

Your Guide to



# Planting a Puppet Team



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**Take some time to think and pray about your team and your community, and ask God to show you where to spend your time and effort.**

**Consider these possibilities:** perhaps you could connect with another church in your denomination and help them start their own team. Maybe there is a church in your community that would welcome your expertise in helping them get started. You might meet a beginner in a training workshop who would welcome a mentor, even if you only communicate by email. You could even take a mission trip, bring a stage and some puppets, train some puppeteers, and leave the supplies behind. Maybe one of your former puppeteers is ready to start their own team at a new location. Perhaps your local fire department want to conduct fire safety puppet shows, but they don't have your skills and expertise. Maybe you could start a puppet team at your child's school, as an after-school activity. The students could present a program on safety or character education. What about hospitals, libraries, missions organizations, inner city ministries?

**Bring your team to the new team's location and demonstrate a great puppet performance.**

Allowing people to see and experience what they could accomplish will generate excitement. Give them a chance to see and examine a few of your puppets. The new leader will get more support from the rest of the organization when everyone can visualize the goal, and it will be easier to recruit puppeteers and additional leadership. Your team members can be a real encouragement to those who may be considering involvement.

## **Suggest the Adopt-A-Puppet Program**

Adopt-A-Puppet is a fundraising program available from One Way Street where individuals or groups purchase a particular puppet from a list provided by the team. This is a great way for the new team to acquire a cast of puppet characters. Your team might decide to purchase one of the puppets. You might also donate some of your own gently used puppets and supplies to help them get started.

## **Conduct a hands-on training workshop.**

Schedule a Saturday and bring your puppeteers to provide some hands-on training for the new puppeteers. You and your puppeteers can teach basic puppet manipulation, coach proper technique, and offer feedback. They can demonstrate prop-building techniques and share what they have learned through experience. Eat lunch together and build friendships as well as skills.

## **Purchase some basic resources.**

Suggest some excellent resources for beginners, such as the Puppet Ministry: Basics and Beyond DVD and the Puppet Director's Notebook. Recommend some of your favorite performance material that would be appropriate for beginning teams.

**Bring them to a training event.**

Take the new team with you to a Puppet Ministry Festival, SummerFest, or even I-Fest. Nothing can compare to the experience of watching dozens of teams perform their best material, learning from expert workshop leaders, and getting encouragement from so many others who share your interest.

**Invite them to perform for you.**

When the new team is ready to perform in front of an audience, invite them to perform for your team, or for your whole church. This provides them with a goal to work toward, while giving you a chance to provide encouragement and feedback.

**Be available to answer questions and offer advice.**

Once the new team has been successfully launched, stay in touch with the new director. Be available by phone or email to answer questions, suggest solutions to problems, and offer support. Get the teams together every now and then to perform for each other and socialize. Both teams will benefit from the experience.