

# Creative Dramatics - Puppet Shows

Puppet shows can be simple or amazingly elaborate. The simplest puppet stage can be created with a board, a flat sheet, and two chairs. Roll the sheet around the board. Leave enough of the sheet unrolled so that when the board sits on top of the chairs the sheet just reaches the floor. Voila! You have a hand and rod puppet theatre. For storage, roll the sheet all the way around the board, stack in a closet, and return the chairs to service.

## Simple Scenery -

- If you want to get fancy, you can paint the name of your puppet theatre on your sheet. What name would you like to give your new theatre?
- If you want to get even fancier you can put a rolling blackboard behind and draw a scene on it or maybe just print the title of the play to serve as the back drop.
- More ambitious? You can hang a series of pictures drawn on large pieces of paper and stack them on the blackboard. Put them in reverse order so you can just pull them down. NOTE: Pulling down is always easier than putting up, therefore if you want to return to a scene, draw an extra scene so you won't have to tape it back up.

**Cut Outs:** Draw a picture or glue a picture of the scenic piece you would like onto a piece of cardboard and cut it out. Tape a pencil to the back of the picture so you can hide behind the sheet, hold up the scene piece and not be seen.

## A Fabulous Scenery – Getting Everyone into the Act – The Scenery Flip Book

Have each child draw in your group draw each scene on a piece of paper. You will want no less than three and no more than five scenes. Staple each child's work together and when the family for that child arrives at the show, hand them their child's flip book as their program. Then, as a new scene is introduced, instruct the audience to turn to that scene in their scenery flip book – personalized scenery. Every child gets a chance to have a personal artistic vision.

## Simple Puppets:

- Cut Outs - The simplest puppet is a cut out prepared just the way we prepared the hay bale scenery. The picture of the animal, mounted on stiff paper, cut out, with a pencil support.
- Sock Puppets can lead to a whole additional project of buttons, and glitter and yarn. The downside of sock puppets is that without a great deal of work, they all look pretty much alike.

- You can go to the store and buy a cast of puppets. If you have a budget, this may be a fabulous idea as each time you do a show, you add to your resident cast of characters. You might also use puppets in your read alouds and storytelling.
- You can also have great fun hollowing out Styrofoam balls and mounting them on gloves or on sticks. I do suggest you do the hollowing yourself as that process can make quite a bit of a mess.
- More exotic hand puppets can be made by sewing felt. There are many craft books that can help you once you reach this level of expertise.
- String puppets are very difficult and will take some time to master.

### Stuffed Animals Puppet Theatre:

This leads to very strange and wonderful shows. You will need a stuffed animal to represent each of the characters. Instead of hiding behind the sheet, when it is time for a character to appear, have the performer stand up, hold the stuffed animals by the back and have them perform the show. The results are amazing. The children forget that adults are watching and we get to observe the magical world of children at play. We see the children taking on the roles, making mistakes, figuring out corrections, engaging in true creative play.

# The Brementown Musicians: A Puppet Show Script

Note: I used the same story adaptation technique for developing this script. Here, I just gave the sounds to individuals and put it in script form. I use only male characters in this text because it was easier. Change the script, please, based on who is cast.

Note: The real people in the play: the farmer and the robber, can be played by real sized people or puppets, maybe even an adult. As the Narrator is holding the show together and as your puppeteers may forget their lines (although half the fun in listening to them whispering “back stage”), have the narrator read the tale from a big book (the script in disguise). This way, if there is trouble, the narrator can serve as a live prompter. This script is available on my web site and can be downloaded and edited as needed. In the current form, I have the narrator more or less prompting every line with for example, “then the donkey said...” etc. If your children do not need to be prompted, these can be edited out.

Note: The following play doesn't require much scenery, maybe even just the cut out of a hay bale and the cut out of a house and maybe a sign directing us to Brementown.

Note: Getting the audience into the act - The audience might be asked to make environmental sounds like birds singing or frogs on the lily pond. Beware! Adults can be shy. Moms will participate reluctantly. Dads will try to act like you can't see them. It's perfectly acceptable reasonable to shame them.

## Scene 1: A farm

(The scene can be represented by a hay bale cutout. If you don't have scenery, have someone announce the scenes. If you have someone who is good with words, have the audience close their eyes and let the person draw the scenes with words. )

NARRATOR: Once Upon a time there was a donkey. (The Donkey appears.)

And a farmer... (The farmer appears)

The farmer worked hard all day. He always said...

FARMER: Boy, there's a lot of work to do.

NARRATOR: The donkey hardly worked at all. He always said...

DONKEY: I'm tired.

NARRATOR: That's because, late at night when the farmer was asleep, the donkey liked to stand up in the barn and the donkey loved to sing.

(The Donkey hums and/or la la's a little tune. It doesn't matter what the tune is as long as it is short and consistent.)

NARRATOR: The Farmer said...

FARMER: You're useless.

NARRATOR: Did the Donkey care?

(The audience guesses)

NARRATOR: Nope. The Donkey said...

DONKEY: That's OK. I'm going to go to Brementown and I'm going to become a famous singer. See you later!

## Scene 2: The Road

(This can be depicted by just removing the hay bale.)

NARRATOR: The donkey walked down the road and as he walked along (He Does.) he sang. (He hums or la la's the same song) He came upon a dog in the middle of the road. (A dog appears) But the dog was crying. The Donkey asked...

DONKEY: Why are you crying?

NARRATOR: The Dog said...

DOG: I'm old. I don't like to go hunting. I like to sit by the fire and sleep. My master says I am useless.

NARRATOR: The Donkey said...

DONKEY: That's terrible.

NARRATOR: Then he had an idea. He asked...

DONKEY: Hey Dog can you sing?

NARRATOR: The dog had never sung before but thought he might like to try. (The dog hums or la la's a different tune. It just has to be consistent, simple and short.)

NARRATOR: The Donkey said...

DONKEY: That's fabulous. Let's go to Brementown. We can become famous singers. As they walked (They do.) The donkey sang. (He does) and the Dog sang. (He does.) They came upon a kitty cat in the middle of the road. (They do.) But this kitty cat was crying. (He Does.)

NARRATOR: The Donkey said...

DONKEY: What's wrong?

NARRATOR: The Kitty said...

KITTY: I'm old and I don't like to hunt for myself. I like to sleep and my master says I'm useless.

DONKEY That's Terrible.

NARRATOR: Said the Donkey.

NARRATOR: Then the dog had an idea. He said...

DOG: Ask her if she can sing. Ask her if she can sing.

DONKEY: Tell me Kitty can you sing?

NARRATOR: The Kitty had never sung before but he thought he might like to try. (The Kitty hums and la la's a song)

NARRATOR: The donkey said...

DONKEY: That's fabulous

NARRATOR: Then they both said...

DOG AND DONKEY: Come with us we're going to Brementown. We're going to become famous singers.

NARRATOR: And off down the road they went. (They do.) As they walked (They do.)

The donkey sang. (He does) and the Dog sang. (He does.) and the Kitty sang (He does.) They hadn't traveled far when up in the road they saw an ancient

old Rooster. (They do.) But this Rooster was crying. (He is.) The Donkey said...

DONKEY: What's wrong?

NARRATOR: The Rooster said...

ROOSTER: I'm old and I don't like to get up early and say cock-doodle-doo and be an alarm clock. I like to sleep in. My master said I was useless.

NARRATOR: They all said...

DOG, DONKEY AND KITTY: Oh, that's Terrible!

NARRATOR: Then they all had an idea. They said....

ALL: Tell me Rooster. Can you siiiiiiiiiiing?

NARRATOR: The rooster had never sung before but it wanted to try. (The rooster sings.)

NARRATOR: They all said...

DOG, DONKEY AND KITTY: That's fabulous!

NARRATOR: then the Donkey said...

DONKEY: Come with us we're going to Brementown. We're going to become famous singers.

NARRATOR: And off down the road they went (They do.) and as they walked, they sang. (They do.) They hadn't gone far when it started to get dark. The Donkey said,

DONKEY: We'd better find a place to sleep. Hey, up on that hill there's a cabin. I bet you if we went up there and sang a concert, I bet you they'd put us up for the night. Let's go. (They do.)

### Scene Three: A Cabin on a hill.

(This can be depicted by a house cut out with a high window.)

NARRATOR: They all tried to look in the window. (They do.) But the window was very high. (It is.) Only the Donkey could see inside. The other animals said...

DOG, KITTY AND ROOSTER: What do you see? What do you see?

NARRATOR: The Donkey said...

DONKEY: I see a fellow in there. (We see him, too. The robber might just be on the other side of the house as opposed to being inside, although looking through the window is great fun.)

NARRATOR: Then the Donkey said...

DONKEY: That's strange. He's wearing a mask.

NARRATOR: And he was because...

ROBBER: Excuse me. I can tell them myself, you know. (To the audience) I am a robber hiding out from people so no one will know where I am. I wear a mask because I am in disguise. Thank you.

NARRATOR: But the animals didn't hear him say this and the Donkey said...

DONKEY: Hey, climb on board. We'll give him a concert.

NARRATOR: So the Dog climbed onto the Donkey. (He does.) And the Kitty climbed onto the Dog. (He does.) And the Rooster climbed on top of the Kitty. (He does.) And when they were standing one on top of another they began their concert. The Donkey sang. (He does. Once they've started singing they keep singing their bits over and over.) The Dog joined in. (He does.) Then the

Kitty. (He does.) Then the Rooster. (He Does.) And they got louder (They do.) and louder (They do.) and louder (They do.) and then they stopped. (They do.) The robber said...

ROBBER: What could be making all that noise. I'd better look out the window. (He does.)

NARRATOR: But it was so dark that all the Robber could see were eyes: the two eyes of the Donkey.

ROBBER: I see two eyes.

NARRATOR: And the two eyes of the dog.

ROBBER: Two eyes and two eyes. That makes four eyes.

NARRATOR: And the two eyes of the Kitty.

ROBBER: Four eyes and two more eyes that makes six eyes.

NARRATOR: And the two eyes of the Rooster.

ROBBER: Six plus two that makes..... That makes...(The audience may help) That's right. Eight. Eight eyes looking in the window at me. Oh no, it's a monster. Get me out of here.

NARRATOR: The Robber ran away and gave up his life of crime but the poor animals - their first concert and the only person in the audience ran away screaming. They were not pleased but they spent the night. In the morning they went down to the road. They looked down were they were going. (They do.) They looked back to where they'd been. (They do) and the Donkey said...

DONKEY: I like it here. Couldn't we just stay?

NARRATOR: So they did.

DONKEY: (Singing in terrible harmony) And we lived...

DONKEY AND DOG: Happily...

DONKEY, DOG AND KITTY: Ever...

DONKEY, DOG, KITTY AND ROOSTER: After!

