

Bongo in the Classroom

To make Bongo the puppet come alive in your classroom and add to the excitement of Live B.i.G., there are some guidelines that will be helpful:

- o Creating a habitat for Bongo to live in when you are not using him will add to his appeal. One habitat that might be fun to have in the classroom would be a tree that could be placed in the corner where Bongo could oversee all the activities in the classroom.

- o To create the tree:

Secure a cardboard carpet roll from one of the local carpet stores. This will probably be very long. You only need a length of 6-7 feet depending on the height of your ceiling. Cut out a hole that Bongo would fit in about 1/3 of the way down the carpet roll. Paint the roll to resemble a tree.

Attach dowel rods or other sticks, about 24 inches long, at the top opening. Tissue paper or colored bulletin board paper can then be added to create the leafy part of the tree. You can also insert a few dowel rods in the trunk to make branches. If you like, you can make the dowel rods look more realistic by placing painted wrapping paper rolls over the dowel rods. You can also use Kraft paper that has been twisted like a vine to drape over the rods.

- o You could paint a small box to attach to the front of tree for the Bible verse. This would be similar to the one used on the DVD.
- o When you are not using Bongo, he could sit on one of the branches. If you place a hook inside the large hole on the trunk, he could be inside looking out at the children. Sometimes he might be sleeping completely out of sight.
- o Be sure to secure your "tree." You can build a stand that it will fit over. You can turn a small table upside down in the corner and the tree can fit over the legs. You don't want Bongo's tree falling on anyone's head.
- o Create a voice different from your own for Bongo. This draws the children's attention to Bongo and away from you. It might be a high, squeaky voice or it might be a surprisingly deep voice. When you talk to Bongo, turn and look at Bongo and have him look at you. The children will look at Bongo too. He will become a distinct personality.

- o Use Bongo only at special times, such as story time or music time. This keeps him special to the children. It keeps the "puppet magic." If you put the puppet out for the children to use, Bongo will no longer be special to them. You may find, however, that the children want to make a Bongo puppet too. There is a sample of this in the **Kids' Book—page A** for fall.
- o Having Bongo "perch" on your arm or hand as you are using him will also add realism. He could fly back to his tree when you are finished.