

## **MOVEMENT PRINCIPLES**

The following principles come to us from the theater and apply to gesture, dance and spatial stage movement. They are useful when doing choreography. They create comedy when done wrong.

**Horizontals** are weak and negative. The maid crosses the stage from side to side, we make the gesture for “forget it”, or “no way” with palms down, hands moving across the body at the waist.

**Diagonals** are active, full of energy.

**Verticals** are the strongest. The King walks straight down stage, a gesture pronouncing judgment is straight down

**Curves and Circles** are love and beauty. We would never describe a baby with a straight gesture. Circles are endless so can be used for infinity or eternal. Circles also symbolize community.

**Stage Directions:** Stage language is not inappropriate for use in a chancel. Since the cross or focal point is not always in the same place using stage directions avoids a lot of confusion.

**Upstage:** the back of the stage, to move away from the audience. In Shakespeare’s time the stage went “up hill”, low in front, high in the back for visibility from the audience. Now we have flat stages and the audience or congregation is often seated on a floor that rises from the front to the back

**Downstage:** the front of the stage next to the audience, to move toward the front of the stage.

**Stage Right and Stage Left:** the dancer’s right and left when facing the audience or congregation

**Combinations** are made from these: upstage right, down stage left

**Off-stage-On-stage:** In the theater there is off-stage—where you cannot be seen ---and onstage--- where you are before the audience. In worship services there is no off stage. Where and how the dancers sit and move from place to place, getting ready for and going out after, their pieces is very important. Children should be taught to line up and get from place to place gracefully without adult help.

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**Make-up:** Many churches do not have even adequate light. Unless dancers wear some eye make-up and lip-stick, they look like they have no face. Good daytime make up is usually enough. If there are TV lights then adjustments may need to be made. Try to get video footage and see how you look.

**Hair:** For the most part, hair should be secured. Long bangs and hair on the shoulders obscure the face and the line of the neck. Once in a while there are characters portrayed who would have loose hair, but a polished look is best for regular pieces.

**Costumes:** Dancers of any age should NEVER look sexy. It is better to go with very covered and conservative costumes than risk a call to the pastor and the loss of the group. The same concerns apply to costume colors as to make-up. Healthy, bright colors will show up in bad light and will not washout in TV lights.

