



Literacy, Puppets, and Little People, Oh My!

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Basic Puppet Tips

- Start Simple! The puppet can be silent.... just nodding or talking in your ear. This will give you a chance to get comfortable with your little friend.
- Plan a gimmick or two... maybe the puppet can scrunch up its nose when you make a point. Maybe your puppet is allergic to loud noise and jumps back into its bag or box when the kids get too noisy. (This could cause a sneeze or a case of the "itchys".) What ever the gimmick is, it helps the kiddos to make a connection.
- Keep the puppet "alive". Just keep making small movements with your hand inside the puppet and you will be surprised how quickly this will become automatic for you.
- Choose your mascot puppet carefully. Expensive puppets aren't always the best choice to use on a regular basis. Check for a flexible puppet with a mouth that is easy to manipulate, one that your hand fits in easily (and doesn't make your hand movements exhausting) and can perhaps be used for a variety of characters.
- When the kids say "It's not real" or " Your mouth is moving". Yeah, that happens. Not really as often as you may think because the kids are so focused on the characters and are pretty adept at using their imagination. That being said, a quick response can usually take care of it and we move on. "That's OK, we are using our imagination today. " usually works fine , or "It can be fun to pretend, can't it?" . If you

come up with other responses that are clever and fun, I am always open to suggestions. See the contact information above.

- Engage the puppet with your library procedures and story time schedule. The puppet can sing the welcome song, greet the kids, encourage check out, and introduce a story.

Puppet Resources

- Thrift and Consignment Stores
- Bay, Etsy
- Garage Sales
- Smart Shopping (I once found a frog that turned into a prince at TJ Maxx for \$10)
- Folkmanis (beautiful, and almost any animal puppet imaginable) they also now include demonstration videos on their website
- Manhattan Toy Company (for more whimsical puppets than Folkmanis)
- The Puppet Company (a huge variety and price range)

Please contact me at my website or by email if you have further questions or would like more information. I would love to visit your library anytime as a storyteller/musician.

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