

# **PUPPETRY**

## **Why Use Puppets?**

1. **Attracts and captures the attention.**
2. **Conveys feelings and emotions as well as facts.**
3. **Shows human weaknesses and prejudices.**
4. **Stimulates the imagination**
5. **Is an excellent teaching method – visual and interactive.**

## **Different Types of Puppets**

1. **String puppets**
2. **Finger puppets**
3. **Hand or glove puppets**
4. **Movable mouth puppets**
  - **Sock puppets**
  - **Sewn puppets**
5. **Large body puppets**

## **Ways to Use Puppets**

1. **Welcoming, announcements or instructions.**
2. **Teaching new songs or poems.**
3. **Conducting Bible drills.**
4. **Reinforcing values or rules.**
5. **Revision and dramatisation of stories**

# PUPPETRY

## - Making the Puppets -

### How To Make a Large Moveable Mouth Puppet

#### Materials:

- Foam – approximately 1.5 – 2 cm thick (1 inch)
- Foam adhesive
- Stretch material and matching thread
- Craft glue
- Small amount of felt material for tongue and tonsils – red, maroon or pink
- Three ply timber, masonite or custom board (4 – 6 mm thick)
- Small amount of any type of material - for hinge
- Small amount of red stretch material - inside mouth
- Wool or alternative for hair
- Eyes
- Wadding as padding for arms, ears and nose

#### Directions:

##### FOAM –

##### **Puppet Foam Head**

Attach **Sheets A and B** at the notch along thin dotted line so that they join together to form the head pattern.

Transfer this pattern onto foam and cut out foam using an electric knife or sharp scissors.

Using only foam adhesive, glue sections along the edge indicated by the thick dotted line.

Allow to set for approx 20 minutes.

When foam adhesive feels tacky, push the glued sections together.

Hold together (with clothes pegs or tooth picks) till glue starts to set and put aside to completely dry.

From **Sheets E** cut one upper mouth section and one lower mouth section from the one inch foam.

Put aside lower mouth for later use.

Apply foam adhesive to the longest edge of upper mouth indicated by the thick dotted line.

Apply foam adhesive to the inside of the foam head at the front and allow to set for 20 minutes.

Attach upper mouth to the inside of the puppet foam head, matching the No. 1 large dot on upper mouth to the No. 1 large dot on the inside of the puppet head.

##### **Puppet Foam body**

Join **Sheets C and D** together at the two notches along thin dotted line to make the complete picture. This body may be lengthened if desired.

Transfer this pattern onto foam and cut out foam using an electric knife or sharp scissors.

Using only foam adhesive, glue along the edge of the sections marked by the thick dotted line.

Allow to set for approx 20 minutes.

When foam adhesive feels tacky, push the glued sections together.

Hold together (with clothes pegs or tooth picks) till glue starts to set and put aside to completely dry.

# PUPPETRY

## - Making the Puppets -

### **MATERIAL –**

#### **Nose** (optional)

You may insert a nose into the pattern if desired, in two ways:

1. Cut two pieces of any shape desired. With right sides together, sew around outside leaving one flat edge free. Turn and stuff. Close flat edge.
2. Attach nose by hand at the end. See instructions at the end.

#### **Puppet Head Material Skin**

Join **Sheets G and F** together at three notches along the thin dotted line

Cut out two patterns out of skin stretch material.

**Please note:** If using **nose option 1**, insert this into seam where indicated.

Sew along the edge indicated by the thick dotted line.

#### **Ears**

Cut four ear patterns from **Sheet H** in skin stretch material.

Sew two together leaving end open.

Turn it around the right way and fill with padding.

Sew ends together.

Attach ears - refer to **Sheet H** - and sew into position indicated.

#### **Mouth**

Cut pattern from **Sheet I** called “Bottom Mouth” on fold on the cross.

Join Side A and B of the “bottom mouth” to Side A and B on the “Top Head” and sew both sides.

Using red stretch material cut “Inside Mouth” pattern, from **Sheet I**.

Fold “Inside Mouth” into quarters and mark folds with pins. Match pins to centre front points on upper and lower mouth and seam line of upper and lower mouth, then sew to puppet mouth.

Cut two mouth pieces of three ply from pattern on **Sheet H**.

Join two mouth pieces together with the hinge material (**On sheet H**) using craft glue.

Allow to dry.

#### **Puppet Arms**

Cut four arm patterns from **Sheet K** in skin stretch material.

Sew two patterns together leaving ends open. Carefully slit between stitching at fingers. - then turn back the right way out. Fill both arms with padding then sew ends. Hand sew a couple of stitches right through the material for elbow.

#### **Puppet body - Skin material**

Cut body pattern from **Sheet J** on the fold in skin stretch material.

Attach arms, then sew along shoulder line from **Sheet J**.

Sew along the side of the puppet's body.

#### **FORMING PUPPET HEAD**

Turn skin material of puppet head inside out and stretch red mouth material wooden mouth (hinge side-up) that has been covered with craft glue.

Make sure that hinge is the side that the glue is applied and check that glue is not lumpy.

Stretch the 'corners' of the material mouth to match the extremities of the wooden hinge.

Work quickly before the glue dries.

# PUPPETRY

## - Making the Puppets -

Quickly turn puppet head material back to correct side with wooden mouth inside. Smooth the red material over the wooden mouth pieces leaving an edge of the skin material to form the lips.  
Allow to dry.

Stitch or insert eyes into position. Use a small scrap of material to strengthen on the wrong side. Insert foam head into material head above the wooden mouth piece.

Using foam adhesive, glue along the dotted line in lower mouth chin (from **Sheet E**) and also along semicircle of the wooden bottom mouthpiece (**Sheet H**).  
Allow to set for 20 minutes. Attach glued area of foam lower mouth chin to glued area of wooden lower mouth.

Turn chin material back to normal.

### ATTACHING BODY TO HEAD

Turn body skin inside out and attach to puppet at neckline.

Join and sew at least twice.

After turning skin material back to correct side, insert foam body (on **Sheets C and D**) into puppet body skin.

Do not attach the foam body to the head.

Turn up hem and sew the hem material to the foam body to hold it in correct position.

### DRESSING PUPPET

Cut out tongue and tonsils from **Sheet H** pattern from coloured felt and glue with craft glue to inside of red mouth.

**Nose Option 2:** Make nose out of small round skin material.

Hand sew around edge of nose and pull thread to form a pouch that is stuffed with wadding. Pull up tight and sew onto puppet head.

Make hair from wool by wrapping wool around a piece of thin cardboard and machine sewing the centre of cardboard. Tear away the cardboard. Glue hair onto head of puppet using craft glue. You may also purchase wigs and glue on or feathery trim and glue on.

Clothing can be purchased from shops or use discarded second hand clothing - children size 2.

If making the fur puppet, cut head as for a normal puppet and make up. For body and arm, draft pattern from **Sheet M** and join to hand on **Sheet L**. Fold fur fabric and place the centre front or back line on the pattern on the fold. Cut two – one for the front and one for the back. Cut centre front neckline as indicated on pattern. (Back neck is cut straight.) Join front to back commencing at waistline and following around fingers and finishing at back and front neckline. Do the same for the other side. Slit between fingers. Join head to body, matching shoulder seams and centre back and front, stretching to fit. Turn up hem around base of body.

This puppet is best operated by two puppeteers, one operating the hands and one the mouth.

**HAPPY PUPPET MAKING!**

# PUPPETRY

## - Presentation & Script Writing -

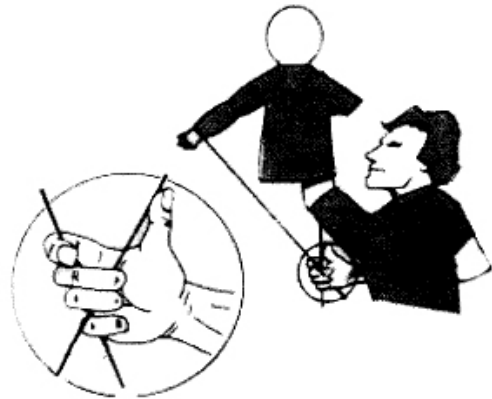
### Five Basic Techniques of Puppetry

Although these basics are important to all levels of puppetry, the beginner must become proficient enough in these techniques to the point that they become second nature. It is important to know that all the basics can be practised without a puppet, but you must also know the correct way to hold a puppet. Insert one hand through the body of the puppet and into the mouth. Your hand should feel comfortable with four fingers in the roof of the mouth and the thumb in the jaw below (see **Illustration A**). Both the fingers and the thumb should be touching the cloth-covered mouth.

**Illustration A**



**Illustration B**



### 1. LIP SYNCHRONIZATION

Synchronize the opening of the puppet's mouth with the spoken word. Avoid moving the mouth at random during a sentence. Do not open the mouth all the way with each word. Save the wide mouth openings for exaggerated or loud expressions. The puppet should open its mouth on the vowel sounds or entire words. Practice by saying nursery rhymes Bible verses or jingles. Practice in front of a mirror.

### 2. MOUTH ACTION

Correct mouth action is necessary in good puppetry. Practice opening the puppet's mouth by moving your thumb downward without moving your fingers upward. A slight forward thrust of the hand may help when first starting out. This is to make sure the bottom jaw moves and not the top of the puppet's head, what we call "flipping the lid." It is always best if you wear a glove in the puppet's head to preserve the puppet as perspiration is extremely destructive to foam.

### 3. EYE CONTACT

Remember to look at the audience regularly. If your stage is elevated, you will want your puppets to look down a little more than usual, rather than over the heads of your audience. This will ensure more effective eye contact. This is achieved by simple adjustments of the wrist angle.

# **PUPPETRY**

## **- Presentation & Script Writing -**

### **4. POSTURE**

If you want your puppet to appear natural, good posture cannot be ignored. To achieve this, the puppeteer's arm must be held at right angles to the floor with the hand level. Do not allow puppets to lean from side to side nor lean on the stage.

### **5. ENTRANCES & EXITS**

While there are many ways to enter and exit a puppet, the one we recommend using most often is to make your puppet appear as if he is walking up or down a ramp. This movement uses the whole arm and requires the puppeteer to keep his forearm straight up and down while the wrist remains relaxed. Using a fluid motion, the puppeteer moves forward as he "bounces" the puppet onto the stage. With each bounce of the arm, the puppet comes more fully into view. When the puppet leaves the stage, this process is simply reversed.

#### **Special Notes:**

- The beginning puppeteer will want to practice in front of a mirror whenever possible to observe his techniques.
- Holding the fingers immobile with the other hand while working the thumb will accustom the thumb muscles to this new movement.
- Whenever possible a beginner should use taped performances, fully memorized so that the added distractions of voice work and scripts are eliminated.

#### **The Ten Commandments of Puppetry**

1. You shall have movement only of the bottom jaw of the puppet whilst talking, and not the top.
2. You shall maintain a high accuracy of lip synchronisation.
3. You shall not push the face of the puppet forward whilst talking.
4. Observe the whole audience.
5. Honour the life of the puppet through proper care, especially the face.
6. You shall not let the puppet die through lack of movement.
7. You shall not use jerky movements; rather you shall be smooth and fluid.
8. You shall not let your arm be seen above the stage level.
9. You shall be disciplined in the practice of your puppet's voice and movement.
10. You shall always think of your puppet as a live being and treat the puppet accordingly.

# PUPPETRY

## - Presentation & Script Writing -

To take advantage of class participation with puppets it is essential to have a leader who acts as an intermediary between the students and puppets and is accessible to both.

### Ad Lib Formats

- Use puppets to pose questions to. e.g. “Did you know?” Students can assist the puppet in understanding what is asked.
- “Where in the Word?” Have puppets look for information in the Bible and get participation from audience to assist.
- Use specific mannerisms in a series of plays – twisting hands, scratching ear, constantly saying the same thing - e.g. “Do you know what?”
- “My mom says” series can help to highlight certain rules and reasons behind them.
- Bible Verse drills – puppet who knows every verse in the Bible. Children test him out and the puppet also tests them on their memory work.

### SCRIPT WRITING

1. Determine the purpose of the puppet presentation. eg. Conveys the facts of a story, help students to understand the emotions of a situation, teach students to pronounce or learn songs, passages, or difficult names.
2. Remember the 4 W’s of entertainment –
  - WHO is the main character?
  - WHAT is the play about?
  - WHERE is it happening?
  - WRONG – What’s wrong – how is it fixed?Establish the 4 W’s at the beginning, then devote the middle section to the activities the puppets take to resolve the WRONG.
3. Outline the script and determine characters – Don’t have too many!
4. Set the scene – what actions will move the play along and how it will be concluded?
5. Write the full script remembering to keep it brief.
6. Write each detail into script – stage directions, emotional state
7. Write natural dialogue – what would naturally be said in conversation.
8. Keep the plays active. Puppet plays should not preach!
9. Develop specific personalities for continuing puppets. Always use the same puppeteer for that puppet. Develop the puppet’s personality. Eg. Smart, dumb, shy etc.
10. Use overstatement and exaggeration,
11. Be innovative – use humour, songs, poems etc.
12. Use children’s imagination to get the story across – eg. Fin instead of a fish. Use animals to relate stories from their perspective.
13. Get ideas from songs, poems other books, etc. Check out scripts on the internet.
14. Review the script to make sure it meets the original purpose. What reinforcement may be needed at the end? What feedback will be required from the audience?

# PUPPETRY

## - Resources -

### RESOURCE AND REFERENCE BOOKS

Bolton, Barbara, and Smith, Charles T. *Creative Bible Learning for Children: Grades 1-6*. Glendale, CA: Gospel Light Publications, 1977.

Goree, Lynn (Editor). *Bible Discovery – Puppets (K-6)* Arthur Miley, Rainbow Publishers, Division of Success with Youth Publications, Inc. PO Box 261129, San Diego, CA 92126. 1986

Harris, Jerry, *Practical Puppet Skits*. (Order from: Harris Advertising Company, 825 Shreveport-Barksdale Hwy., Shreveport, LA 71105.)

Harris, Jerry. *The Successful Youth Worship*. (Order from: Harris Advertising Company, 825 Shreveport-Barksdale Hwy., Shreveport, LA 71105.)

Hawes, Bill. *The Puppet Book*. (Order from: Beta Books by Puppet Productions, Inc., P.O. Box 82008, San Diego, CA 92138.)

Peters, Mike. *Reach Out With Puppets*. (Order from: Evangelism Supplies, 9132 E. 7th, Tulsa, OK 74112.)

Rottman, Fran. *Easy-to-Make Puppets and Ways to Use Them (Children)*. Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1978.

Tobey, Katherine M. *Learning and Teaching Through the Senses*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970.

### SOURCES FOR PUPPETS AND PATTERNS

The following internet site has great puppets and scripts which are particularly aimed at health topics. It also has many other health resources and teaching aids.

<http://www.healthconnection.org>

#### Other sources:

**Puppet Productions, Inc.**, P.O. Box 82008, San Diego, CA 92138. (Full catalogue upon request. Large movable-mouth puppets.)

**Sheram Puppets**, Sheram Industries, Inc., P.O. Box 1402, Columbus, OH 43216. (Small animals and movable-mouth puppets.)

**Success Dynamics, Inc.**, 719 E. Tennessee St., Florence, AL 35630. (Puppets, books, and cassettes. Catalogs available.)

**Youth Aids:** P.O. Box 23, York, NB 68467 (Large movable-mouth puppets. Also a book, *Puppet Plays and Patterns*, which contains fifty short plays and a pattern for making the large movable-mouth puppets.)



# PUPPETRY

## - Stages -

Making a useful stage can be as simple as looking around for items already available in the room or as detailed as drawing up a plan and buying the materials to assemble a custom made theatre.

- ✓ In a classroom, for example there are usually pieces of furniture available for a quick, on the spot performance.
  - flip over a couple of desks or a table if the students are small enough to sit or kneel behind and be hidden
  - hang a blanket or sheet over a rolling coat rack, free - standing chalk or white board or between two chairs
  - sit behind a short free standing bookshelf
  - have no stage - interact with a puppet right out in front of your audience. (Take advantage of our capacity for suspension of belief.)
- ✓ With a couple of small purchases turn your doorway into a theatre.
  - a curtain with a rod pocket (whatever length you need to hide the puppeteers)
  - a spring-loaded rod long enough to fit snugly between to door frame
  - Simply slide the curtain onto the rod and prop it into the doorway. This is also great entertainment for people passing in the hall outside. They get a reverse view of the action!
- ✓ Cardboard box stages:
  - Table Top Stage for Small Hand or Finger Puppets  
Take a cardboard box and place on table. Use flaps to attach to table with tape or library book ends. Scenery can be drawn on paper and attached to the back and wing pieces with clips for easy scene changes for different groups
  - Floor Stage for Hand or Rod Puppets  
Use a large appliance box and one smaller appliance box. Tape to floor and cut out as needed to provide a standy room theatre and a kneeling theatre in the front.
- ✓ Custom Built Theatre – See directions on the next page.

# PUPPETRY

## - Theatre -

### **Materials Needed:**

19.885 m PVC pipe – 25 mm diameter (Buy in 7 x 3 metre lengths)  
12 T joints – for 25 mm pipe  
8 elbow joints – for 25 mm pipe  
6 straight joiners – for 25 mm pipe  
PVC cement  
3/16" bolts (38 mm long) and nuts – at least 18 (32 if bolting gravity held joints)  
13.8 metres x 153 cm (60") wide curtaining material (crushed panne velvet is ideal)  
4 metres of Velcro fastenings (hook and loop) to match material

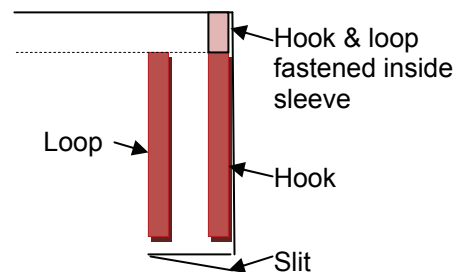
### **Curtains:**

Cut material into 4 sections – 2 x 4.6 metres; 2 x 2.3 metres

**FRONT:** Turn under a small hem (1 cm) on each cut edge. Attach 8 cm Velcro loop, 1.37 metres Velcro hook and another 8 cm Velcro loop to wrong side of each edge. Make an 8 cm hem on each selvedge edge forming a sleeve for the front pipes to thread through. Start stitching 5 cm in from edge. Leave a 10 cm gap in the centre for joint B at the top and joint E at the bottom. Finish stitching 5 cm from edge.

**SIDES:** Turn under a small hem (1 cm) on each cut edge. Attach 1.29 metres of Velcro loop starting 12 cm in and ending 12 cm from the end on the right side of fabric along one edge. Make a 12 cm hem on each selvedge edge forming a sleeve for the top and base side pipes to thread through. Attach 5 cm Velcro hook to wrong side of fabric on side which does not have the long Velcro strip – 20 cm from the top of sleeve. Attach 5 cm Velcro loop 10 cm in from the edge, 20 cm from the top of sleeve for it to attach to.

**BACK:** Turn under a small hem (1 cm) on each cut edge. Attach 8 cm Velcro loop and 48 cm Velcro hook to wrong side of each edge, commencing at the top. Make an 8 cm hem on the top selvedge edge forming a sleeve for the top back pipe to thread through. Start stitching 5 cm in from edge. Leave a 10 cm gap in the centre for joint I at the top. Finish stitching 5 cm from edge. Attach 40 cm Velcro loop to wrong side of fabric, from hem stitching down, 10 cm from each edge. If desired, a slit may be made at the end of these two strips of Velcro and edged to allow the curtain to drape better.



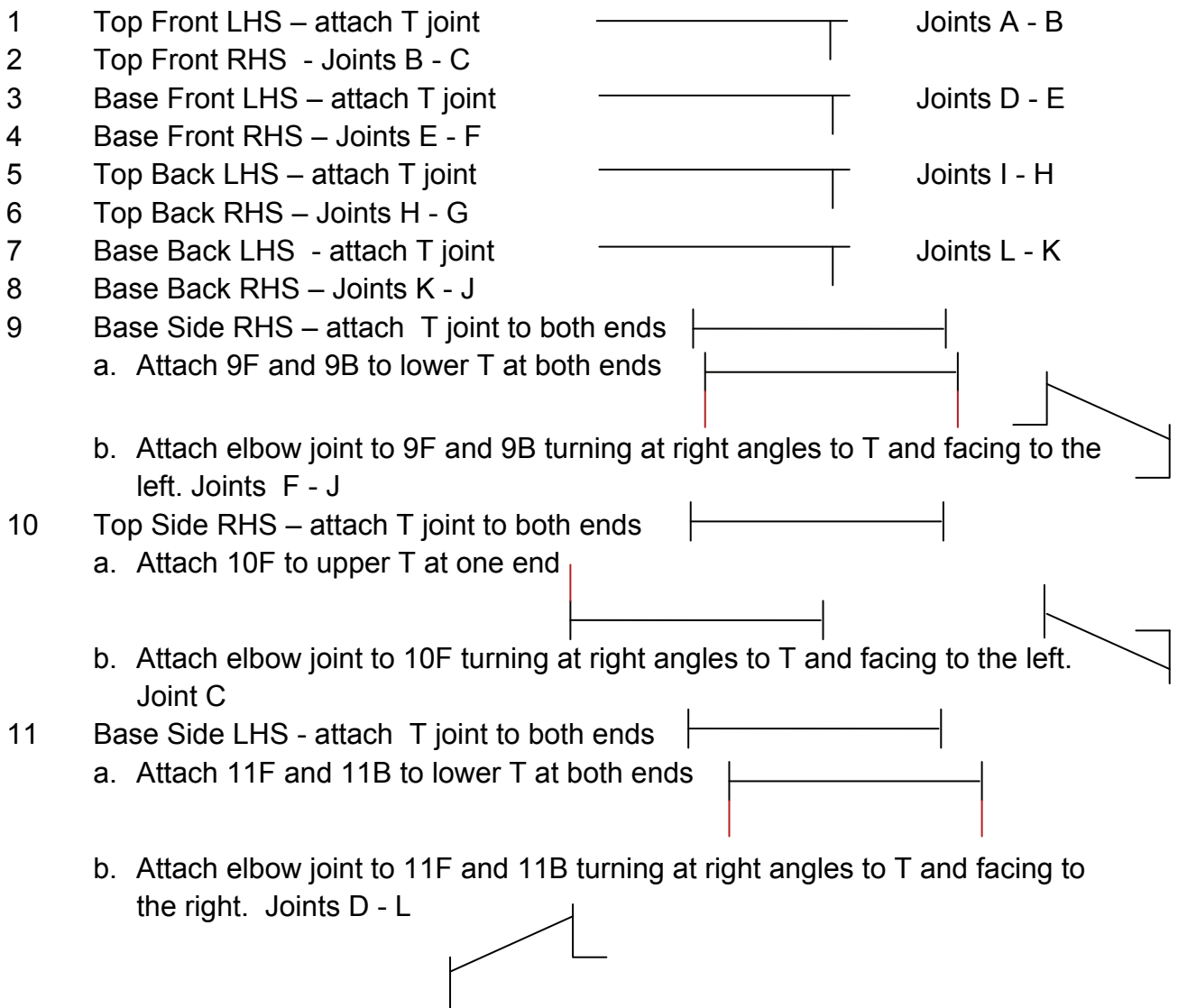
# PUPPETRY

## - Theatre -

**Frame:**

Cut 7 x 3 metre pipe as follows:

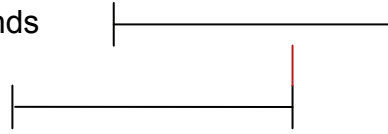
- Length 1: 2 x 910 mm; 2 x 575 mm (30 mm not used)  
= Pipes #1, #3, #13 x 2
- Length 2: 2 x 910 mm; 2 x 575 mm (30 mm not used)  
= Pipes #5, #7, #13 x 2
- Length 3: 1 x 910 mm; 1 x 970 mm; 2 x 560 mm  
= Pipes #9, #2, #14 x 2
- Length 4: 1 x 910 mm; 1 x 970 mm; 2 x 560 mm  
= Pipes #10, #4, #14 x 2
- Length 5: 1 x 910 mm; 1 x 970 mm; 2 x 460 mm; 4 x 50 mm  
= Pipes #11, #6, #15, #16, #9F, #9B, #11F, #11B
- Length 6: 1 x 910 mm; 1 x 970 mm; 2 x 50 mm (1020 mm not used)  
= Pipes #12, #8, #10F, #12F
- Length 7: 1 x 910 mm; 1 x 765 mm; 1 x 640 mm; 1 x 630 mm (35 mm not used)  
= Pipes #19, #20, #17, #18



# PUPPETRY - Theatre -

12 Top Side LHS - attach T joint to both ends

a. Attach 12F to upper T at one end



b. Attach elbow joint to 12F turning at right angles to T and facing to the right.  
Joint A

13 Lower Corner Uprights x 4

14 Upper Corner Uprights x 4 – attach straight joiner to one end of each pipe

15 Back LHS Corner Extension – attach elbow joint to top end – Joint I

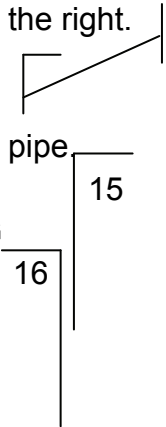
16 Back RHS Corner Extension – attach elbow joint to top end – Joint G

17 Lower Front Upright

18 Upper Front Upright – attach straight joiner to one end

19 Lower Back Upright

20 Upper Back Upright – attach straight joiner to one end



## **Assembling the Puppet Theatre:**

1. Join pipes 1 & 2 at joint B.
2. Join pipes 3 & 4 at joint E.
3. Join pipes 5 & 6 at joint H.
4. Join pipes 7 & 8 at joint K.
5. Drill 4 – 5 mm holes through each joint and pipe and fasten with bolt.
6. Thread pipes 1 & 2 and 3 & 4 through curtain with sleeves on the top and bottom. Have centre T joints B & E at opening in curtain sleeves.
7. Thread pipe 5 & 6 through the curtain with one sleeve. Right side of curtains face the front. Place T joint H at the opening in curtain sleeve.
8. Lie the four pipes on the floor with 7 & 8 at the back, then pipes 5 & 6, pipes 3 & 4 and pipes 1 & 2 in the front.
9. Thread side curtains onto top side (10 & 12) and bottom side (9 & 11) pipes if not already in place. The long Velcro on curtains goes to the front next to joints A-D and C-F.
10. Connect joints D, F, J & L to form bottom rungs of puppet theatre, leaving the top side rungs (10 & 12) lying on the floor to the outside of the rectangle formed.
11. Drill 4 – 5 mm holes through each joint and pipe and fasten with bolt. Pull front curtain to side while you fasten with bolts.
12. Join the 4 upper and lower corner uprights (13 & 14); the upper and lower front uprights (17 & 18) and the upper and lower back uprights (19 & 20). Drill 4 – 5 mm holes through joints and fasten with bolts.
13. Place corner upright pipes in each corner joint D, F, J & L on the lower rung of the theatre.
14. Attach top side pipes (10 & 12) to corner uprights at each end. These pipes are gravity held, but could be drilled and bolted if you wanted a more stable structure (you would need 14 additional bolts for gravity held joints)

# PUPPETRY

## - Theatre -

15. Join 15 and 16 to top of T joint on back uprights .These are also gravity held. Wrap back of side curtain around back corner uprights and fasten 5 cm Velcro strips.
16. Place front and back uprights in joint on the bottom rung of front (Joint E) and back (Joint K).
17. Raise pipes 1 & 2 and attach centre joint (Joint B) to top of front upright, then attach joints A & C. Drill 4 – 5 mm holes through joints A & C and pipe and fasten with bolt. Move curtain to side while you bolt these two joints.
18. Pull curtain back over joints and fasten the Velcro on the ends of sleeve and then the Velcro on the side curtain loops.
19. Raise pipes 5 & 6 with curtain in front of centre back upright and attach the centre joint (Joint H) to the top of the back upright. then attach joints G & I, turning corner extensions to fit. Drill 4 – 5 mm holes through joints G & I and pipe and fasten with bolt. Move curtain to side while you bolt these two joints.
20. (If desired the back corner extensions may be drilled and bolted where they join to the top of the back corner uprights for greater stability)
21. Pull curtain back over joints and fasten Velcro on the end of the sleeve. Wrap edge of curtain around corner extensions and Velcro fasten.
22. Spread curtains, evenly around theatre, so that they drape nicely.

