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Dear Cub Scout Leader,

Last spring you indicated that you wanted to receive a **FREE** copy of my *Cub Scout Magic Activity*. I’m sorry it took me as long as it has, but I found that the notes and handouts that I use in presenting the program would be a little different than those a person with no magical background would need, and I needed to adjust it and provide you with some additional information. So although the “meat” of the program is contained within the three-page review sheets, the *real* magic is in the way you present it to the scouts!

Please read the following information and have a great time making magic at your next scouting event!

Sincerely,

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P.S. One copy of this packet is being made available to each pack that requested one. Please feel free to reproduce this packet and share it with other leaders in your pack.

About the program

The package you have in your hands is a variation of the program I have presented to organization for almost two decades. It is the result of years of presentations and trial-and-error on my part. It was originally developed back in the late 1980's when I was asked to teach a magic class for children at the *Cedar Rapids Youtheatre* in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Since then, the program has been refined and I have presented it at numerous places and events, such as 3 years at *Wild Eagle Lodge* in Eagle River, Wisconsin; 2 years as part of the Children's Theater classes at the *Sunset Playhouse* in Elm Grove, Wisconsin; and too many school events and high interest days to mention. Oh, and (of course) a few *Cub Scout* events here and there!

There are two different ways that I have presented the program. Each is based upon the different conditions given for the event or activity. I will briefly explain each method, describe how *I* present the program, and my suggestions on how you might do so.

We are all different people, and the way you go about doing something will be different than the way I would. However, I believe that you should have some kind of outgoing presentation and be a little bit of a "ham" for this to program to have its full impact. If you can get the kids interested and excited, the rest is easy!

Here are the two methods of presenting the *Cub Scout Magic Activity* program:

"Make and Take" workshop - I think that this will probably the way most of you will use this program. You will pick one or more of the tricks, present the trick to the scouts, teach them the method, and have them make the trick for themselves. This would fit in well at either a den meeting, or a larger all-pack activity. *Two Card Montes* and *Jumping Dots Cards* are two great tricks to make. After the trick is made, you can have the boys practice their trick, develop a unique presentation, and then do some magic for their fellow scouts!

This is a very practical way to use the program as it allows you control over how much time the program will take and how much magic the kids actually learn. The program can stretch out over several meetings, or just be a "one trick pony." I often use the "*Make and Take*" method of teaching when I am asked to teach a several-week-long course.

When planning a "*Make and Take*," be sure you have all the necessary supplies you will need so everyone can build the trick. Build a sample yourself first -- you'll need one anyway to do the trick -- and take notes as you do, so you don't forget anything important that I may have inadvertently left out!

"You Do Magic" Seminar - This is the way I present the program at events such as resorts and High Interest Nights at schools. This presentation is a combination of a show and a seminar. I will do a few magic tricks for the kids, and then teach them how to do the trick (or a similar trick.) Sometimes I will make simple props available to them, like

rubber bands or paper clips, *but I do not have them construct anything*. In this way, they can follow along with some of the tricks, and build the others later using the instructions from the handout packet.

The advantage to this method is that you can fit in more magic, and there is incentive for the children to pursue the magic on their own after the event is over. The disadvantage to you is that you will have to learn an entire repertoire of tricks, rather than just one or two. But that can be fun, too!

Also, if you have seen my presentation you will know that I use similar tricks to those shown, but use a different technique or more professional equipment than what the kids will learn. In this way they get to experience entertaining and professional-level magic, yet be able to perform their own “junior” versions of the same tricks. An example of this is when I do the famous *Linking Ring* trick, in which rings of solid steel magically link together. Naturally, such a trick would cost a lot of money and take much practice for a child to perform properly, yet they enjoy doing my *Linking Paper Clips* version themselves!

You Are The Magic!

Admittedly, you are at a disadvantage. The trick packet I am supplying you with were developed as an addendum to the live presentation -- sort of a “Cliff Notes” version of what the attendees of the class or seminar have already seen me do. All of the little hints and personal experience that I bring to my presentations cannot be included in these notes ... so much of it is up to you!

Naturally, you can just as easily go to the library and get a magic book. But what I have done here is prepared what I think are the very best tricks for children of scouting age to understand and be able to perform. Also, the tricks I have selected all lend themselves to fitting into one of three categories:

1) Can be learned almost instantly - This is important. When a child returns home from the program and is asked by a parent, “What did you learn?” I want him to be able to do at least *one* trick ... *right away!* This helps the parents feel good about the time spent at the event, and gives the child the encouragement to continue learning and performing magic.

2) Something the child can make - I like the idea of a child being able to perform a trick with something he made himself. That creates real ownership and understanding of the trick. Besides, it’s fun to do!

3) Something the child can use to invent a story or creative presentation - An active imagination is one of the joys of working with kids! I don’t want them to think that the way I do a trick is the only way! So a few of the tricks I present are accompanied by a story ... when I make the knot appear in a rope, I tell a story about a ghost in the room

who can't be seen but will reveal itself to you by tying the knot -- *if* you can get the rope close enough! Or, when presenting the jumping rubber bands, we aren't just dealing with a rubber band ... it represents The Great Houdini as he escapes from one jail cell and jumps into the next! This can actually lead to a follow-up activity for the next meeting to see who came up with alternative accompanying stories!

So how do I start?

Let's make this simple ... here are my recommended steps to presenting *Cub Scout Magic Activity*. Based on the information above, you'll first make a few choices... then begin the magic!

- 1. Determine your method** - "*Make and Take*" or "*Seminar*"
- 2. Select your trick(s)**
- 3. Learn the trick or tricks**
- 4. Gather your materials**
- 5. HAVE FUN!!!**

You will need to learn the trick itself! This is not a big task, but make sure you are doing it well and in a manner that will fool the kids. I might add here that a lot of the scouts will *never* admit that they were fooled ... so don't let it bother you if they say, "I know how you did that!" Chances are they don't ... they just won't admit it in front of their friends! The best way to handle this is not to argue or challenge them but to simply say, "Good! You're paying attention. Don't say anything yet! We'll all learn how to do it in a little while!"

In learning a magic trick, it's important to understand that there are very few "rights" and "wrongs" in magic. By its very nature it's an illogical art form. Whatever works, works! I have tried to explain the tricks so you can understand them ... but if you find a better way to do something, feel free to use it!

After you learn the trick, practice it until it becomes second nature. You don't want to mess it up in front of the kids! Finally, think of a fun way to present it -- an interesting story, a unique twist, or even by using music or sound effects! This is "Show Biz! Ham it up!"

The Tricks

Here is a list of the tricks in the order of difficulty, as well as some of the problems kids typically encounter with each and hints that may help.

Knot vanish - Easiest of all. Plus, they get to learn how to tie a slip knot! If the knot isn't prepared properly, the trick won't work.

Two Card Monte - Make sure they do not accidentally show the back of either card.

Magnetic Wand - Make sure the audience cannot see behind the hand. Make sure the "secret finger" isn't seen to move.

Jumping Rubber Bands - As easy as opening your hand, but kids tend to slip their fingers out from beneath the rubber band. Also concentrate on getting the setup done without being noticed.

Mental Calculator - Not a difficult trick, but it will require good math skills. In fact, this trick is an excellent way to practice addition! The main point here is to *describe clearly* what the spectator is to do. If they miss seeing their number on one of the cards, the trick will not work!

Linking paper clips - Once set up, this trick is simple -- just pull the ends of the bill. But the setup is often confusing for kids (and adults!) Make sure they get a picture like the one on the review sheet. You might also want to make up a set for them to take home so their parents can see how it's set up before they do the trick.

Knot appearance - Some kids get this right away, others really have trouble. I use the "finger scissors, finger pinchers" description. It might seem childish to explain it that way, but believe me they understand it a lot faster using those analogies. It's all about remember which fingers are supposed to be open, and when!

Jumping Dots - This tends to be a really hard trick for the kids. The moves themselves are easy, but unnatural. They always want to turn their hands or twist the card in a way that results in the trick not working. It's all about turning the card!

Here's a hint: The fingers of the bottom hand always point to the ceiling as the card pivots; the fingers on the side hand always point to the side as they flip the card. Once they remember to do that, the only thing to remember is always cover the dot or the blank spot completely!

“Magic Mark” Nilsen’s Magic Workshop ***Magic Review Sheet***

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JUMPING RUBBER BANDS - A rubber band mysteriously jumps around on your hand - *BY MAGIC!*

Here’s how you do it - Place a rubber band over the first and middle fingers of your open right hand, back of hand towards the audience. Grasp the rubber band with your left hand (on the palm side), and pull the band out far enough so you can slip all four fingertips of the right hand into the rubber band. Your right hand will now look like a fist.



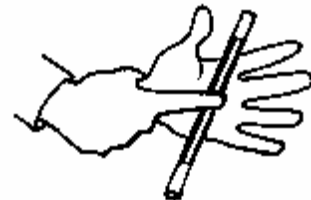
From the front of the fist, it will still look like the rubber band is only on the two fingers; but from the back, the band will be around all four fingertips!

Now open your hand, and the rubber band will jump to the other two fingers (the ring and little finger). What is actually happening is your four fingers are "pushing" the band off the first two fingers, and onto the second two fingers -- and it all happens automatically when you open your hand!

Presentation notes: Don't let people know that you are placing your fingertips into the band; in fact, they should not notice you doing anything at all. I hide this by comparing the rubber band to the magician Houdini and stretching the band several times as Houdini 'limbers up' in preparation for his escape. Then, on the last stretch, I sneak my fingers in! Again, invent a good story for your magic trick!

MAGNETIC WAND - You can make a wand stick to your hand -- *BY MAGIC!*

Here's how you do it - Hold the wand (or pencil, stick, etc.) in your right fist. The wand's ends should extend out both the top and bottom of the fist. Your palm (or fingers of clenched fist) should face the audience. Grasp your wrist with your left hand, saying "To make sure that nothing slips up or out my sleeve, I'll tightly hold my wrist".



Here's the move - you will do two things at the same time: Gently swing your body to the left, so the back of your right hand now faces the audience. During this "swinging" motion, move your LEFT forefinger over the wand, pressing it into your RIGHT HAND palm (remember, this is misdirection - you are covering the small movement with a larger movement). Now open your right hand: the

wand will appear to magically "stick" to your hand. Reverse these actions to end the trick.

Presentation notes: Be sure to have the wand and your hand examined by someone in the audience, so they know that no glue, tape, etc. is used.

TWO CARD MONTE - You have two cards A - a double back card, B- a double face card. Hold in the right hand, spread the two cards. It looks like you have one card face up and one face down. Name the card face up, turn the cards over and name the card now face up.

Place card B behind the back, allowing the audience to see the uppermost face. Ask them to name the card behind the back. After they name the card they saw, you secretly turn the card over, bring out the double face card showing *the opposite side*, place it under card A, and say "No, that is the card I have in my hand" (referring to the card they named.) Flip the cards over showing the face of card they thought was behind the back.

KNOT APPEARANCE - You can tie a knot into a rope by simply shaking it - **BY MAGIC!**

Here's how you do it - You will need a piece of rope about 3' long. Tie a knot into the rope about 10" from one end. Start the trick by hiding the knot in your hand. Pick up the other end of the rope, about 10" from the end, and place it into your hand with the knot. While pretending to tie a knot in the rope by merely shaking it, give the rope a violent shake, at the same time releasing the unknotted end (this should look almost like you're cracking a whip). Apparently you failed, so try it again, and again release the unknotted end.



The third time, however, do something a little different. This time, hold onto the unknotted end and release the knotted end. It will look like you magically tied a knot into the rope by shaking it!

Presentation notes: When you release the knotted end for the "appearance"; it should look exactly the same as when you release the unknotted end. If people see you switch the ends, there is no magic. I like to tell a story of cowboys doing amazing things with their lariats when I do this trick. Make up a story yourself to keep this trick interesting!

KNOT VANISH - You can make a knot disappear without having to untie it - **BY MAGIC!**

Here's how you do it - Secretly tie a "slip knot" into a rope. You can make it "vanish" by blowing on the knot and pulling on both ends of the rope. The knot will disappear!

Presentation notes: I prefer to swing the knotted section of the rope in a twirling motion while holding on to both ends. That way the pulling action isn't so noticeable and knot seems to vanish into thin air while being twirled!

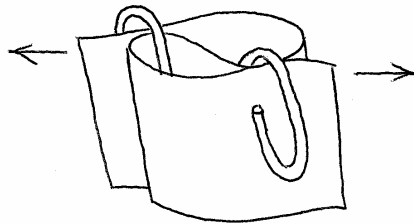
LINKING PAPER CLIPS - Two paper clips link together and fly off a dollar bill - **BY MAGIC!**

The set-up: Lay a dollar bill, or other similar sized piece of paper, on the table. Fold the left edge to the right one-third of the length of the bill. Place one of the paper clips over the fold to hold it in place, and push it down so it is snug against the top of the bill. The clip should be positioned near the edge of the paper (over the number if you are using a dollar) and not near the fold.

Now flip the bill over so you are looking at the back. Do not turn it upside-down; the clip should still be at the top. Fold the other edge over one-third of the way as you did the first time. Place the second paper clip on this fold from the top. Clip together just to two layers of paper nearest you – do not clip all three layers together!

If properly placed, the bills should look like the picture.

The magic: Firmly grip both ends of the bill near the top edge and pull apart. The clips will start moving together. As they get close, give a sharp tug and they will link together and fly off the bill!



MENTAL CALCULATOR - You are able to tell someone a number they are thinking of *by reading their mind!*

Here's how you do it - You have a set of six cards. Each card has numbers printed on it. The numbers are all in the correct order, but some numbers are missing from each card. Ask someone to think of a number from 1 to 63, then show them each card and ask if they see their number on the card. After they have seen all six cards, you confidently and accurately tell them the number they are thinking of!

The Secret - Each card has a “Key Number.” The Key Number is the first number on the card. If you look at the cards you will see that the Key Numbers are 1,2,4,8,16 and 32. Every time the person indicates that they see their number on a card, you remember the key number on that card. The next time they say they see their number on a card, add that Key Number to the first ... and keep adding the Key Numbers every time they see their number on a card. When you have gone through all six cards, the sum of the Key Numbers will be their chosen number!

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|--|--|
| <p>1 3 5 7 9 11 13 15</p> <p>17 19 21 23 25 27 29 31</p> <p>33 35 37 39 41 43 45 47</p> <p>49 51 53 55 57 59 61 63</p> <p><i>Magic by Mark Nilsen</i></p> | <p>4 5 6 7 12 13 14 15</p> <p>20 21 22 23 28 29 30 31</p> <p>36 37 38 39 44 45 46 47</p> <p>52 53 54 55 60 61 62 63</p> <p><i>Magic by Mark Nilsen</i></p> |
| <p>2 3 6 7 10 11 14 15</p> <p>18 19 22 23 26 27 30 31</p> <p>34 35 38 39 42 43 46 47</p> <p>50 51 54 55 58 59 62 63</p> <p><i>Magic by Mark Nilsen</i></p> | <p>8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15</p> <p>24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31</p> <p>40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47</p> <p>56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63</p> <p><i>Magic by Mark Nilsen</i></p> |
| <p>32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39</p> <p>40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47</p> <p>48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55</p> <p>56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63</p> <p><i>Magic by Mark Nilsen</i></p> | <p>16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23</p> <p>24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31</p> <p>48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55</p> <p>56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63</p> <p><i>Magic by Mark Nilsen</i></p> |

JUMPING DOTS - You show a 2sided card that apparently has four different sides!
IT'S MAGIC!

Here's how you do it - This will be easier to follow if you have the card in your hand as you read these instructions. To make the card, cut out the rectangle on the following page, fold it along the center line, and tape or glue the card together. To make the card a little stiffer and easier to handle, you can place a thin piece of cardboard between the halves. You will now have a card with 2 spots on one side and 3 spots on the other.

When performing, the card will **always** be held with a corner pointing up to the ceiling, like a diamond shape. The side with 2 spots will be called "Side 1." The side with three spots will be called "Side 2."

First we'll learn how to position your hands. Your **left hand** will **always** grasp the card at the bottom. The back of your hand will face you. The fingers of the left hand will *always* point toward the ceiling. Turn the card by rotating your hand.

Your **right hand** will **always** grasp the card on the right edge. The back of your hand will face you. The fingers of the right hand will *always* point toward the left. Turn the card by rotating your hand and flipping the card forward.

Doing the trick -

1) Begin with Side 1 facing you, with the empty space at the top. Hold the card with the left hand (LH) covering the bottom dot. Only one dot can be seen. Rotate the card so the audience can see Side 1, and say, "There's a spot on one side of the card ..."

2) Side 2 is now facing you (3 spots.) Grasps the card with the right hand (RH) so it covers the right spot; only 2 spots can be seen. Flip the card so the audience can see Side 2, and say, "... and two spots on the other side."

(Now is a good time to say some magic words!)

3) Side 1 is facing you, with the empty space at the bottom. Hold the card with the LH covering the empty space. Two dots can be seen, but it looks like you are covering a spot. Rotate the card so the audience can see Side 1, and say, "But now, where there was once one spot, there are now three ..."

2) Side 2 is now facing you (3 spots.) Grasps the card with the right hand (RH) so it covers the empty spot; 3 spots can be seen, but it looks like you are covering a spot. Flip the card so the audience can see Side 2, and say, "... where there was once two spots, there are four!"

You are now in the position to repeat the trick, or end it and put the card away.

