

This document is intended to be used in conjunction with the Official Rulebook and Evaluation Criteria, and not as a substitute for either. Download the Official Fine Arts Rulebook and the Evaluation Criteria at www.faf.ag.org/rules.cfm.

PUPPETRY & CHILDREN'S LESSON

1. GET VISUAL.

Get visual with your big idea and memory verse in Children's Lessons. Don't just tell – a children's lesson needs to show. Incorporate vivid images, characters, examples, testimony, and object lessons to reinforce and drive home the big idea.

2. THE BIG IDEA.

Establish the big idea or the primary concept of your Children's Lesson at the beginning and then repeat it often or creatively weave it into the lesson throughout the entire presentation.

3. SLOW DOWN.

Don't let the 5-minute time limit scare you. You have time. Work on your timing and the pace of your lesson; keep it moving but don't go so fast that you muddy the communication of the central themes. Move from point to point smoothly, with a sense of pacing. Use your time wisely to grab the audience with a great opening, hit the main ideas and repeat your big idea, and finish with a strong conclusion.

4. EYE CONTACT

In a children's lesson, be sure to include every audience member by drawing them in with excellent eye contact. In a puppetry entry, tilt your fingertips toward the floor to help the puppet achieve good eye contact with the audience.

5. KEEP IT AGE APPROPRIATE.

Your Children's Lesson or Puppetry entry should be geared toward children ages 5 – 12 years. Too many entries in Fine Arts present content that is better suited for an older audience. Find out how elementary students learn best and be very intentional in how you build your content, illustrations, timing, stories, and objects to best fit the learning styles of students between 5 and 12 years of age.

6. MOUTH MOVEMENTS.

Only the lower jaw of the puppets should move. Practice moving your thumb across to meet your ring and middle finger. Also, work on lip syncing by using the syllables of each word to know how to move the mouth. And keep the mouth of the puppet closed when you aren't speaking or singing.

7. UNNATURAL PUPPETRY MOVEMENTS.

Head bobbing is appropriate but excessive movement and unintentional moving back and forth is distracting and unnatural.

8. GUM.

It is inappropriate in any form of public communication to chew gum or have mints in your mouth. Chewing gum is distracting, rude, and can hinder your ability to enunciate and project properly.

9. POSTURE.

Puppets who mysteriously "sink" or move so high that puppeteers' arms are exposed are distracting and show a lack of excellent technique. Puppets should be "belly-button" height. There shouldn't be any puppets who sink out of site or lean lazily on the stage. Puppets should be straight with good posture.

10. BLOCKING/VISIBILITY

Signs, props and lots of quick-paced activity are excellent touches in Puppetry ministry but make sure that all elements are visible and that props and signs don't block other puppet characters or important signs or props. Have spectators or coaches watch your rehearsals closely to be sure you have excellent site lines and visibility and that nothing gets blocked or lost.