

A cool way of spreading the Gospel

COMICS

by Dave Weiss

What you need to do this project:

Paper
Pencils
Inking devices, markers, pens or brushes
(plus a variety of other media depending on how you intend to publish)

Ah the art of sequential story telling. Comics have been a long maligned art form but they have always been a great way to communicate a message. They are usually concise and to the point with a visual image that helps to drive the point home. They are great for communicating the Gospel message and drawing them can be an awesome way to reach people, not to mention a lot of fun.

Start your group off with a Bible story or an attribute that you would like them to express. Brainstorm some story ideas and create a script which includes both dialogue and action directions. Think of your comic page as a mini movie. Have them create thumbnail story boards with rough ideas for each panel. Then have them work up rough page outlines where the panels are drawn in. Most finished comic books are 6" x9" so the page would be drawn to a proportional size to the finished piece. Many artists work at a size of 10" x 15" and then have the work reduced. The size you work at should

depend on how you will reproduce your work. If for example you are going to attempt to publish a professional book work at the previously mentioned size.

If you choose to do an online comic or something you will produce on your office copier, work at a size your equipment can handle. Comic artists often work on Bristol board because it can stand up to the inking process.

Keep frames to about 6-9 per page or less. Once you have thumbnailed your page and done the layout of the frames, you are ready to "pencil" the page, that is draw the details in in pencil.

Professional comic artists draw very detailed frames and indicate where all the shading will be. Please note, your finished piece will be rendered in ink so any shading will have to be

accomplished through hatching and crosshatching. Try not to get too caught up in continuous tone shading as this cannot be done in pen and ink. I usually use a non-repro blue pencil since that will not reproduce in scanning, photocopying or printing.

Word balloons are added afterward but as you lay your panels out there should be some room allowed for them. Once your pencils are fairly tight, it is time to ink the page. There are several techniques and tools from markers to pen and ink to brush and ink. Use the one your



group would be best able to use. After all the details have been inked in, it is time to letter the piece. There are a couple of ways this can be done. Word balloons can be created on another piece of paper and pasted into place or if you have the capability, you can scan your page and drop the word balloons into it in a program such as Photoshop or a number of other programs.

Fonts for comics are available at a few different sources. One I have enjoyed is blambot (<http://www.blambot.com>). These are low cost or even free (depending on how you intend to use them).

Color, for most ministries is out of the budget, but it can be done a number of ways. In the comics industry, many people use water colors like Dr. PH Martins, but the trend is moving more toward computer generated color. Again this will be out of your budget if you are printing the book but if you go the online route, try painting your page in Photoshop and save the page as a 72 dpi jpg file. Please note while working on a page like this, these files get huge. Save often.

If you do decide to print there are several ways to go. You can try to get it into a major publisher (if your work is very professional). If you're interested in just handing a few out around church, you might just try photocopying the pages and stapling them together in a folded book format.

There are also a few services online that will publish a book for you. One that I have found is Harold Buchholz Print Services' All Ages Comic Book Publishers at <http://www.icomics.com/hbps/index.htm>

There are a multitude of kids out there that are chomping at the bit to learn how to draw superheroes and super villains and all the high tech gadgetry. Use this as an outreach. There are two ministries in Georgia that are already doing

this. For insights into their ministries, go to Tony Snipe's Kreative Kingdom web site at <http://www.geocities.com/tonysnipes/> or Edgar J. Williams' web site Prosperous Warrior Productions <http://pwp1.tripod.com>. These guys are both very gifted comic artists who have decided to use their gifts to serve the Lord by teaching their skills to kids.

If you have gifts in the area of cartooning and comics, go to your local comicshop and see if they will let you post a flyer offering to teach comic



art. Then brainstorm some stories great Biblical messages and get started.

Find a printer, so that your group can see their finished work in print or if that's not in the budget, create a web site and post their work on line.



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