Puppets as Transition Devices

Excerpted from “Puppet Power” workshop by Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist Joe Pipik

Transition Device
One very popular use for a puppet is to use it as a transition into a new subject. When introducing a new subject, the puppet character can help assess the familiarity, point of reference, and knowledge base of the children. In reviewing a subject, the puppet (you) can check retention of important key points. The puppet character can function in a variety of ways.

A. Concrete representative of new subject
   - Farmer or farm animal for farm unit
   - Doctor or dentist for hygiene unit
   - Historical or literary figure
     
     Good morning! My name is Goose—Mother Goose. Do you children know any of my rhymes?
     
     (...Or use an unknown character from a story or rhyme such as Miss Muffet’s spider or Little Red Riding Hood’s brother)

B. Class mascot or random visitors
   - Cuddly friend or pet for class (dog, cat, bear, etc...). A simple “Hey, what’s up?” can lead into any topic.
   - Stranger
     
     Example:
     
     Teacher: Well, who are you?
     
     Puppet: I’m a wizard, and I heard there was going to be a little magic here, so I thought maybe I’d learn some new tricks.
     
     Teacher: Well, we are talking about dinosaurs.
     
     Puppet: Well, how about a magic spell to go back in time and meet one?

C. Reoccurring theme character

Oh, look who’s here. It must be lunch time. (...or clean-up time, time for coats, math adventure time, etc.)

Who’s my line leader? Here are the alligator eyes.

What kind of bodies do alligators have?

Right, long and straight. Show me.