

Cub Scout Magic

I first learned magic tricks from my Grandfather. We would go visit them in the summer and we'd have a Magic Show night. My first memory of this was when I was 6 or 7 years old. The tricks astounded me and entertained me. But, I just HAD to know how they worked. Many young boys (and girls) are the same – curious about the how and why.

Magic can be used for entertainment and for learning, but also for getting Cub Scout's attention!

The entertainment part of the equation is fairly easy to understand. I've included several tricks and ideas in this set of handouts to help you.

The learning part may seem a bit odd, at first. There are many types of magic tricks. Some of my favorite tricks have to do with mind games, about logic and thinking. Magic also takes practice . . . lots of practice. Boys develop better eye-hand coordination and self-control. And finally, boys can develop not only a talent, but an ability to perform in front of other people, losing some of the stage fright over time that many feel. Bear Cub Scout Elective 13 deals with magic and asks scouts to learn and perform magic. And magic could be used for part of the Webelos Showman Activity Badge (it would be kind of a stretch, but still possible).

I started doing magic shows for family members, then family birthday parties, then school talent shows, and then for even larger groups of people, like entire church groups or cub scout packs or schools.

I am by no means professional, but I enjoy sharing the wonder of Magic with others. As a youth teacher and later a Cubmaster, I've found that magic tricks are a great way to get the attention of my audience. One or two sprinkled through a lesson or pack meeting keeps everyone on their toes.

Doing magic tricks isn't simply about knowing the secrets behind the tricks. Knowing how the tricks are accomplished does not make you a magician. Being able to properly perform magic and affect people in a positive way is what makes you a magician. When you are performing magic, your goal is to entertain your audience.

Choose an appropriate setting, select a costume, add some decorations, and have some fun.

Rules of Magic

1. Don't ever tell the secret!
2. Never do the same trick twice for the same audience.
3. Leave your audience wanting more.
4. Learning 1 trick very well is better than partially learning 100 tricks.
5. Practice, practice, practice!

Attention-Getters

It is perfectly acceptable to throw in a magic trick just for fun whenever you want – In den meetings, pack meetings, walking around your neighborhood. I usually carry around one or two little items that I can use for tricks (known as pocket magic). From coins to toothpicks to paper to a pre-prepared prop, these items can be used for a variety of tricks.

The secret to most tricks is the patter. Patter is the words you use when setting up the trick. You can tell a story to the audience or explain what is going to happen or ask for volunteers and talk to them about the trick. Patter needs to flow and feel natural. It also can throw your audience off by making them pay attention to something you want while doing the “trick” part without them noticing.

Pretty much any trick can be an attention-getter. But, the most effective ones are those that don’t need a lot of setup and that seem to just happen (usually because someone mentions something related to the trick you’d like to do, or your patter involves a relevant story, or when someone asks for a trick).

How to Do a Show

After you’ve mastered (or your boys have mastered) several tricks, you are ready to put on a magic show.

An entire show usually has 3 parts: opener, middle, closer.

For the opener, make it something that has lots of flash and that is quick to do. This is to make sure you capture your audience’s attention.

For the middle section, you generally perform more involved tricks and stunts. I like to build on a theme. For example, for the Abracadabra theme a couple years ago, I made each boy a magician’s apprentice and was “teaching” them how to be a real magician. So, each trick got progressively more difficult. Or, you could arrange them by type of trick (rope, card, coin, mind, and so forth). In any case, the middle tricks generally have a bit of setup time. This helps to build suspense – so don’t rush it.

For the closer, you perform the best trick you have so you can end with a “bang”. This is the last thing your audience will remember about your performance, so make it great!

Tricks

Balanced Coin



Fold a dollar bill in half lengthwise, and place it on the table with the fold up. Challenge your friend to balance a half-dollar coin on top of the fold. Fold the bill again into a V-

shape, and place the coin as shown. Pull slowly and gently on the ends of the bill to straighten it out, and the coin will remain balanced on the creased edge.

Disappearing Water

Pour a little water into a paper cup. Say you will make the water disappear. Ask someone to hold out a hand. Pour the cup into their hand. Instead of getting wet, the person will be left holding an Ice Cube instead. Say that you tried to make the water disappear - but it was too hard!

Secret: You will need to prepare the cup in advance. Take a piece of dry sponge, and cut it into a round shape so that it fits into your paper cup. Glue the round sponge to the bottom of the cup. Put an ice cube into the cup, just prior to performing the trick. Have a second cup of water ready. Pour a little water into the cup, so that the water doesn't touch the ice cube. The sponge will soak up the water. Pour the ice cube onto the person's hand. You may want to cover the top of the cup while pouring so that the person cannot see the contents of the cup.

Coin Through the Napkin

You cause a borrowed coin to penetrate a cloth napkin. Borrow a coin and have the owner mark it if he wished. Hold the coin vertically by its flat side between thumb and forefinger of your left hand. Place the napkin over it so that the coin is under its center. Under cover of the napkin get a small fold of the napkin between your thumb and the coin.

Now, with your right hand lift the part of the napkin closest the he audience and drape it back on top of the other half, over your left arm, and show that coin is still there. With a snap of the left wrist cause both halves of the napkin to fall forward while still holding the coin and napkin, in the center, in the left hand.

Secret: Twist the napkin to have the illusion that the coin is wrapped securely in the center of the napkin. Exert a little pressure on the edge of the coin and it will "rise through the napkin". It looks as if it is slowly penetrating the napkin. Hand the coin back to the owner and show the napkin is unharmed.

The Six Glasses Puzzle



Arrange six glasses in a row as shown. The three on the right are filled with water. The three on the left are empty. The puzzle is to arrange the glasses so that they alternate, full and empty. You are allowed to move only one glass.

Solution: Pick up glass number five, pour its contents into glass number two, then replace it in its original spot.

Levitating Arm

Tell a friend that you can create a powerful force that will invisibly raise his arm. Ask your friend to stand up straight with one shoulder leaning against a wall. Tell him to push hard against the wall with the back of his wrist and to keep pushing while you slowly count to twenty-five. Then ask him to step away from the wall and relax. Within a short time, he will be astonished to find that his arm is floating up and away from his body as if something were pulling it up.

Secret: The secret lies in the muscles. During the time that your friend is pushing against the wall, the shoulder muscles that would normally raise his arm out to the side are tensing. Later, after the arm is free, the muscles automatically respond again in a delayed reaction. But to the person doing the trick, his arm feels as if it is moving magically on its own.

Super-Strength Napkin

This is a great trick to do at a dinner party, such as the Blue and Gold banquet. Twist a paper napkin into a "rope." Hand the paper rope to a friend, and challenge him to break the napkin rope by pulling at the ends. No matter how hard he pulls, he will not be able to break it. You take the napkin rope and break it easily.

Secret: Have a glass of water handy. First twist the napkin into a tough rope. While your friend is trying to break the napkin rope, dip your fingertips into the glass of water. When you take the napkin, twist the middle once more. Touch the middle of the rope with your wet fingertips, so that the rope gets wet. When the rope gets wet, it becomes easy to break apart.

"Think Of A Cub Scout Word" Trick

AKELA	TIGER CUBS	DEN	BOBCAT	WEBELOS	WOLF
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Preparation: Fold six 5x8 inch index cards in half lengthwise. On each card write in large capital letters, the following Cub Scout words: den, wolf, Akela, bobcat, Webelos, and tiger cubs. Mix up the cards and place them on the table in no particular order.

Have a member of the audience mentally select one of the words. After they have done so, ask them to silently spell the word, one letter at a time, as you tap on a card in turn. Every time you tap a card, your spectator is to silently spell one letter. When they reach the last letter of the word, they are to yell, "Stop!" Amazingly, you will be pointing at the card they had selected.

Secret: The secret is that each word contains a different number of letters. Den has three, wolf has four, Akela has five, etc. For the first two letters that the spectator silently spells, you can touch any of the cards. However, starting with the third letter, you must touch the three-letter card, den, for the fourth letter the card wolf, for the fifth letter the

word Akela, and so on, until the spectator yells, "Stop!" When you place the cards on the table, mix them up well so that the fact that each word contains a different number of letters is not obvious. This trick should be used as a transition from one trick to another. Do this trick only once, because the secret can be quickly revealed if the trick is repeated. You can also make up a set of cards for other things, such as colors, cars, drinks (tea, milk, water, coffee, limeade, root beer), and pets (dog, bird, snake, turtle, hamster, gold fish). Tailor the cards to match your theme.

Lightning Math

This is a great demonstration of mental mathematics. You will show your audience that you can add up a column of numbers before the total is written down. Ask a volunteer from the audience to help you with this trick. On a whiteboard or drawing pad, write down the number 234. Have your assistant write any three-digit number under it. Now write a three-digit number under his. Continue doing this three more times, so that your volunteer has written five numbers and you have written four numbers. There should be a total of nine numbers. Next draw a line under the column and hand him a calculator to add up the numbers. He'll come up with the number 4,230. Before the volunteer writes down the number, hold up an envelope and say, "In this sealed envelope is the answer to this math problem. Let's compare answers." Have him write down his answer. Then hand him the envelope and have him open it. Inside is a note that reads: "The total of the numbers is 4230."

Secret: You will be controlling the column of numbers so that the column adds up to 4230. The first number that you write down is the key number. The next eight numbers are written in a series of four pairs. For each number that your assistant writes down, you write down a number that when added to his number will give a total of 999. See the example below. You will notice that the pairs of numbers 2-3, 4-5, 6-7, and 8-9 each total 999. So, when your assistant wrote 321, you wrote 678 under it. This pair of numbers adds up to 999. For you math types, the total is determined by the formula:

$\text{Total} = 4000 + (\text{KeyNumber} - 4)$. Knowing how the key number derives the total, you can repeat the trick using a different key number and generate a different total each time.

Example:

(1)	234	(key number)
(2)	321	
(3)	678	
(4)	972	
(5)	027	
(6)	321	
(7)	678	
(8)	422	
(9)	577	
Total	4,230	

Haunted Paper Clips

Materials: 2 paper clips and a dollar bill.

Fold a dollar bill into thirds (S shape) and hold it in that position with two paper clips placed over each end and the center. Now pull the ends of the dollar bill in opposite directions quickly. The paper clips will jump into the air and hook together!!

Magic of Cub Scouting

To take a little boy and help him grow into a man, that's magic.
To teach him how to make things and let him know he can, that's magic.
To watch him learn the Promise and apply it to his life, that's magic.
To see him grow in mind and body, overcoming strife, that's magic.
To watch his family beam with pride at everything he'll do, that's magic.
And love him even if things don't go as he wanted them to, that's magic.
And his Scouting leaders, we also beam with pride,
Because we know he's learning and growing up inside,
That's Cub Scout Magic.

Additional Resources

Other Great Resources:

<http://magic.about.com/od/beginningmagic/a/120706scouts.htm>

<http://www.scoutingmagazine.org/issues/0109/a-magc.html>

For even more resources, just search the internet for “magic tricks for children” or “cub scout magic”

Also, please feel free to email or call me!