



## How Many Lesson Questions Can Your Puppet Answer?

By Tim Brown

I'm teaching a survey of the Old Testament in Junior Church and include a brief review of what we've learned each week. The children can now give me highlights of the events from Genesis 1:1 through the birth of Jacob and Esau.

As a result of the review time, when I'm done, the children will be able to "walk through" the entire book of Genesis hitting all the key points and events.

Since puppets are great teaching tools, it stands to reason that they can be great reviewing tools. The question is; how do you use a puppet to review a lesson?

### Include a Puppet in Your Review Time

The easiest way is to prepare a set of review questions and have the emcee call for the puppet. Present some dialogue about the last lesson where the puppet is confident that he or she remembers every aspect and is willing to take a test as proof.

The emcee proceeds to ask the questions. After the puppet answers a question, check with the children to see if they agree or disagree and then give the answer. If the answer is correct, cheer for the puppet. If it's not, ask the children for the correct answer and have the puppet cheer for them.

There are several variations on this type of review:

- You could have the puppet get all the answers right and at the end use the puppet's success to teach the importance of listening in class.
- The puppet could start well and then struggle on some of the more difficult questions. He could then turn to the children for help. This approach involves the children instead of them being spectators.
- The emcee shows the list of questions to the puppet who "reads" them and declares that she knows the answers to all of them. Instead, of asking her the questions, the emcee directs them to the children and the puppet becomes their cheerleader as they answer.
- Play a review game with the children where you divide them into teams and award points for each correct answer. The puppets can be team captains, team members, cheer leaders, or record keepers.

### Why Have a Review Time?

Here are five valuable reasons to conduct a weekly review time.

1. Use it to discover if the children learned the lesson from the previous week.
2. It reinforces the teaching and helps make it permanent. We learn best through repetition.

3. If you're doing a lesson series, it helps those who missed last week to get a synopsis of what they missed.
4. It helps prepare the class for this week's lesson.
5. It's also a great way to evaluate your teaching. If the children consistently have a hard time answering questions, you may want to reevaluate your teaching method. If they easily answer every question, you may want to go more in-depth with your teaching.

### Review Time Preparation

To prepare a review time play, you need to develop a list of ten to fifteen questions. It's important to ask thought-provoking questions—ones that can't be answered yes or no. If you ask a class "Did Abraham obey God by going to the Promised Land?" it's not going to help them because the question requires little thinking. You've given away the answer in the question. Here's a better question. "How did Abraham obey God in our lesson last week?" With this one, the children have to think in order to give an answer.

In preparing the questions, ask several easy ones, but throw in a few hard ones. Children like a challenge, and you might be surprised at the insight God gives these little ones. When you do ask a hard question, be sure to give the children enough time to think about the answer.

If they don't answer after a minute or so, don't just give them the answer. Try rephrasing the question or give a bit more information. During this time, their focus is right where you want it to be and they're working to come up with an answer. If you guide them and allow them to come up with the answer, learning is taking place.

It's helpful to play a game during the review time to make it fun. I've got a script on the website that goes along with this article and includes a PDF file of a game you can print and make. It's one that goes over well in our Junior Church program. You can find the script and game at: <http://www.experiencepuppets.com/pdffiles/puppetscript-letshavesomefun.pdf>.

You can also download a PowerPoint™ review game at <http://www.experiencepuppets.com/pdffiles/ReviewGame.ppt>. This is a game I developed for our Junior Church. Feel free to change it to fit your ministry.

I use review times almost every week in our Junior Church and it's producing lasting results. It is well worth the time and effort involved in preparation. I hope you currently use a review time or that you will start if you haven't been. Also, if you include puppets with it, the kids will not only learn, but have fun at the same time.