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Puppetify!

Puppet Making Guides

Top Tips for Puppet Workshops



About Puppetify!

Puppetify! is a creative advocacy project. It explores how puppet making can start wellbeing conversations between children and the adults who care for and support them.

In Puppetify! workshops, we invite children to make a puppet version of themselves. Making a puppet of yourself lets you share how you feel about who you are, your life, and the world around you.

Chatting about the puppets gives children a chance to explain their creative choices. Sharing the puppets and operating each others' puppets promotes empathy, care, and shared experiences.

If you are interested in Puppetify!, or would like a workshop in your school or setting, please contact Dr. Amy Skinner, the project leader: A.E.Skinner@hull.ac.uk

This guide shows you how to make one of the puppets that we use in Puppetify! workshops.



Top Tips for Puppet Workshops

The purpose of the Puppetify! project is to use puppet making to start conversations. This guide gives you our top tips for running puppet workshops and starting puppet conversations.

At the end of the guide, you can read some advice from our brilliant collaborators from schools in the North Lincolnshire area. They all took part in Puppetify! workshops and helped us work out the best ways to make puppets with children.

If you find this guide helpful, please let us know! You can email Dr. Amy Skinner (A.E.Skinner@hull.ac.uk).

Don't forget to share your puppet with us on Instagram #PuppetifyMe and tag us @puppetifyme

Our Top Tips

1. Just a few instructions

We try to keep instructions to a minimum. We usually just ask the children to make a puppet of themselves and see how they interpret that instruction.

We offer some simple puppet making tips during the workshop, and usually guide the final construction of the puppet step-by-step, so everyone can follow along.

You can hear some of the tips in the puppet making videos on the Puppetify! website.



2. Provide materials that promote choice

We use a mix of materials in Puppetify! workshops that promote creative choice making.

Some of the materials can be used for anything (e.g. ribbons, tissue paper shapes, sheets of coloured paper, packaging paper).

Other materials are more representational (e.g. stickers with emojis or animals). We find this mix of materials helps start conversations about the puppet, and helps the children think about how the puppet represents their personalities, as well as their appearance.



3. Make alongside when you can

If you can, try to make your own puppet alongside the children.

This means that you are both in the same position, experimenting with puppet making together.

When the puppets are made, try out operating each other's puppets and ask questions about them.



4. Chat alongside making

Focusing on the activity helps to start natural conversations about the puppets, meaning you can chat whilst you make.

We start Puppetify! workshops by explaining why we are interested in the children's puppets. Then we can chat about the children's choices throughout the workshop.



5. Ask questions about creative choices

We try to ask lots of questions about the creative choices that the children have made: why have they chosen those colours or materials? Why that sticker or that piece of fabric?

This helps us to understand how the children's puppet making choices relate to their understanding of themselves.



6. Add a chance to reflect

We try to add a short session at the end of Puppetify! workshops to allow the children to reflect on their puppets.

Here are some of the questions we've asked include:

- How is your puppet like you?
- What is your favourite thing about your puppet?



Advice from our collaborators



At the end of the Puppetify! workshops, our collaborators were asked what advice they would give to someone making a puppet. Here's some of the things they said:

“Do your own thing”

“Ribbon is good for hair”

“Cut out and colour the hands”

“Stickers are a good idea”

“Be yourself!”

“Be creative”

“Do not use glue!”

Collaborators from Castledyke Primary School and Leys Farm Junior School

All of the puppets photographed in this guide were made by our collaborators at Castledyke Primary School and the University of Hull



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Thank you

Please let us know if you find this guide useful!

You can email Dr. Amy Skinner A.E.Skinner@hull.ac.uk

Share your puppets with us on Instagram #PuppetifyMe and tag us @puppetifyme