



family production notes

INTRODUCTION

This overview describes resources and ideas for a weekly 45 minute production for families of elementary aged children. Twelve segments are listed that usually happen in the same order from week to week. Most segments are four minutes or less. We've developed and organized the segments so that the bottom line message remains the same, but the way the message is delivered changes often.

Although complete scripts are provided for drama and Bible story segments, the Family Production component of 252Basics provides a framework, outlines, and idea generators which your team may use to develop a production that best reflects the needs of your particular environment.

It's important to note that this is neither "Children's Church" nor a stand-alone, complete curriculum. It is an approach to reaching families in a relevant manner, without changing the timeless message of biblical virtues.

Specific details of each segment's purpose and production are described below.



PRE-SHOW MUSIC

The choice of pre-show music is essential to creating the desired atmosphere for the production. Even before people walk into the theater, an expectation exists in their mind. As they walk into the room, an image is created of what they will experience that morning.

Use pre-show songs that are upbeat and virtue driven. Consider using previous activity songs. Target 4th and 5th graders during this segment.

In addition to using music to establishing a feel for the room, position two characters from the production at the front of the stage. An energized dialog between kids and characters helps focus attention on the stage area and builds a personal bond between the audience and performers.



ACTIVITY MUSIC

A repeatable, interactive signal should always mark the transition from the pre-show to the activity music. The first few minutes of any production are the most important. Three activity songs establish a strong upbeat feel at the beginning of the production and set the tone for the environment. The songs should have moderate to high energy levels and immediately engage kids in the environment. In addition to adult singers leading the songs and movement from the stage, a team of kid singers who model

For a video sample of segments and audio tracks for transitions used in a Family Production order the "KidStuf Backstage" enhanced CD @ www.kidstuf.com

For additional tracks to use in your family production, you can order "Wait: Songs That Teach Character," on this website.





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the moves is highly desirable. This segment defines the rhythm you will carry through the day.



WELCOME/INTRO

During the welcome segment, two Co-hosts answer the questions: “What is this?”, “Why are they doing this?”, and “What is going to happen today?” One Co-host tends to be an up-front, serious, credible spokesperson. The second Co-host is not always accurate, and serves as a comic foil. They are the classic straight man/funny man team. In the Welcome/Intro segment, they recognize first time visitors, explain the goals of the production, and unveil some type of banner of the virtue definition. After they read the definition, an object lesson is introduced by a character who interrupts them and needs attention, or by incorporating a surprise object.



INTRO SKETCH

The sketch presents a valid, credible problem within the world of the characters. This problem focuses on the virtue and specifically deals with the Bible focus (and bottom line) of that particular day. Generally, a four minute Intro Sketch sets up the problem. By using nine basic character types and a few cameo characters, the imaginations of the kids and adults are engaged. The sketch tries to blend broad humor with some serious subjects to make essential points without being heavy-handed. At least one character will stand out as the sympathetic protagonist—the one who will learn how to apply the value in an essential way. He or she is the example of how the audience members can apply the value in the coming week.

A chart is included that broadly defines the characters’ personalities. It is vital to understand that the characters are not limited to one area but are certainly most comfortable when they can deal with circumstances that are easily defined inside their realm. Some of the most effective sketches draw from the tension created when a character willingly or unwillingly is taken far out of her personality.



RAPID RESPONSE

Audience participation is a key element to every Family Production. This can take the form of direct questions, asking people from the audience to participate onstage, bringing in an animal to illustrate the value, or inviting a special guest to directly address the audience. Since rapid response happens after the Intro Sketch, the change of presentation from dramatic (pretending we are in the clubhouse world), to personal (acknowledging we are all in the same room participating in a Family Production) keeps the audience involved. Parents are given the opportunity to praise their children in public by sharing how they have seen their kids show the month’s virtue.



GOOD BOOK LOOK

Good Book Look is the most important segment of the Family Production. It's designed to show the audience that the Bible has the answers to life's issues. It is important to note that reading a Bible story is very rare. Everything in the segment is from a kid's perspective. The details of a story are told in a creative way. Since the story has been 'told' in the small group setting to the majority of the audience, the treatment in the production serves as a reminder of the basic details, allowing the Host of the segment to be specific about the application of the bottom line. Many methods are used, including visual examples, cartoons, mime, a news program, a talk show format, a stand up comic, and special guests. The objective is to make sure families can readily apply the principle the Good Book Look teaches to their lives in the coming week.

Though most of the characters for Good Book Look are on the zany side, the Host will remain credible. The Host is responsible for gathering all the facts and presenting them.



MEDIA TIME

Use contemporary tools to communicate a relevant, timeless message. Video is an overwhelming part of our culture. Kids are accustomed to watching a screen and taking in information. Use this segment to visually break the flow of the production. Moving the audience's focus from the stage, or the house, to the screens gives them another perspective on the Virtue. The videos typically should feature local kids and teens so the audience can identify with them.

Examples of video presentations could include:

- Kid Views: Kids give their opinions about how the Virtue applies to them.
- Teen Talk: Teens talk about the Virtue in an edgy, black and white, presentation
- Dear God: A video shot completely from the point of view of a kid writing a letter to God. The letter usually asks God about the Virtue and relates a story that is happening in the child's life. Family Production notes will include some general ideas to use for videos each week.



EXIT SKETCH

The most basic function of the Exit Sketch is to resolve the conflict created in the Intro Sketch in a way that is relevant to an elementary child's environment. The key to doing this in the Family Production is the word "relevant." Families realize that sometimes problems are tough to fix. Even though closure is brought within an eight minute sketch, the sketch maintains the truth of the situation in a way that can serve as a memorable example to families.


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ACTIVITY SONG

The Activity Song reflects the style of music that kids regularly listen to on the radio. The goal is to reinforce the application of the monthly Virtue through the lyrics of the song, the movements that are taught from the stage, and the repetition of the Activity Song each week of the month.

Be sure to download a sample of an activity song on this web-site.



WRAP UP

Wrap Up is the last chance to state the bottom line for a specific program. This segment includes a review and summary of the program. It's goal is to leave the audience with something to remember. This is sometimes done in the form of a question for kids to ask in the car on the way home. The characters clearly state what they have learned that day and the Co-hosts lead everyone in repeating the definition of the Virtue. All transitions are crucial, but the transition into Wrap Up must be quick and easy in order to retain the attention of the audience.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Co-hosts make announcements about upcoming events or other relevant information. Quick and clear are the keys to this segment. Although the singers and characters are onstage during this segment, the focus needs to be on the Co-hosts.



EXIT SONG

This specific tag at the end of your Family Production is a signal and a promise. It functions as a signal that it's time to go home or to lunch with your family. It also functions as a promise that we will be back to do the same thing again next week (or month). Think of television theme songs. Each one tells an audience that the same quality and care will happen again and again.