



# Puppets

*That's the way to do it!*

KATE CROOKES

## Aims of session

- To discover why puppets are a great way to communicate gospel truths.
- To look at different types of puppets you can use.
- To inspire you with some hands-on activities.

## Why use Puppets?

- Great visual aid to get message across.
- Appeal to all age groups.
- Fun – when people laugh, they listen.
- Iced fingers - encourage consumption of bread!
- Can involve children and teenagers in your church service.

## What type of puppets should I use?

### Finger Puppets

- Use for children and by children. Making their own puppets in a previous craft session could add an extra dimension. Particularly suitable in small intimate setting.

### Up-front Puppets

- Especially good when there's only you!
- Ventriloquist Puppets – for the bold! If you just can't do it, then try...
- "Ventriloquism" for those that can't! Don't be put off – children will suspend their disbelief.
- Whispering Puppets. Choose character and size to suit your group and situation.

### Behind-Screen Puppets

- Great for shy puppeteers and teenagers! Beware of arm ache and keep appearances short.
- Hand puppets – huge variety available.
- Arm-rod type – can double as up-front puppets with the addition of legs, (and vice versa).
- Human-arm puppets, for signing, or holding props.
- May need to think about additional resources such as sound equipment, lighting etc

## How can I use them?

- To act out a bible story that you're telling. Do it yourself or get children to use the puppets - keeps them involved and listening.
- Reinforcing or demonstrating your teaching. E.g. an explanation to a puppet who hasn't quite got the point. Can be puppet+puppet, or live adult+puppet. Conflict adds to entertainment value.
- During church services or mid-week kids clubs. To reinforce teaching or simply to provide a "commercial break". (Remember iced fingers!)
- Maintain the illusion. These are "real" characters and shouldn't be seen "dead" or floating in space!

## Resources

You might find the following helpful.

- One Way UK are an inter-denominational Christian puppet-mad(!) organisation who supply a fantastic range of puppets, music and other resources. They also run regular and excellent training days for budding puppeteers around the country. Check out their website at [www.onewayuk.com](http://www.onewayuk.com)
- Puppets By Post is an internet-based company with a huge range of puppets of all sorts. [www.puppetsbypost.com](http://www.puppetsbypost.com)
- There are loads of good internet sites if you are looking for Christian puppet scripts. Try these for starters: [www.puppetresources.com](http://www.puppetresources.com)  
[www.puppetsforjesus.com](http://www.puppetsforjesus.com)

Kate Crookes  
[kateinyork@hotmail.com](mailto:kateinyork@hotmail.com)



# Mime, Movement and Clowning

*Power to reach where words alone can't reach*

Sue and Nigel Hardgrave

## Aims of session

- To equip you with some practical techniques you and your children can use
- To inspire you to develop your use of these techniques in your ministry
- To give an opportunity for you to be creative, share your own ideas and to have a go!

## Biblical Basis

### Mime

"I have also spoken (to you) by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions (for you) and (have appealed to you) through parables acted out by the prophets" (Hosea 12:10 Amp.)

Mime is used 40 times in Scripture. Over one third of the ministry of Ezekiel is done in mime. Could the Prophet Ezekiel have been the first mime artist, acting out his prophecies as God instructed him?

## What is mime?

Mime is defined as the expression of an idea or emotion or the portrayal of a character, entirely by gesture and bodily movement. Mime artist Rick Shope says "Mime is the language of the body, the silent component of our otherwise spoken language"

Research suggests that we use body language consisting of body pose, gestures, and eye movements to communicate around 50 – 65% of what we say. It is mostly used by us and read by us unconsciously.

## Why use Mime, movement and clowning?

- They have power to reach where words alone can't reach.  
A quote from David Hopwood Mime artist - "I once met a girl who told me she had learnt to hide from words but the mime had got through to her, she had not known how to avoid it".
- They are a fun way of presenting a teaching point /life illustration! The fun makes it more memorable.
- They can be an effective teaching tool.
- Some themes and concepts can be best described through movement and best understood through movement.
- They bring a familiar story to life. Because the children actually experience part of a story/scripture they are also more likely to understand its meaning, find relevance and remember it.
- They bring the joy of being creative.
- They can be very funny e.g. Tom and Jerry.
- They have the added benefit of not having to learn lines!
- They can be used as a game, asking them in turn to think of an action, mime it and ask the others to guess what they are miming.
- Mime has an application in all 7 aspects of intelligence and is therefore very useful in any sort of education but especially in the area of kinaesthetic intelligence.
- They help us think through emotions and situations, connecting with our own emotions drawn from our own experiences e.g. How do I feel about... injustice, forgiveness, prayer, authority?
- They encourage expression of feelings in a controlled way.
- They increase awareness of body language so we can communicate more effectively in ordinary life.
- They can be a response to teaching or a response in worship.
- They can bless and challenge others.
- Mime and movement to worship songs encourages increased understanding of the meaning and the use of the whole body in worship.
- They encourage freedom of expression in worship generally.
- They are a way of losing inhibitions.
- They are a way of learning new skills.
- In evangelism they are used not only to creatively communicate but as a vehicle for addressing issues and areas of life in a thought provoking way.



## **Practical Techniques and ideas**

In mime/clowning any action needs to be exaggerated and as detailed and clear as you can make it. It's important to think through how the character is feeling and how best to portray that and to be aware of what your expressions are and what your body posture is.

### **Freeze frames**

Having covered the story, children are given scenarios and asked to get into character and portray what they are thinking in mime then when freeze frame is called they act as if caught in a photo.

### **Tableau**

Create a photograph of the whole story or do parts of the story as a series of different snapshots. Another way of doing this is to build up a tableau adding one character at a time. As an added idea the ten seconds or so before or after the tableau could be mimed, then the characters freeze again.

### **Mime to a narrated story**

E.g. Play on words – do as a presentation then get the children to do it with you.

### **Progression movement to tell a story/testimony or explore emotions**

Examples of such stories could be the children's or other people's stories, testimonies of where they have come from and what God has done for them and is doing now; or made up stories to illustrate changing circumstances or emotions in life or a situation. Stories from the Bible such as parables lend themselves well to this form of expression. E.g. in the case of the Parable of the Lost Sheep they might express fear at being lost, comfort at being found and joy as the shepherd rejoices.

They can be expressed from a literal, symbolic or emotional viewpoint.

Adopt a mime posture to express the first circumstance or emotion, move to the next posture then to the next. The movement, in between the postures, could also become part of the mime.

### **Add mime or clowning to Scripture, prayer or song**

The scripture/story can be interpreted in movement either literally or symbolically.

Read it first, or give the children a copy of it to read. Ask the children to illustrate it in mime emphasising the words of each phrase, verse or paragraph or the whole theme. This can be done as the scripture is narrated either individually or as a group. Mime as a series of movements or snapshots after each part of the narration, or do as a themed piece of movement after the narration.

Mime can be added to prayers in a similar way.

Add mime to a song appropriate to its mood and theme. This could become high energy action, more contemplative etc. for use in various situations. Mimed actions to scripture, prayer or worship songs, encourages increased understanding of the meaning of the words and the use of the whole body in worship.

### **Clowning**

There is lots of humour in Bible, directly or contained within themes, which clowning can accentuate.

Use eye contact with the audience so they feel involved and go OTT! Makeup for Mime/Clowning accentuates facial expressions and is useful if you have a large audience.

## **Resources**

Play on Words – available from [www.powerpackministries.co.uk](http://www.powerpackministries.co.uk)  
[www.beholdmimeministry.org](http://www.beholdmimeministry.org) - Christian Mime - resources from Steve Murray  
[www.toddfarley.com](http://www.toddfarley.com) – Christian Mime - resources and links to mimes on YouTube

**The following resources are available from Sue Hardgrave** [www.alpha-creative.co.uk](http://www.alpha-creative.co.uk)

- 'Practically Releasing Children in Praise and Worship' – Training guide with creative, fun, interactive ideas.
- 'Using Flags and Ribbons in Praise and Worship' – Training guide based on Sue's Flag Workshop
- Flags, ribbons and streamers – in various colours and sizes. And greetings cards.
- Flag Workshop - To book Sue to lead a flag workshop for children or adults please email: [info@alpha-creative.co.uk](mailto:info@alpha-creative.co.uk) to discuss your requirements.

© 2008 Sue Hardgrave



# Games (Children)

*The who, what, why, when and how of games in children's ministry*

LAURA PENNINGTON

## Aims of session

- To explore the context for games in children's work
- To be resourced with fresh ideas and learn from each other's experiences

## Why play games?

- Children love games! Who doesn't?!
- Games can break barriers, be relationship building and be a non threatening way in.
- Universal- children play all around the world and cross culturally

## What makes a good game?

### Clear aim

- Why are you playing it?
- Is it just for fun or to get a message across?

### Structure

- The best games are thought through.
- How will each part work out?
- What will you need?
- How will you explain it?
- How will the game end? Does it have a natural ending?

### Variety

- A great game done every week, very quickly loses it's appeal
- Use a variety of styles to appeal to different children and learning styles

### Age and ability appropriate

- What is their concentration span?
- What are they capable of?
- Be aware of special needs

### Fun!

## When do games work best?

- Plan games into your programme every session
- Think about your audience - What do they respond to?
- Choose the game appropriate for the environment and the programme

## Which type of Game - Ideas and favourites!

### Quick and Easy games

- Heads and Tails
- Games with songs
- Quick fire challenge games
- Heads down thumbs up!

### Games for small groups

- Jigsaw or ordering games
- Rapidough
- Treasure hunts

### Games for big groups

- Atlas ball/ Under over/ Pass the torch
- Relays and obstacle courses

### Messy games

- Marshmallow drop
- Wet head
- Scaredy pants
- Gunge tank!

- Jelly face

### Up front games

- Talent shows
- Hero of fire

### Team games

- War ball
- Olympics
- Armour of God
- Wide games

### Themed games

- Noughts and crosses/ Boys vs. girls
- Alphabet madness
- Who wants to be a millionaire
- Application balls

### Child led games

- Don't always be the leader



## How? Practical issues in running games

### Be creative!

- Watch children's TV
- Listen to what the children say
- Don't always stick to the book!

### Giving instructions

- Keep it quick and simple
- Be clear
- Try to limit it to 3 points
- Age appropriate language

### Splitting children into groups

- Avoid methods that could leave children feeling inadequate or rejected
- Numbering off
- Grouping up

### Safety

- Safeguarding children- safety should be paramount throughout
- Risk assessments
- Consider your environment and resources

### Fostering the right environment

- Your attitude will influence theirs
- Games shouldn't be a chore
- Rule 8
- Enjoy it and remember what it was like to be a child!
- Dealing with winners and losers!

## Resources

### Websites

[www.youthpastor.com/games](http://www.youthpastor.com/games)

[www.childrensministry.com](http://www.childrensministry.com)

[www.kidssundayschool.com/gradeschool/games/gameindex](http://www.kidssundayschool.com/gradeschool/games/gameindex)

[www.scriptureunion.org.uk/lightlive](http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/lightlive) (Specify in search type that the activity is game)

[www.bonaly.org.uk/games](http://www.bonaly.org.uk/games)

### Books

*Fun group games for children's ministry*- Group Publishing

*Ultimate games*: Patrick Goodland £9.99- Scripture Union

*Everyone's a winner*: Ruth Wills £7.99- Scripture Union

*Theme games (#1 and #2)*: Lesley Pinchbeck

*101 Great games for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers*: Jolene Roehkepartain

*On the spot: No prep games for Children's Ministry*- Group Publishing

*The best of Children's Ministry Magazine: Games*

### Other useful resources

[www.newitts.com](http://www.newitts.com)- great for sports equipment, cones, balls, parachutes etc

Throw and tell ball sets (children's ministry set) - Group publishing

<http://www.max7.org/search.aspx?s=noughts+and+crosses> –Noughts and crosses game

<http://www.max7.org/search.aspx?s=boys+vs+girls> –Boys vs. girls variation of X and O

<http://www.teachnet.com/lesson/misc/winnergame022500.html> - Who wants to be game

Laura Pennington  
[laura@yoyotrust.org.uk](mailto:laura@yoyotrust.org.uk)



## Songs (Children)

*Cheese, please Gromit!*

Dave Godfrey

### Aims of session

- To explore why children love to worship with a smile on their faces
- To learn some songs and song actions that will help children have fun whilst worshipping Jesus.

### Bible References

#### **Psalm 98 v 1: Sing a New Song!**

*Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things!*

#### **Psalm 149 v 3: Action in Worship!**

*Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp.*

### Reflecting

#### **Exploring the theme so far...**

In the seminars at the beginning of the day we explored the insatiable love that children and young people have for fun and enjoyment. We discovered that children of different ages respond in different ways at different times due to their own personality and their stage of development. We thought about the fact that generally children are switched on when they enjoy themselves and easily switch off if they are not.

Is it possible to have fun and worship at the same time? I think the answer is yes!

### A Child's Favourite Worship Song

At Spring Harvest over the last few years we have used a wide variety of songs – from the fast, fun-filled action packed theme song through to the slow, intimate worship song. The children have engaged with each type, but when we have asked them which ones are their favourite - the following songs have been at top of the 'Top Ten' on the final day:

- Amazing
- Praising
- Cheese
- Nose Explosion

Two questions stand out: 1. Why are they popular? 2. Are they praising and honouring to God?

### Keys to a Song's Popularity

Here are some of the possible reasons why these songs have been popular:

- There is an element of fun and humour in each one
- They are upbeat, rocky and bouncy songs
- They are jargon free and relate to their own lives in different ways
- They are action based songs which allow the children to use their energy up in worship!

### Do they honour Jesus?

I believe these songs honour Jesus and children can worship through them for the following reasons:

- Jesus loves seeing his children enjoy themselves when in his presence, and their bodies were made for action!
- The words e.g. 'love you Jesus' and 'God, you're amazing' etc are direct praise and worship to Jesus.
- The songs are set in a relevant context – they explore everyday life and what it means to follow Jesus.



## Keys to Adding Actions to Songs

Here are some of the steps you could take to make up your own fun-filled actions to songs that don't seem to have any!

- Step 1: Choose a suitable worship, teaching, theme or praise song.
- Step 2: Listen carefully to the rhythm and accompaniment as this will affect the style of actions/dance.
- Step 3: Take a close look at the words and the theme of the song, to help you decide what sort of actions you would like. (Actions can either: a) Reflect what the words say or suggest. b) Reflect the musical accompaniment.)
- Step 4: Have a go at making up some actions! (Either with the children or before you meet them!)

Note:

- Actions and dance should be fun, interesting and supportive of the song.
  - Maximum effect is when the actions are kept simple!
  - It can be helpful to gain the support of people who are natural movers! Teenagers who are really into pop music, and know a lot of funky dance moves, can be really helpful!
- Step 5: Teach the children the song and actions. Here is a possible way forward:
    - a) Play or listen to the song with no actions.
    - b) Talk through the actions of the song line by line, re-enforcing as you go along.
    - d) Have a go and get worshipping!

## Why do Fun-Filled Child-friendly Songs Sometimes Not Work?

- Lack of confidence, clarity in presentation, or attitude of the leader.
- Children are expected to do actions and the adults aren't willing to join in.
- The actions are too complicated or are not rehearsed properly.
- The song is not a particularly appropriate choice to put actions too! (e.g. 'And Can It Be')

## Resources

[www.omegazone.org.uk/shop/cd.htm](http://www.omegazone.org.uk/shop/cd.htm)

This is the page on Dave's website that lists some of his existing CD/DVD resources, including the new Amazing album and the Action Praise DVD.

[www.numberfun.co.uk](http://www.numberfun.co.uk)

This is the website of Dave's Maths and Music consultancy work. The same principles are put into action here, this time focusing on the teaching and learning of Mathematical principles!

[www.duggiedugdug.co.uk](http://www.duggiedugdug.co.uk)

For many years Doug Horley has been the market leader in writing and recording contemporary children's worship songs. If you get a chance to listen to Doug's songs, it is worth reflecting on the somewhat different style that Doug has adopted. (*They are great songs - full of fun and enjoyment of course!*)

Dave Godfrey, Omega Zone, PO Box 94, Copmanthorpe, York, YO23 3WW: 01904 778848  
dave@omegazone.org.uk



## Drama (Children)

*“Fun through drama for children. Come and learn how to use role play and improvisation to bring out biblical truth whilst being active and fun!”*

Nicolette Hobson

### Aims of session

- To look at ways of how to structure drama so that it is engaging and fun!
- To make the stories of the bible come to life using drama
- To show how you can use basic drama techniques in teaching the bible

### How can we to use drama as a tool to engage and build young peoples understanding of the bible?

#### Structuring drama

- Choose a story that you enjoy as a starting point, the bible is great for this!
- Try to keep the group engaged by keeping a pace and rhythm to the session
- Keep to a theme and choose activities that link in and connect the session together
- Have fun!

#### Let me tell you a story.....

During the session we will look at two parables that Jesus taught as a stimulus, “The Parable of the seeds” Luke 8 and “The Unforgiving Servant” Matt 18. This will enable us to try out some basic drama techniques in exploring the themes of the story.

At the start of every drama session warm-ups are key in getting everyone energised, focused and ready to participate. Try to link the warm-ups and other preliminary activities with the main focus of the story; this helps the young people to be engaged.

#### Warm ups

- **Fruit bowl** (alternative version - **Seeds**) everyone has a chair except the child in the centre. Everyone is given a name of a fruit: apple, orange or pear. This is repeated round the circle. The caller in the middle calls a fruit and those children have to move to another seat if “fruit salad” is called then everyone moves! The aim of the game is not to be left in the centre. The game then starts again. This game is great for using different themes that link into your main story.
- **The Farmer and the Fox** everyone stands in a circle and a fox is chosen, they leave the circle and then a farmer is quietly chosen without the fox knowing who it is! Then make a gap in the circle and place a bag of seeds in the middle. The fox then enters the circle through the gap and as soon as he touches the seeds the farmer can chase him. The winner is the fox who makes it back through the gap to his den without being caught!

#### Read the story - The parable of the seeds.

- **Story whoosh!!!** Explain that you will now retell the story and that, as you do so, the children will act it out in the space within the circle. Explain that as you say “Whoosh!” the space is cleared and new volunteers will be chosen to continue the action. This exercise is always great fun and a good way to bring high energy into the session and works as a fun way of getting the story into their heads –even if it can get a little ridiculous at times!!!!
- **Huggy** - This works as a good way of getting everyone into groups. You call out a number “Huggy 4” and the children have to get into group hugs of that number. If you have any children left out, members of the group can hide them in their huddle!
- **Still image/photograph** – Now in groups the children create a photograph of what happened in the story and give it a caption/title. Set a time limit of a couple of minutes and then show back.
- **Show back** – In drama it is important for the participants and audience to evaluate their work in a positive and non threatening way.
- **Wonderings.....**I wonder do you know people like that.... this exercise allows you to bring a lower level activity into the session and gives the children a time to reflect and share ideas in the group. What

have we learnt so far? Do we know people that fit into some of these categories that Jesus is talking about?

- **Role play** – Now in groups the children can use these thoughts and ideas to use in role play to improvise a short scene. Give each group a different part of the parable, for example the seed that fell amongst the thorns. Set a time limit of five to ten minutes for rehearsal and then show back.

#### **Let me tell you another story.....**

Again start the session with a couple of warm-up games.

#### **Warm ups**

- **Prisoner** An odd number of participants are needed - you can always join in! Put chairs in a circle. Ask participants to get into pairs, one person sitting on a chair and their partner standing behind them. One person will be left standing behind an empty chair. Those sitting down are the 'prisoners' those standing behind them are the 'guards'. Any guard with an empty prison, must try to fill it by calling the name of one of the prisoners seated. That prisoner then tries to escape to the new prison by making a mad dash for the empty chair in front of the guard who has just called his or her name. The guard standing behind the prisoner trying to escape must try and stop this by tapping the prisoner lightly on the shoulder or back. If the guard manages to tap his or her prisoner before he/she escapes, then the prisoner remains, if, however, the guard misses, then the prisoner is free to go to the new prison. The game then continues with a new guard with an empty prison. Guards must stand at all times a little way behind their prisons, with their hands behind their backs. Prisoners must sit firmly on their chairs and not perch on the edge!
- **The Powers of Persuasion** – get into pairs, A's have to try and persuade B's to go to the other side of the room by words and actions only, no physical contact is allowed! (Begging and pleading may help!!!) Have you got the power of persuasion?
- **Tell and act out the story** – This is a story about Forgiveness. You as the leader narrate the story using volunteers to play the different parts, the leader then feeds the lines to the volunteers and they simply have to mime the actions and repeat the words you speak. This means that there is no pressure on them having to perform or being put on the spot.
- **Thought tracking** - This is a good tool to use to get the characters to speak out how they are thinking or feeling and allows the participants and audience to find out more about the characters.
- **Role on the wall** "The Unforgiving Servant" – This is a low level activity, which allows the group to reflect on the story and to think about the central character. Why didn't he forgive his fellow servant when the King had forgiven him? Questioning is really useful in trying to understand the character. By using this method it allows the group to write down some thoughts and questions and allows you time to think of some answers before you go into role as the character!
- **Hot seating** "The Unforgiving Servant" Now you have got the group to think about the character you can now become that character. All you need to have is a good understanding of the story and character and what you want the group to get out of meeting him. You don't need to have good acting skills, it's the attitude of the character that matters – does the servant just not care about anyone but himself, is he just selfish etc?
- **Conscience Alley** – Now set up the scene when the unforgiving servant approaches his fellow servant. The group forms two lines between which the character can walk. As he/she walks down the "alley" his/her thoughts are spoken by the rest of the group; one side for and one side against. The person playing the unforgiving servant then has to make a decision at the end. Which of the reasons were most persuasive?
- **Forum Theatre** – This is where the participants and audience can influence the action and outcome. This is an improvised scene with volunteers playing the parts. The scene is now set a few years on and the servant has now paid his debts and is free, he goes home to see his family, what happens next? The action is played out and the audience can then stop the action at any point and suggest ways that they would like to see the scene changed. This is a good way to get the children to think about how they would deal with situations and possible outcomes and resolve.

#### **Resources**

[www.improvcyclopedia.org](http://www.improvcyclopedia.org)

[www.dramaresource.com](http://www.dramaresource.com)

[www.artsonthemove.co.uk](http://www.artsonthemove.co.uk)