustrated by the subtle gestures that are available to live actors.
11. Except for serial puppet plays, try to co-ordinate the subject matter of the play with the subject of the teaching theme of the day.

Don Stott, Nov 2007