

Nativity Puppets-in-a-Cup

Nothing is a more effective, engaging way for school-age children to tell a story than through the use of props. Handmade "puppets in a cup" make telling the nativity story easy enough kids will want to spread the joy everywhere!

Here is what you will need:

- one Styrofoam cup
- a white 3 x 5 index card
- a white 4 x 6 index card or 5 x 7 piece of white cardstock
- a pencil, crayons, markers or colored pencils
- white transparent tape
- 4-5 coffee stirrers
- scissors

On the 3 x 5 index card, draw (or copy and color some from below) the characters for the Christmas story. You may only use one side of the card. You can only have five puppets, so some characters may need to be "grouped" together. (For instance, you may want to include the Wise Men, but draw them close together to make them a group, then it only "counts" as one puppet!) Be creative!

Using a pair of scissors, trim around your characters (or groups of characters). Remember, you may only have up to five puppets because your stage is small. On the 4 x 6 card or larger cardstock, draw your background scene. This is where your story takes place. If you choose, you may have two different backgrounds by drawing another on the backside.

Cut two, 1.5 inch slits into the bottom of your background, as shown below.

Tape each "puppet" to the top of a coffee stirrer. Count the total number of puppets.

Take the Styrofoam cup. Using a pencil, gently push the tip of the pencil into the bottom of the cup, just big enough for the stirrer to fit. Make the same number of holes in the bottom of the cup as your total number of puppets, being careful not to break the bottom of the cup out.

Put your puppets into the cup (otherwise known as a "stage") so that the coffee stirrers stick out the bottom and the characters are hidden in the stage.

Place your background on the stage, as shown below.

To tell the nativity story, simply push up the stirrer of the character from below so he/she is "on stage" in your background. When that character is "finished speaking," pull the

stirrer back down and push the next character up. To change backgrounds, turn the card-stock around and slip it back onto the cup to finish the story.

