



Kennedy Klostermann, left, shows Ralph the puppet to 3-year-old Finley Schmitt.



Claire Ridenour, left, smiles as Reagan Holthaus tries her hand at puppeteering.

# Puppet ministry brings word of God, fun to audiences

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What do you get when you bring together a group of high school students, big puppets, the word of God and enthusiastic audiences? For at least 40 years in the Manchester area, that answer has been His Handiwork Puppet Ministry.

The ministry performs puppet shows and skits to deliver a message of hope and redemption. A recent performance at Regional Medical Center had an audience of children and their parents hear the puppets tell the Christmas story through songs and skits.

The group is led by Michele Harris and Lisa Andreasen. Rehearsing at the Stone Church every Sunday night, the high schoolers practice using their puppeteering skills, enjoying spending their 90 minutes together.

Harris has led the group for 23 years. She began performing with the group when she was in high school.

“Our students are high schoolers. We have all girls now but have had boys in the group in the past. We take anybody who just wants to share the word of God and be part of a ministry that is maybe not in people’s faces, but is delivering the message of God in a fun way.”

Harris said the group is made up of several denominations. The group performs throughout the year, with the

Christmas season being their busiest.

“It’s a great way to minister to the community,” Harris said. “Sometimes people don’t even realize they are hearing the word of God. They just think they are here watching a fun puppet show. We hope the word of God comes out in the songs and skits.”

Harris said she and Andreasen enjoy the girls. “It’s just fun to get together with them every Sunday. We do a devotional to help get them into the word. Sometimes we help them read the Bible on their own and understand that. It’s fun seeing the relationships they form.”

After performances, the puppeteers come out with their puppets and let the kids in the audience get an up-close look at them. “Seeing the kids interact with the puppets makes it all worth it,” Harris said.

That interaction with the audience is something West Delaware senior Claire Ridenour enjoys about being in the ministry. “I’ve been involved for two years,” she said. “I love the kids. They are so much fun.”

West Delaware senior Kennedy Klostermann has been involved in the ministry for three years.

“We spend every Sunday night together and it’s a great refresh. It’s a great way to start my week. We get to build our relationship with Christ and then we get to practicing. It’s so much fun spending time with these girls. They are people you



Brooklyn Lahr is all smiles as she checks out a puppet following the performance by His Handiwork Puppet Ministry at Regional Medical Center, Dec. 5.

Mike Putz • Staff Photos

can trust and rely on.”

Klostermann gets as much out of the program as the kids in the audience.

“The kids are so much fun and are one of my favorite parts of the ministry. We hear their giggles and laughs from behind the curtain. Then when they come up afterward and see their faces light up is something not everyone gets to see. I love this program. It’s so awesome.”



Wise men and their camels are part of the Christmas story performance of His Handiwork Puppet Ministry.



His Handiwork Puppet Ministry: front from left, Michelle Harris, co-leader, Claire Ridenour, Kesley Roths and Lisa Andreasen, co-leader; back row, Kennedy Klostermann, Maddie Hoeger, Maylin Coates, Lena Petlon and Andrea Wubbena.