



Becoming A Puppet Maker

By Clif Desmond

My earliest recollection of being interested in puppets was at the age of 3 or 4, fascinated with Shari Lewis and her ventriloquism! I also remember Kukla, Fran and Ollie (we are talking the early 1960's), Danny O'Day and Farfel and on Channel 5 in Boston, we had Bozo the clown, a program that featured puppets and costumed characters. I remember making a puppet out of cardboard in third grade and then experimented later with old socks! Before too long I was the oldest kid on the block who enjoyed watching Sesame Street and I took a lot of ridicule until I made a bunch of puppets, a stage and started doing puppet shows everywhere! The schools and churches had plenty of work for me to do but I soon discovered that people paid good money to have puppet shows at birthday parties!

As a young adult I still enjoyed doing puppets but was not making enough money to pay the bills so I got into Radio Broadcasting. As that career flourished I still found myself making puppets and doing shows.... There were costume puppet mascots, live remote broadcasts, grand openings and benefit fund raisers. Yes, as far back as I can remember, puppets have always been a major part of my life!

There was a lot of difficulty during those years. Puppeteers do not like to pass around their secrets! I was forced to figure things out for myself. Due to the popularity of the Muppets, I felt that my puppets should have mouths that move when they talk. This technique is called lip synchronization (lip-sync). It is the art of making the puppet's mouth move to the rhythm of the dialog. These skills are necessary for anyone who aspires to become a puppeteer.

Most professional puppeteers are also puppet makers. They make their own puppets unique to their own style.

I often dreamed of some day passing the ability on to some young enthusiastic person. I know that just the right amount of encouragement can mean a lifetime of fun and profit in a field such as puppetry! Over the years, my broadcasting career progressed into television production. Somewhere in the middle I learned how to make websites and stream audio and video on the internet. I suddenly and literally woke up one day and realized that I had a lot of fascinating resources that I could now utilize in order to create puppets and pass on the ability to many!

I owe a lot to E-Bay and some of the people who buy and sell puppets there. Without them I would have never discovered the demand for certain kinds of puppets. Having had a lot to do with ministry most of my adult life, I realized how expensive puppets were (if you have to buy them). I have always seen a need for resources in the area of Children's Ministry. Too often churches simply do not have a budget for the kids and even more often, the children's church pastor or Sunday School teacher pays for resources out of their own pocket! Serving Children's Ministries, my puppets are VERY EASY to make but do require adult supervision because of the use of scissors, sewing needles and melted hot glue.

The materials required to make your puppets are inexpensive and easy to obtain. Everything you need can be found in your local Wal-Mart, Fabric Store or Craft Shop! There is nothing that generates more excitement in kids (and adults) of all ages than a well-rehearsed puppet show! What a way to get a message across!

My pattern is available in eBook form at BiblePuppet.com

<http://www.biblepuppet.com>