

Bird Puppets

A paper puppet project with DiAE Teaching Artists
Yolanda Chetwynd (Visual Art) and
Melissa Berman (Performing Arts)



Overview

You will *build* (term for making a puppet) a bird puppet with simple materials. Once you have *built* your bird puppet, you are going to explore how to develop a character and create a voice for your puppet. Then you will explore how your puppet moves (known as *manipulation* or *manipulating* the puppet) and make choices about what your puppet is doing.

DO YOU KNOW...

- Birds are considered sacred or holy in many cultures and are associated with ways of being such as: “free”, “brave”, “mysterious”, “trickster”, “messenger.”
- The Delaware state bird is the Blue Hen.
- The national bird for the United States is the bald eagle.
- The first puppet show was performed over 3,000 years ago!
- Many different cultures use puppets for storytelling and religious ceremonies around the world. Here are just a few examples: Wayang Puppets (INDONESIA), Sicilian marionettes (ITALY), Bunraku (JAPAN), Mua Roi Nuoc (VIETNAM), and Punch and Judy (GREAT BRITAIN).
- A famous puppeteer from the United States is Jim Henson, who was the creator of The Muppets and the Sesame Street characters.

Materials:

Toilet paper tube (Save the inner roll after all the toilet paper is used!)

Tissue paper

Googly eyes

Glue stick

OPTIONAL: pencil, scissors

Building Your Puppet:

1. Find an empty toilet paper roll (or 2 or 3!) and add it to your kit of materials. You can also use an empty paper towel roll and cut it in half.
2. Decide what color you would like your bird to be from the choice of tissue paper that you have in your kit. Cut or tear your tissue paper to the size that you want to cover on your tube. *Helpful hint: The color of the tube is a tan so if you want your bird to be lighter in color than tan color, you need to glue a white layer of paper first, then add on top your light colored tissue paper.*

3. Begin gluing your tissue paper onto your tube. Remember that the tissue paper is FRAGILE or DELICATE and may rip easily. You can use the glue stick on the toilet paper tube and then press the tissue paper into place. If some tissue paper is not sticking down, just run your glue stick over the tissue paper; the tissue paper is so porous the paper glues to the tube.
4. Add the eyes. Before peeling the back of the adhesive paper off, decide where you want to place the eyes.
5. Now it is time to add the beak, you can scrunch up some tissue paper into a pyramid shape. Add glue to the bottom of the pyramid. Then place between the eyes and down a ¼ inch. **You can also watch the video and make a beak out of a piece of a second tube or a cereal box.**
6. Use your remaining tissue paper to add a *plume* of feathers to the top of your bird's head. Don't forget to make some tissue paper wings!

Things to think about:

- A character is an individual in a story. You will create a character for your bird puppet.
- A story for your puppet has a beginning, middle and end. You can always begin with "Once upon a time..." and create from there. Think about *who* your bird is, *where* your bird is and *what* your bird is doing.
- How young or old is your bird? Does it have a lot of family members and friends?
- Does your bird live in a cold, moderate or hot climate?

Creating Your Character and Manipulating Your Puppet:

1. Decide what your bird is doing. Is it looking for food, playing, building a nest, visiting friends, going to school? Let your imagination and creativity guide you.
2. Play with your puppet. Find ways to move it so that it looks like it's flying, hopping, walking, etc.
3. Keep your eyes focused on your puppet since you are the *puppeteer* (the person who controls and manipulates the puppet).
4. What does your bird sound like? Give it a voice and let it talk.
5. Have fun exploring different ideas for your bird puppet's adventures!



Scan here for a video of DiAE Teaching Artists Yolanda Chetwynd and Melissa Berman demonstrating the project, along with links to additional resources or please visit our website: <https://diae.org/resources/diae-artist-in-your-residence/>.

We'd love to see your puppet. Please share a photo of your work and tag us!



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