

PUPPETTEACHERS I

by Linda Thomas



CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

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PUPPET CHARACTERS

LILY — a lamb

FREDDY — a frog

TUCKER — a turtle

TWIT — a bird

JOSE — a donkey

VON RATTE — a rodent

MITZI — a girl puppet

MAX — a boy puppet

These scripts contain parts for eight different puppet characters. However, parts could be assigned to any kind of character without losing the basic meaning. Puppets originally used for these scripts were purchased from:

Freda Marsh's House of Puppetry
P.O. Box 19482
Oklahoma City, OK 73119
Phone: (405) 632-5787

Staging is kept to the most simple. A basic tri-fold stage was used. Small props were attached to the top edge of the stage with C-clamps or ingenuity. No prop is used unless it is easily available. The type of puppet most effective in these scripts has a mobile mouth and some have rods attached to one arm for mobility. Puppet actions for the most part are created by those operating the puppets, keeping with the character of the puppet and stage limitations. Puppetry takes for granted the imagination of its audience. But it also requires the imaginative creativity of all those involved in production. There are no production notes that can adequately fill all requirements. Hopefully, these will be helpful in sparking ideas. More extensive information can be found in your public library.

PRODUCTION NOTES

STAGES: The purpose of a stage is simply to conceal the puppeteers. This can be accomplished in many ways:

Curtain Stage — This can be as simple as a sheet hung between two stationary points.

Trifold Stage — This has one large panel with two smaller side panels of the same height attached with hinges. Braces are usually added for additional stability. Puppeteers operate by sitting behind this stage. Advantage: this stage can be folded fairly flat for moving and storage.

Standing Stage — This is constructed like a box. The two sides are completely enclosed and the back is left completely open. The front is enclosed to shoulder level of a standing puppeteer. A curtain is hung from one side to the other to conceal the puppeteer's face, but far enough back to allow room for the puppet to operate. Advantages: allows for backdrops to be used in place of the curtain. Curtain can be arranged to give the puppeteer a view of the audience.

Multi-level Stage — This is basically constructed like the standing stage on a much larger scale. The front of the stage has openings at several different levels. Advantage: additional staging techniques.

PUPPETS: There are many different kinds of puppets. The limits are only defined by imagination, accessibility and financial resources. Puppets can be made from socks, papier mache, fake fur, etc. Information on creating puppets can be purchased from Christian Publishers LLC.

Puppets can be purchased ready-made from childrens' toy stores, or from specialty shops such as Freda Marsh's House of Puppetry, mentioned on preceding page. Some are simple three-finger puppets while others are life-sized, and require two people to operate.

DEVELOPING CHARACTER: Puppets take on character with their voices and the ability of their puppeteers to manipulate them.

Voices — We find it effective to use one person's voice for one puppet rather than one person being the voice for several puppets. Advantages: it's hard for an amateur to change voice quickly and consistently. Also, people with interesting voices can be used without cultivating phony voices. Disadvantage: requires the involvement of larger numbers of people.

Manipulation — It is important to remember that even good scripts lose something if the puppets just stand on stage. Puppets

are like actors and their characters are partially formed by their actions. For example, a fuzzy puppet might unconsciously scratch. Another difficulty to overcome is the tendency to make fast, jerky movements. The human arm can move very quickly. The puppeteer must learn to move his or her arm as if it were the entire body. Mouth movements are also difficult. The most common problem here is to open and shut the hand to form words. But the ideal method is to have the hand stationary and parallel to the floor and move the thumb under it to a position between the 2nd and 3rd fingers. Words are formed by moving the thumb up and down. (Hint: practice in front of a mirror so you can see the coordination of movement to words.)

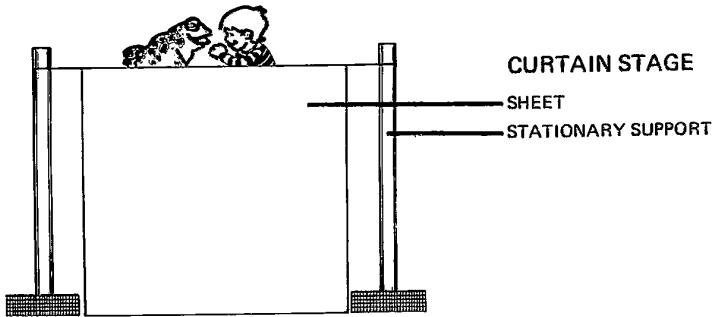
AUDIO: Again, there are a variety of methods that can be used to project the puppet's voice to the audience.

Live — This is simply talking loud enough for the audience to hear. Advantage: simple. Disadvantage: maintaining volume.

Pre-taped — This consists of taping the voices and running this tape through an amplifier or P.A. system. Advantage: consistent quality. Disadvantage: more practice required to synchronize movements to tape.

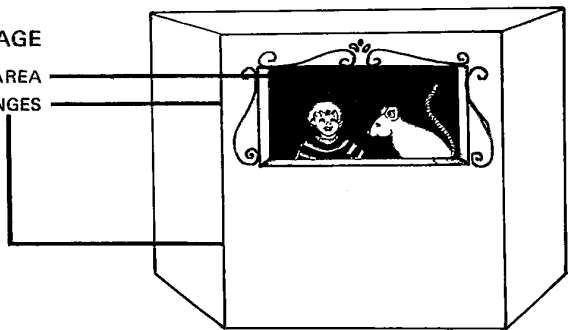
Direct Mike — Puppeteer is also voice of the puppet and speaks directly into a microphone. Head-sets are best for this, but expensive. Advantage: puppeteer can carry on live dialogue. Disadvantage: puppeteer can get so busy following the script that he or she has difficulty maintaining the action.

STYLES OF PUPPET STAGES



TRI-FOLD STAGE

PERFORMANCE AREA
HINGES



STANDING STAGE

PUPPETEER
HAND PUPPETS

FROM ABOVE
FRONT VIEW

MULTI-LEVEL STAGE

PERFORMANCE STAGE OPENINGS

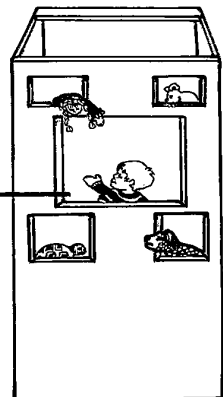


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Mirror, Mirror

(Theme: Self-Acceptance)

CHARACTERS

FREDDY, THE FROG

TUCKER, THE TURTLE

LILY, THE LAMB

MITZI, THE LITTLE GIRL

PROPS

a mirror attached to the stage

FREDDY: *(Pops onto the stage.)* Hey, kids! I've got this neat joke I'm going to play on my friends, hee, hee. You see this mirror, hee, hee? I'm going to tell them that this mirror, hee, hee, is magic, hee, hee. A magic mirror — get it, hee, hee? It's just an old mirror my mom said I could play with. But my silly friends won't know that, hee, hee. I'll bet they get so excited, hee, hee. Oh, I see Lily coming. *(Calling)* Lily, hey, Lily! Come look at what I've got.

LILY: *(Appearing on stage)* Hi, Freddy. What do you have? Let me see.

FREDDY: Do you see this mirror?

LILY: *(Hesitantly)* Yes . . . I see your mirror.

FREDDY: Well, this isn't just an ordinary mirror. This is a magic mirror!

LILY: A magic mirror?! How does it work?

FREDDY: Oh . . . it's one of those "mirror, mirror on the wall" type magic mirrors. Go ahead and try it, hee, hee.

LILY: Well, if you think it's all right. Here goes: "Mirror, mirror on the wall. Who's the loveliest lamb of all?"

- 1 *(Long pause)* Freddy, nothing happened.
- 2 FREDDY: Well, try again, hee, hee.
- 3 LILY: Mirror, mirror on the wall. Who's the loveliest
- 4 lamb of all? *(Pause)* It still didn't work. What's wrong
- 5 with it, Freddy?
- 6 FREDDY: Hee, hee! Maybe you're too ugly, hee, hee.
- 7 LILY: Oh, no! I'm ugly! *(Starts crying.)*
- 8 FREDDY: Oh, oh. Now I'm in trouble! *(Pops off stage.*
- 9 *TUCKER comes on stage.)*
- 10 TUCKER: Lily, why are you crying?
- 11 LILY: Boo, hoo! You see that mirror? It's magic and I'm so
- 12 ugly, it won't even talk to me. Boo, hoo!
- 13 TUCKER: A magic mirror?! *(Looks it over.)* Maybe I'll
- 14 try it. Mirror, mirror on the wall. Who's the most
- 15 terrific turtle of all? *(LILY stops crying and she and*
- 16 *TUCKER watch the mirror expectantly.)*
- 17 LILY: Boo, hoo. It didn't work for you either. Boo, hoo.
- 18 We're both ugly! Boo, hoo. *(TUCKER snaps his head*
- 19 *into his shell and LILY'S crying gets louder. MITZI*
- 20 *comes on stage.)*
- 21 MITZI: What's wrong? Oh, my, what's wrong? Lily, stop
- 22 crying. *(Looking into TUCKER'S shell)* Tucker, come
- 23 out. Lily, please tell me what's wrong.
- 24 LILY: You see that mirror, sniff, sniff? It's a magic mirror
- 25 and — sniff, sniff — Tucker and I are so ugly it won't
- 26 even talk to us!
- 27 MITZI: Lily, that's not a magic mirror — there's no such
- 28 thing. That's all pretend. That mirror can't see anything.
- 29 It's not alive; it doesn't have a voice.
- 30 LILY: Really?
- 31 TUCKER: *(Peeping out)* Really?
- 32 MITZI: Of course! And you're not ugly! We may each
- 33 look different, but each of us is beautiful in his or
- 34 her own way.
- 35 TUCKER: You mean I'm beautiful?

1 MITZI: Oh, yes!
2 LILY: And I'm beautiful, too?
3 MITZI: Of course! I want you to remember that next time
4 you look into a mirror. When you look in a mirror,
5 you see what you really look like.
6 LILY: Oh, we'd better go tell Freddy, 'cause he still thinks
7 this mirror is magic!
8 TUCKER: And we can tell him he's beautiful.
9 (All depart.)

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King of the Jungle

(Theme: Housekeeping)

CHARACTERS

TUCKER, THE TURTLE
VON RATTE, THE RODENT

PROPS

a ruff made out of yellow yarn (like a lion's mane) to be worn around Tucker's neck

(Enter TUCKER wearing the lion's mane.)

TUCKER: *(Very dramatically)* I am king of the whole jungle. I am king of the whole jungle. *(Enter VON RATTE.)*

VON RATTE: *(To Audience)* Vhat is dat silly turtle saying?

TUCKER: *(Still very dramatically)* I am king of the whole jungle.

VON RATTE: *(To audience)* King of the sillies is more like it.

TUCKER: *(Roars like a lion.)* I am a big ferocious lion! And I am king of the jungle.

VON RATTE: *(To TUCKER)* You are a silly little turtle. Vhat do you know about being king?

TUCKER: I know lots.

VON RATTE: Like vhat?

TUCKER: Well . . . *(Pause)* Well, a king kings.

VON RATTE: Vhat kind of answer is dat? A king kings! Dat tells me nothing. Nothing!

TUCKER: Well, a king makes rules.

VON RATTE: Und who's going to listen to the rules of a silly turtle?

TUCKER: Well . . . a king has a kingdom — that's what he

1 calls where he lives. And I live somewhere — that
2 could be my kingdom.
3 VON RATTE: Und how does vun get to be king?
4 TUCKER: Hmm . . . he's just born king.
5 VON RATTE: So you see, you are not a king. (*Starts to*
6 *exit.*)
7 TUCKER: Wait, wait! (*VON RATTE turns back.*) I am a
8 king — I am! Well . . . sort of.
9 VON RATTE: Vhat is dis "sort of?"
10 TUCKER: The whole world belongs to all of us. It's here
11 for us to take good care of it. And that's what a king
12 does. He takes care of his kingdom.
13 VON RATTE: Und how can a little twerp like you take
14 care of your kingdom?
15 TUCKER: I can put my toys away when I finish playing.
16 That way they'll stay nice and last a long time. And
17 I can put trash in the garbage can . . . and I can
18 turn off lights . . . and I can eat all the food on my
19 plate. . . . I bet there are lots of things I can do!
20 VON RATTE: Vell . . .
21 TUCKER: Hey . . . we can all be sort of kings! We each
22 have a special place. And we can take care of it. So
23 you see, I am a king.
24 VON RATTE: (*To audience*) Rats, foiled again! (*VON*
25 *RATTE exits.*)
26 TUCKER: (*Roars and says dramatically*) I am king of the
27 jungle. (*As he exits, he roars again.*)
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The Frog Prince

(Theme: Lying)

CHARACTERS

FREDDY THE FROG

JOSE, THE DONKEY

LILY, THE LAMB

(FREDDY and JOSE come onto the stage carrying on the following argument:)

FREDDY: I am, too!

JOSE: You are not!

FREDDY: I am, too!

JOSE: No, you're not!

FREDDY: Yes, I am! *(LILY enters.)*

LILY: Hi, you two. What's going on? I could hear you all the way to my house.

JOSE: Freddy says he's really a prince in disguise — that a wicked witch turned him into a frog.

FREDDY: *(Not quite so sure of himself)* Well . . . I am.

JOSE: You're lying! Only a baby would believe something like that!

FREDDY: *(Outraged)* I'm not a baby!

JOSE: You're not a prince, either!

LILY: Oh, Freddy. Why did you make up that story?

FREDDY: I just wanted to be somebody special.

LILY: You're special to us, Freddy.

FREDDY: *(In a pitiful voice)* No, I'm not. I'm just a frog.

LILY: *(In a disclaiming voice)* Just a frog!

JOSE: Yeah, just a frog.

LILY: Jose, I'm ashamed of you. We're all just what we are. We're special to ourselves and to our friends, too!

JOSE: Well, Freddy lied! And lying is bad.

FREDDY: I thought you'd like me more if I was a prince.

1 LILY: Oh, Freddy. I like you just the way you are. You
2 can't get someone to like you by pretending to be
3 something you're not!
4 FREDDY: I guess you're right. No one believed me,
5 anyway.
6 LILY: That's one of the problems with stories. *(In a teasing*
7 *voice)* Just to show you how much I like you, I'm
8 going to kiss you.
9 FREDDY: No, don't kiss me! What if I do turn into a
10 prince?!
11 LILY: I'll take that chance. I'm going to kiss you anyway!
12 *(FREDDY starts running around the stage with LILY*
13 *in pursuit.)*
14 FREDDY: No, don't kiss me.
15 LILY: I'm going to.
16 FREDDU: No, no!
17 LILY: Yes! *(They run off stage. JOSE looks at audience.)*
18 JOSE: I think I'll go kiss him, too. That will teach him
19 not tell stories. *(JOSE departs.)*
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Tug of War

(Theme: Working Together)

CHARACTERS

LILY, THE LAMB
FREDDY, THE FROG
TUCKER, THE TURTLE

PROPS

a rope, one end safety-pinned to Lily's hand, running through a hook at far end of the stage (to keep it above eye level of the stage) and the other end disappearing behind the stage. Suggestions: have Lily positioned at the end of the stage farthest from hook. Tucker should be next to her — also facing hook. Since our Tucker puppet has no hands, he needs to hold the rope in his mouth. But since he needs to let go of it to "talk," Lily will still be able to hold the rope up. Pulling the Lily puppet one way will move the rope in that direction. One of the puppeteers behind stage can pull the other end [hanging off stage] when rope is pulled by Freddy.

(TUCKER and LILY begin action by pulling on the rope.)

LILY: Pull harder, Tucker.

TUCKER: I'm pulling as hard as I can.

LILY: Try holding the rope higher.

TUCKER: *(Groaning)* It hurts my neck when I do that, Lily.

LILY: *(With disappointment)* I don't think you and I can do it alone.

TUCKER: *(Letting go of the rope)* No, we're not strong enough. What are we going to do?

LILY: *(In a disappointed voice)* We're just going to have to

1 ask Freddy to come help us.
2 TUCKER: *(Also disappointed)* Are you sure we can't manage
3 by ourselves? I was hoping we could do it without him.
4 LILY: I know how you feel, but we need help and he is
5 the only one I can think of.
6 TUCKER: Oh, OK. *(Calling)* Freddy, Freddy! *(FREDDY pops*
7 *on stage.)*
8 FREDDY: Hi, whatcha doin? Can I do it, too?
9 LILY: Yes, that's why we called you.
10 FREDDY: *(Looks at rope.)* Oh, boy! *(Takes rope and*
11 *begins pulling in wrong direction — tug-of-war fashion.)*
12 Hey, this is fun!
13 TUCKER: No, you're pulling the wrong way! We need
14 your help!
15 FREDDY: *(Still pulling against them)* I like my game better.
16 This is a lot more fun. Whee!
17 LILY: *(With some anger)* Freddy, you stop that! Stop that
18 right now! It's not funny!
19 FREDDY: *(Still pulling)* It is too fun! I'm going to pull
20 you both over so you'd better hang on tight!
21 LILY: We're not playing a game so stop it!
22 FREDDY: *(Dropping hand so it no longer looks like he's*
23 *pulling)* You two never do anything that's fun. This is
24 a neat game and you're just mad cause I thought of
25 it first.
26 TUCKER: We're not mad, Freddy. It's just that we don't
27 want to play a game now. We've got something important
28 to do.
29 LILY: That's right. This is really important. So, please
30 help us.
31 FREDDY: I don't want to work. I want to play. You two
32 are no fun at all. *(FREDDY leaves.)*
33 TUCKER: Well, I guess we'll just have to give up.
34 LILY: Yeah, you're right. Oh, I wish Freddy would have
35 cooperated. We could have done it if he would have

1 helped.
2 TUCKER: We should have known he wouldn't. He thinks
3 it's more fun to do what he wants to do.
4 LILY: Maybe we should have told him.
5 TUCKER: But that would have spoiled the surprise!
6 LILY: Well, it's spoiled now anyway.
7 TUCKER: Yeah, it sure is.
8 LILY: Maybe he would have helped if he knew there was
9 a gift for him on the other end of this rope. Now
10 he'll never get it.
11 TUCKER: (*Sadly*) Maybe someday he'll learn we have to
12 work together for good things.
13 LILY: Maybe — I sure hope so.
14 (*TUCKER and LILY leave stage. If the person*
15 *Backstage lets go of the tension on the hidden end*
16 *of the rope, LILY should be able to leave the stage.*
17 *As soon as she's hidden, the safety pin holding the*
18 *rope can be unfastened.*)
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Common Ground

(Theme: Making Friends)

CHARACTERS

TWIT, THE BIRD

LILY, THE LAMB

FREDDY, THE FROG

FREDDY: (*FREDDY on stage. Enter LILY.*) Hiya, Lily.

LILY: Hi, Freddy. (*Looking off stage*) C'mon, Twit. No one will hurt you — I promise. Please come and meet Freddy.

FREDDY: Hey, Lily, what in the world is a *twit*?

LILY: It's not a *twit*. Twit's not a what — Twit's a who.

FREDDY: (*Confused*) A who what?!

LILY: Oh, Freddy. Twit's my new friend. She just moved here and I want her to meet you.

FREDDY: Is she like me?

LILY: No, she's very different.

FREDDY: Then I don't want to meet her.

LILY: For goodness sake, why not?

FREDDY: I probably won't like her.

LILY: How do you know? Just because she's different doesn't mean you can't be friends.

FREDDY: (*In a bored voice*) Well, OK.

LILY: And you be good and don't try any of your silly tricks. Twit's very shy.

FREDDY: Shy, why?

LILY: Because everything is so new — new places and new people.

FREDDY: Why should that make her shy? I like going new places! And everyone likes me — I'm so neat!

LILY: Some people are different from you, Freddy. They worry that new people might not like them or maybe

- 1 even treat them mean.
- 2 FREDDY: You're kidding!
- 3 LILY: No, it's hard for some people. So you be extra
- 4 nice. Got that — nice!
- 5 FREDDY: OK, OK.
- 6 LILY: (*Looking off stage*) Twit, please come meet Freddy.
- 7 He wants to meet you and he's really (*Turning to*
- 8 *FREDDY*) nice. (*TWIT comes slowly on stage.*)
- 9 LILY: Now, Twit this is Freddy. Freddy, this is Twit. I
- 10 hope you'll be friends.
- 11 TWIT: (*Very Shyly*) Hi, Freddy.
- 12 FREDDY: Hiya, Twitch. Ya wanna play ball?
- 13 TWIT: My name is Twit and I don't know how to play
- 14 ball.
- 15 FREDDY: (*Turning to LILY*) See, I told ya.
- 16 LILY: Be nice, Freddy.
- 17 FREDDY: Well, Twitch, what can you do?
- 18 TWIT: I can sing.
- 19 FREDDY: Hey, do you know (*Singing*) Row, row, row
- 20 your boat . . .
- 21 TWIT: No, I don't know that one.
- 22 FREDDY: (*In a disgusted voice*) Well, what else can you
- 23 do?
- 24 TWIT: I can fly.
- 25 FREDDY: (*Very excited*) No kidding! Wow, that's neat!
- 26 Is it hard to learn, Twitch?
- 27 TWIT: No, flying is easy.
- 28 FREDDY: C'mon, Twitch. Let's climb on top of the roof
- 29 and you can teach me how.
- 30 TWIT: Well, OK. (*FREDDY and TWIT depart.*)
- 31 LILY: Isn't that nice? I knew Freddy would like Twit if
- 32 he gave her a chance. (*Pause*) Twit can fly because she's
- 33 a bird. (*Pause*) Wait, Freddy, you can't fly. Freddy,
- 34 come back. (*LILY exits calling:*) Freddy, Freddy.
- 35



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by Linda Thomas.

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P.O. Box 248 - Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406
Toll Free: 844-841-6387 - Fax 319-368-8011
customerservice@christianpub.com