

Magical Connections



Capture and
maintain the focus of
your Scouts like
MAGIC!

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my two boys Matthew and Isaac, in hopes that during the course of their years in scouting they will meet dedicated leaders, like yourself, who will go the extra mile to make the process of education **fun** as well as informative!!

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CHAPTER 1 - What Is Magical Connections?

In the interest of full disclosure....I am not a certified teacher. My degree is in Human Services with a minor in probation and parole. But since receiving my degree I have done a lot of educating. For the first five years of my career, I educated children in the worst of all situations, as a counselor for an Emergency Shelter in Minneapolis/St. Paul. I then followed that up with a 12 year position as a director of education at a local Twin Cities church. During this time I worked hard to help motivate and teach volunteer teachers how to get kids to buy into the objectives we had established in our religious education programs.

Over the years I found a wonderful tool that has a magnetic attraction for students, and that tool is MAGIC. You see my full-time job is teaching important messages as an educational entertainer. The entertainment I offer uses customized magic programs that bring home a particular message with IMPACT. Themes such as reading motivation, the 3 major steps to successful conflict resolution, say “no” to drugs and many many more. You see during my years as a counselor and director of education I used magic all the time to “connect” with kids. This tool has incredible power and I am going to teach you how to use it as a new and powerful resource to include in your lesson plans.

Specifically, Magical Connections teaches simple magic tricks that you can use to motivate, capture and excite scouts. The wonderful advantage to these tools are that they are easy to learn, inexpensive and fun to share. What I have found over the years is that in addition to the positive effects this tool has on the kids, it has an equal effect on the leaders who use them. It gets leaders excited about the activity and that excitement is passed on to the kids in the Pack/Troop.

But this workbook is much more than magical effects for the group. In addition to the magic we will also learn Fun Activities to Connect with your Scouts & Magical Activity Plan Enhancers. This workbook is full of ideas to kick your creativity into high gear.

So let's sit back and get started on a MAGICAL adventure for you and the scouts in your Pack/Troop.

CHAPTER 2 - Just where is the MAGIC in my activity?

As a leader, you know a lot about putting on an event. I want to assure you that the following suggestions are simply made to make this resource complete. In my efforts over the years to help volunteer teachers do the best job they could I always gave this very simplistic outline on how to organize a lesson plan. It will be equally useful for planning a FUN event.

How to organize an event

“If you wish to find it you must search, rarely does a good idea interrupt you!” -Jim Rohn

- A. ***Breaking down the event to its essence....***what do you hope the scouts will take away from your event. Imagine the following scene, the kids leave your event and rush up to their parents and instead of saying, “What’s for dinner” they start spilling out the wonderful things they learned at your meeting, what would they remember? What are your objectives?
- B. ***Now that you have a list of objectives, select three main objectives that you feel are achievable for your group.*** Then write them down in order of priority! Remember you determine which objectives are achievable because you know your group better than anyone else. Write down your objectives in order of priority. No matter how well we plan, it is inevitable that something happens and it cuts into your time. By having priorities set you will know what objectives to concentrate on if you find your time has been cut short. Or if the opposite happens and you have more time (a more unlikely occurrence), you may be able to get to some of the other priorities you listed in step A.
- C. ***Self inventory what are your joys and passions...***when I am asked what makes a great leader I always think that the greatest leaders are those that communicate their ultimate joys and passions. It goes back to creating a contagious atmosphere. If you teach using tools that you love the kids can’t help but get caught up in your enthusiasm. On the next page you will find an event planning worksheet that I give leaders in my workshops, to help them in the process of brainstorming ideas for their groups. What skills talents and tools do you bring to the meeting? Write down each of those at the top of the chart. Along the left hand side write down your 3 main objectives for the meeting. The rest of the boxes are used to fill-in ideas that come from mixing the tools/passions you bring combined with the major objective you are trying to convey.
- D. ***Now take your lesson plan to the ultimate level and anchor it.*** The most effective way to anchor a message is to incorporate as many of the senses as possible. For example, let’s say that one of your joys, is jazz music and your lesson is about Veterans. Maybe you could have some jazz music playing as the kids come into your meeting. As the natural curiosity takes over you explain the music and give a brief bio on the musician they are listening to. You also explain that this was what

the GI's in World War II loved to hear when they got back to the states to “kick-up their heels”. You see you took the objective, helping the students learn more about World war II and tied it with one of your passions (Jazz Music) and anchored the experience by using their sense of sound.

What I hope to achieve in this workbook, is to teach you another skill to use as a tool in achieving your main objectives. The impact these simple ideas have on your scouts will fuel your passion to use them. And as you use the art of magic, to get your objectives understood, you will find they are the perfect tool to anchor the objective. Magic incorporates a number of the senses, it involves emotion, the sense of sight, touch, sound and incorporates curiosity as well as a sense of wonder. When you roll all that together it creates excitement in what you are sharing.

Well, enough about how this workbook will help let's move on to a real important part of making this resource useful to you. The key to getting the most out of this book is to use the information shared in a creative manner. So let's take just a moment and discuss the importance of creativity in your lesson plans.

	Skill/Tool #1	Skill/Tool #2	Skill/Tool #3	Skill/Tool #4	
Objective #1					
Objective #2					
Objective #3					

CHAPTER 3 - Creativity and Magical Connections

“The great gift of the human imagination is that it has no limits, until we impose those limits upon ourselves!” Brian Richards

In order for you to get the most out of the ideas explained in this book, it is essential that you start this process with a creative attitude. Each of the tools described can be applied to virtually any meeting/event. The only limitations are the ones that your mind allows. In each case, I will give you an example for a particular objective. However, this in no way implies that the technique is limited to that one objective.

In an effort to help you tap into your own creative powers I will give a brief frame of reference for each technique. By focusing on the frame of reference, you will see the potential of the tool from a much broader perspective. In this way, you will have an easier time customizing each technique to your message and individual objectives.

You may be asking why the creative muse is so important? The key reason is that by customizing these techniques to your particular objective you will make them your own. They will feel natural to you and will appear natural to the scouts who observe. Another reason for putting your own creative flair into these techniques is that it will make the whole process a lot more fun for you.

Now the next question invariably is, “What if I’m not creative?”. Well, let me state up front that if you are asking that question you need to adjust your attitude dramatically. You see I believe with all my heart that every person has creative ability, it all comes down to two things....not putting ridiculous parameters on what you believe creativity to be and using that creative ability on a daily basis.

Let’s start with point #1 - **Putting ridiculous parameters on what we believe creativity to be.** Too often when I ask what people to define creativity, I get a list of individuals...Thomas Edison, Michael Angelo, Jim Henson, Carol Burnett, Robin Williams, Oprah and the list goes on and on. True the people mentioned are very creative people but this is not the definition of creativity. The actual meaning is as follows, “The power or ability to invent.” By this basic definition I think you would be hard pressed to find someone who is void of creative ability. Now I will admit that there are different levels of creative ability. But just because you didn’t figure out the Theory of relativity, doesn’t mean you are unable to be creative.

Let me ask you a simple question. Have you ever gone to a movie that was based on a book you had read and wound up just hating the movie. If so, that is proof that you are creative. The reason for your disappointment is due to the fact that you created the visual parameters of the book in your head. When Hollywood attempted to bring what you created in your mind, to the screen, they missed the target. You created something that only you could create (with the help of the author who wrote the words you read).

Too often people confuse creativity with originality. They are two entirely different concepts. Often a creative idea comes from combining two unoriginal ideas which improves an existing idea. The best example I can think of is the POST-IT note. When you break it down the post it note is simply a replacement for the Memo sheet and tape.

Point #2 - **Using your creative abilities on a daily basis.** There is a very creative magician that I have a tremendous amount of respect for (maybe it would better phrased, jealousy for...), his name is Martin Lewis and he has an incredible ability to create some of the

most entertaining magic effects in the world. Chatting with him over the internet I asked him what he saw as the secret to his creative ability, here is his response...."How do I stimulate creativity? Good question. I try to create a new trick every week, good bad or mediocre, after I have a good number of effects stockpiled I then go through them and discard the weeds. Then I set to work on those remaining. My idea is that constant exercising of the creative muse makes it stronger." You see it doesn't matter if you come up with something useable all that matters is to give yourself time to try and be creative at least once a day.

As ideas present themselves write them down and stock pile them. Then, at a later date maybe at the end of the week, go through all the ideas and weed out the bad. Then work with those few that seem to have promise for your lesson plan. Remember, that this is akin to brainstorming don't edit your ideas no matter how silly they may seem. Don't be discouraged if the ideas don't flow at the beginning, it will take time. Just stick with it. In time as you get more and more comfortable with the idea that your brain is a computer full of ideas, suddenly you'll start hitting the right keys and getting results.

I am often asked the following question, and in the interest of making this book complete I will discuss it now....How can I stimulate my own innate creative abilities? I think for leaders just starting out there are four main ways to jump-start your natural abilities.

#1 SKILL OBJECTIVE WORKSHEET - By using the worksheet explained in the previous chapter you can do wonders to encourage creativity. You see another secret to creativity is in constantly asking questions. Creative people always ask what if? For example, what if you asked the following question. How can I use the format of the Skill Objective Worksheet to help me incorporate the techniques of this book with my objectives?

If you laid out 5 objectives and 5 techniques from **MAGICAL CONNECTIONS** and put an idea in each box that would give you 25 ideas to use in your lesson plan. Now of course not every idea will be spectacular, but you could then go through this matrix and eliminate the weak ideas and focus on the strong.

Another thing this matrix may help you do is to narrow your field of objectives. As per the example above you have 5 objectives. Well let's say after doing this matrix you find that you had very few ideas for objectives 2 & 3. Well, now you can eliminate those two objectives and concentrate your plan on objectives 1, 4, & 5.

#2 CREATIVE WRITING TECHNIQUES - As the author of five books, I have found that the use of creative writing techniques are wonderful catalysts for tapping into your creative flow in any area. Now your goal may not be to write a book but these techniques will help get all your creative ideas/thoughts on paper so you can start to organize a lesson plan that will be unique to you.

Technique A - Looping....*Here are the rules for looping: Select an idea or statement to write about. You must write nonstop about the subject as fast as you can don't stop. Make no corrections so your thoughts can move fluidly. 5 minutes of writing for each loop. After 5 minutes you choose a grounding statement for what you have written (What leaps out at you from what you wrote?). When you start the new loop you do not*

have to start where you left off it doesn't even need to be related, each loop is it's own entity. So start the process again. Do this as many times as you like or until you feel you have enough material to use.

Technique B - Cubing...Here are the rules for cubing: Choose Subject. So what happens here is you take a subject, idea, or thought and you take four minutes to write about the six following aspects of the subject:

DESCRIBE IT, What is it all about...**DEFINE IT**, Narrow down the subject to the tiniest of details...**COMPARE IT** What is it like...**ANALYZE IT**, what is the importance of this to the students your are teaching what impact will it have on their lives...**ASSOCIATE IT**,...**ARGUE IT**, what are the pros and cons of the subject try and think about the questions your students may have and plan answers to them!

Set 4 minute time limit for writing. Begin writing as fast as you can w/out stopping or correcting. Write till time is up and then go to immediately to next side of cube. Do this till all six sides of the cube are addressed.

Technique C - SCOUTS IN YOUR GROUP...A long time ago I heard someone compare leading a group of energetic kids as going for a ride on a horse. If you hold the reigns tight on the horse you'll get a nice quiet gallop, relatively uneventful. By in doing so aren't you inhibiting that which is natural for the horse to do? You see, if you let up on the reigns it is true that the horse may take off on a wild ride but it is important for the horse to do so to learn and be that which the horse is. Don't hold the reigns too tight better to let them run and guide them, who knows you may learn something too. Why not share your objectives with you scouts and get their input. True they may have some wild ideas but maybe with your help, they may be applicable.

Technique D - A PARTNER TO HELP INSPIRE AND MOTIVATE...Of course it is always nice to hang out with a creative individual who can inspire and give you advice. You could also start a mentoring/brainstorming group to develop creative techniques for the meetings and for your group activities. Do you have a son or daughter who is in the age range that you teach? Why not get their input. Do you have a spouse who is willing to give constructive criticism and advice? Why not get their input in your activity plan.

These are a few ideas to help stimulate your creative potential but the most important factor is believing in yourself and that you can in fact be creative in your lesson planning. And always remember what Ford said, "Whether you believe you can or can't do something...you already have!"

Magical Connections
(putting a little magic in
your meetings)...



Imagine this, your sitting with your scouts and you explain that your plan for the day is to discuss one of 3 historical wars. What's more the group will vote on which of three wars in American history you will discuss. You show a manila envelope and display three pieces of poster board each with the name of a war: Korean, Vietnam and Gulf war. You announce that the selection will be made democratically and you poll the group to see which war will be discussed first. Let's imagine after you poll your class, Korean war is selected. You turn to your class and say, "That is very strange, read the note that is in the envelope...". Your scouts find a note and upon opening it, it says...most scouts find the KOREAN war the most interesting, so do I, I will plan on discussing the Korean war!

FRAME OF REFERENCE: The leader can have the students choose between one of three topics and whichever they choose the leader correctly predicts the results.

Think about the scenario for a moment, you knew which of three possible outcomes they would pick before they actually did. Do you think this would make a strong impression on your group? You bet it would!

What makes this so effective is the simple method. In the magical world, this is known as a multiple out. What that means is, you are right no matter which war is chosen.

Needed: 3 pieces of poster board, an opaque envelope to put the three cards in, and your teacher's guide/notebook.

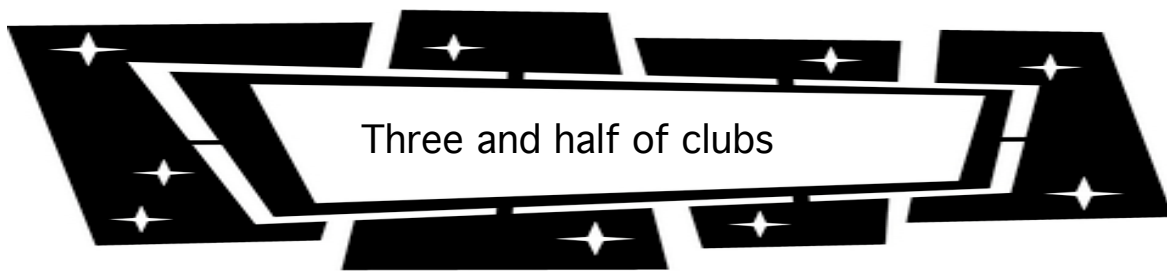
Have the wars Korean, VietNam, and Gulf printed on the 3 poster board cards. On the back of the VietNam card write: Most scouts find the Vietnam war the most interesting, so do I, we shall discuss the Vietnam war! In the envelope that contains the cards have a note that states: Most scouts find the Korean war the most interesting, so do I, we shall discuss the Korean war! Finally, in your calendar insert a bright piece of paper that states: Most scouts find the Gulf war the most interesting, so do I, we shall discuss the Gulf War!

Step-by-step instructions : From this point, it should be fairly obvious what happens. You put the cards on the table and have the scouts vote for their favorite sacrament. Then simply direct them to the appropriate source.

Afterthoughts: Now in this example I used American wars but you could use countries, 3 Famous Scouts, famous paintings...whatever 3 subjects you deem are appropriate for your current lesson can be used.

Now there are other ways to reveal your prediction, one teacher I know recorded one response on her answering machine. She decided to replace the note in the teacher guide. If the students selected that particular subject, she pulled out her cell phone, and dialed her own # (don't give the scouts your # for obvious reasons). She would then hand the phone to the student to listen to the answering machine which would say the prediction.

Technical Notes: Use your creative juices and you may be able to come up with other "outs" like the answering machine. If you use my 3 suggestions and the answering machine, you could have 4 subjects for the kids to choose from instead of 3.



You start your meeting talking about respect and working through problems. To illustrate you have a scout select a card at random from a shuffled pack of cards. To check the groups problem solving skills you tell them to divide the card they selected in half. In other words, if they selected a six of hearts, dividing it by two would result in the three of hearts. You ask the scouts if they have solved their problem. Explain that you have a large card in your envelope that will match their "new" card. The scouts start to laugh as they tell you the answer is the three and half of clubs. You smile and explain that problem solving requires RESPECT (they shouldn't laugh at you)! Slowly, pull the card out of the envelope and show that you do have a three and half of clubs. As the kids, calm down from this, ask what is the key to solving big problems? As they think, and give various answers, a little banner drops from behind the card that says r-e-s-p-e-c-t!

Needed: Special jumbo card, Deck of cards, and the RESPECT banner.

Step By Step Instructions: This whole effect is determined by something known as a "force" of a card. The force you will be learning is known as the "cut deeper force". First, take the seven of clubs and place it on top of the deck. Next you shuffle the deck but don't disturb the top card. You can do this by traditionally shuffling the deck making sure the seven of clubs falls last and stays on top of the pack. You then ask a student to cut off about a third of the deck and turn it face up placing it to back on top of the deck. Then repeat the process asking another student to "cut deeper" about half of the deck and turn it face up placing it back on the deck. You then explain that the first face down card you come to will be used. Spread through the deck and the first face down card will be the top card of the deck, in this case, the seven of clubs. Have the students take the card and show it to their friends. You then have them divide the card in half giving them the $3\frac{1}{2}$ clubs. You announced dramatically you have a card in the envelope that corresponds to the answer they have. You'll get a lot of skeptical looks...you ask what card they got. They answer the three and half of clubs, and you slowly and dramatically pull out the card showing the $3\frac{1}{2}$ of clubs.

To do the banner ending, simply pleat fold a strip of paper and write the word RESPECT on it. You attach the paper to the back of the card with a piece of Scotch tape. At the bottom of the paper, tape a penny. Refer to figures A and B for clarification.

Make sure to hold the paper and penny in place as you display the $3\frac{1}{2}$ of clubs. At the right moment let go of the paper and it will tumble down showing the RESPECT Message.

Afterthoughts: If I do say so myself this is a wonderful object lesson. You could alter the banner and put whatever word you want like Thrifty, Obedient, Success etc.

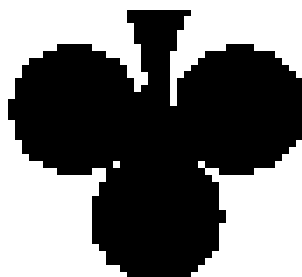
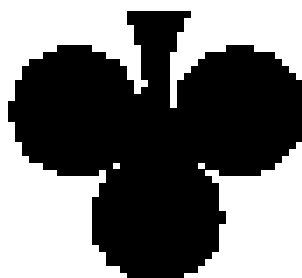
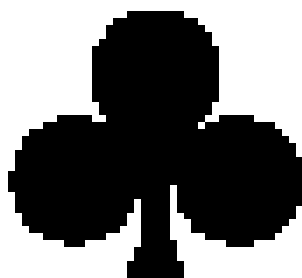
The other thing that I always like to add when I use this piece is to remind them of how to successfully resolve conflict. The following three points are my program "The Magic of Cooperation".

- *Treat individuals with RESPECT!
- *Attack problems, not People!
- *Always work for a WIN/WIN solution.

Technical Notes: One point I need to make is that you don't have to make up a special 3 and a half of clubs card. You could simply write three and a half of clubs on the poster card. However, I have found that the kids are always very intrigued with the odd looking card. As a result some wonderful side discussions have taken place. Such as the fact that each student is unique. Sometimes people appear different from the norm but what matters is what is on the inside of a person!

On the next page I have a pattern for you to photo copy to use for the 3 1/2 of clubs card...have FUN!

3 1/2
♣



♣ 3 1/2

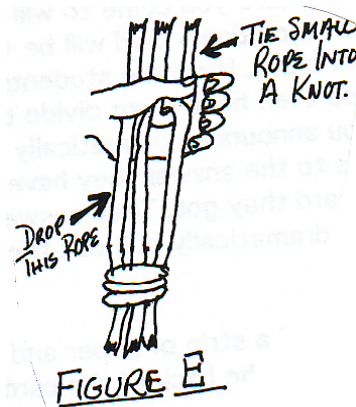
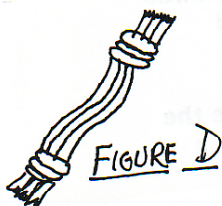
3 Rope Trick

The magic number 3. In all of my educational programs, I always use 3 main themes. Three just seems to be a very manageable amount of concepts to remember. If you have to review 3 points, try the following imprint technique.

Let's say you are reviewing the 3 promises of the Scout oath. You display 3 pieces of rope. Each rope represents a subject : Duty to God, Duty to other people & Duty to Self. As you display the 3 ropes you tie them together to form one long piece of rope. You then coil the rope around your hand. You give one end to a student and slowly you uncoil the rope showing it is in fact one whole piece with no knots, the 3 parts of the oath make a Scout complete.

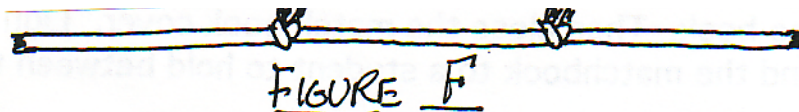
Needed: One long rope about two and a half feet and two short pieces about three inches each.

Step By Step Instructions this ingenious technique makes one long rope and two short pieces appear to be three equal individual pieces of rope tied together at each end (Figure C & D).



Display the three ropes knotted together. Untie one end of the ropes, hiding the special setup with your hand (Fig. E). Drop the end of the long rope leaving you with a short piece looped around the long piece. Then tie the short piece onto the rope in a knot.

Repeat this process with the other side. When you are done the rope will look as in Figure F.



Grab one end in your left hand, and coil the rope up in your left hand. As you come to the knots, hold them tightly with your right hand and they will slide along the rope till the end where they will slide off the rope and into your hand. Then reach into your pocket with your right hand leaving the knots behind and bring out some whiffle dust (An imaginary substance that

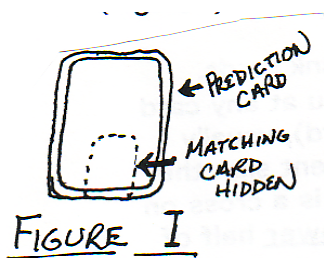
magicians have been using for years to give them a reason to reach into their pockets to do something sneaky). Sprinkle the invisible powder on the rope and have a student hold one end of the rope as you unwind it to show the three promises makes a Scout complete.



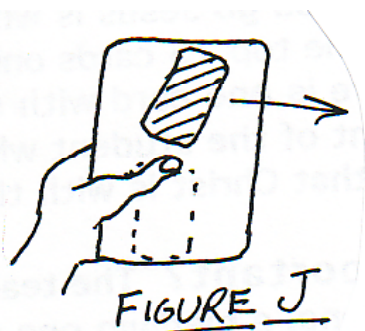
Ok, lets pretend that you are sharing the fact that scouting is a worldwide phenomena. You display some cards (like a regular deck of cards) that have a number of different countries from around the world. You also display a large jumbo prediction card. You tell the class to elect a spokesperson for the group. That person will choose one of the country cards. You do this in a very special manner. You have a student mix the country cards... you take the cards and proceed to deal them face down one at a time onto the large prediction card, you then let the country card slide off the large prediction card onto the table. You repeat this process pausing a beat as each card lands on the prediction card. When they finally say stop, you turn over the large prediction and country card to show they match. You may now share all the information you have put together regarding scouting in that part of the world!!

Needed: Prediction card and Country cards...for the prediction card you can use a piece of poster board about 4 X 6 inches with the name of one of the countries of the world. The country cards can also be made of poster board about 25 - 30 will do all about the same size of a standard deck of playing cards. Another option is to use an old deck of cards and put opaque labels over the value side of the cards with the countries printed on the labels. Or you could buy a deck of flash cards with countries already on them at a teacher resource store.

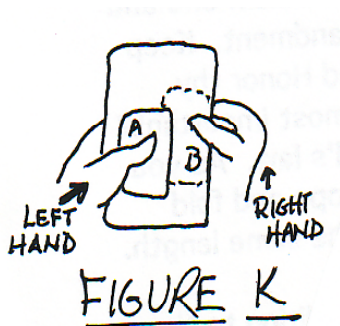
Step By Step Instructions: This is extremely simple, but the final revelation may take some practice. You start by placing the matching Country card underneath the large prediction card. In other words, let's say you wrote Russia as your prediction you would take the regular Russia card that has and place it under the large card (Figure I - both cards are face down).



Give the rest of the country cards to a student to mix. Take the deck and proceed to deal the cards in the following manner: Hold the deck face down in your right hand. Thumb the top card onto the back of the prediction card, held in your left hand while keeping the matching country card hidden underneath (Figure J).



Then dump the card to the table. Do this until the student says stop. From this point you will need to switch cards so they think that the card they stopped at is the card under the prediction card.



Hold the cards as in Figure K. As you turn the cards face-up to the students, the left hand simply holds card A in place while the right hand pulls the hidden card away and back towards you snapping the edges of the cards together (Prediction card and hidden card). When done at the correct speed it appears that you simply turn both cards face-up and they do indeed match.

Afterthoughts: One of the teachers I taught this to did it throughout the year by changing the prediction each week. The students were absolutely amazed that every week no matter where they stopped her it always matched.

Technical Notes: The key to this whole effect is in doing the move in one fluid action. The secret to learning this is to start by doing the move in slow motion and gradually building up speed till even you don't see the switch of cards when you do it.

Another thing you may want to consider is something I call the cleanup move, it works like this.....

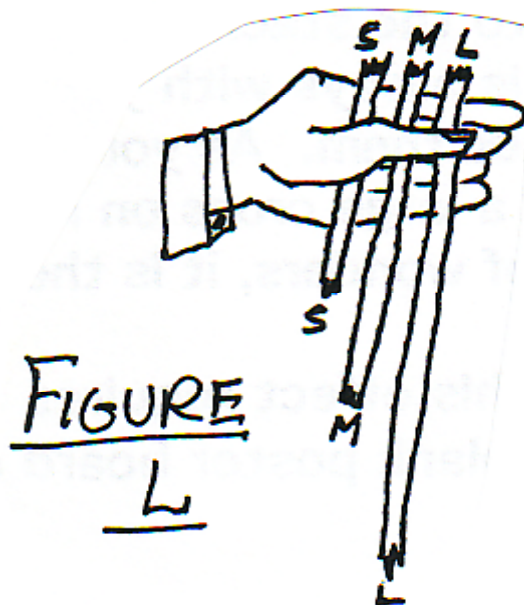
After you show that the big card and small card match, take the cards on the table and turn them face-up and spread them around saying, "As you can see you could have stopped me at any of these". Then simply lay the jumbo card on top of the cards on the table. What this does is leave the card you switched out on top of the pile of cards on the table. That card is simply one of the many on the table. In this way you can let them check out all the cards and you are clean. When they lift the jumbo card they won't notice the new card among all the others.



Let's say you are teaching the Cub Scout promise. The leader displays 3 pieces of rope of differing sizes, a short one, a medium one and a long one. You explain that each piece represents one aspect of the promise. To do my duty to God and my Country, To **HELP** other people, and To **OBEY** the **LAW** of the pack. Which of these points is the most important? They are all equally important to the successful cubscout. As you say this you proceed to take the three unequal lengths of rope and fold them together. When you open them out the ropes are all the same length.

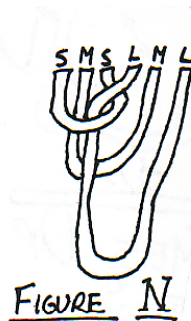
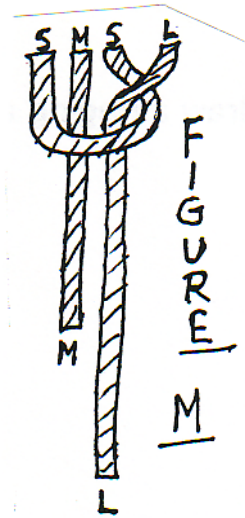
Needed: 3 ropes one short, one medium, and one long. In addition to the rope this will require some practice.

Step By Step Instructions: Hold the ropes in your left hand as illustrated in Figure L. the shortest rope is to the left in the crux of the thumb. This is followed by the medium rope and the long rope. You may hand the ropes out to be examined, but you must place them back in your hand as in Fig. L.



Now grip the hanging end of the shortest rope with your right hand and bring it up to the right of the long piece of rope. When you have done that take a moment and reposition the ends twisting the long end with the short end (Figure M).

You should now have four ends of rope at the top of your hand and two hanging. Take the hanging end of the middle rope and place it to the far right but don't switch any ends. So now you have 5 ends at the top of your hand and one end hanging (the long end). Finally, bring the end of the longest rope and place it to the extreme right of all the ropes (Figure N). The fingers of your hand hide the upper end setup. Now with your right hand take the 3 far right ends and pull them to the right while the left hand maintains a firm grip on their three ends.



The final result is displayed in Figure O. As you can see the actual condition of the ropes is the short and long rope are folded over on each other. When you do that they are the same length as the medium rope.

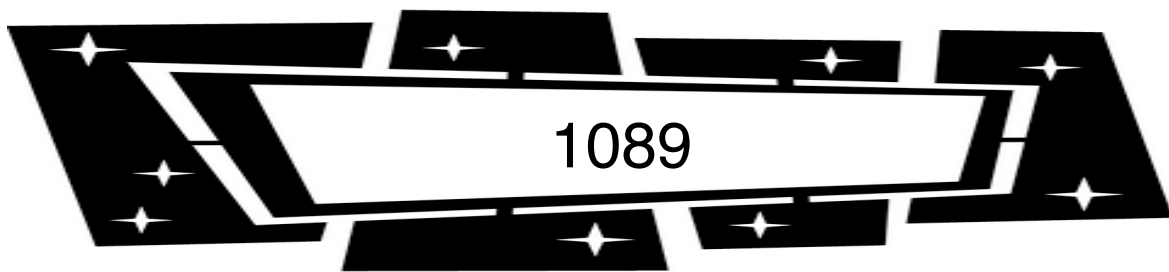
If you decide to make up the ropes yourself, Figure O is how to measure the ropes. First, cut a long rope and short rope and fold them over each other then cut a piece of rope the length of the those two pieces when folded.



Afterthoughts: Obviously, you could use any 3 subjects that have equal importance in the discussion.

I am often asked how do you end this demonstration. Well I'll give you the simple version. After you display them all as the same length just roll all the ropes together and pull them apart and show that they are back to their original lengths.

Technical Notes: As I said at the start of this piece, practice will be the key to making this effective. You need to start off doing it slowly and deliberately until you understand the mechanics. Practicing in front of a mirror may be very helpful. This will let you know what the audience sees as you do the transformation.



Imagine this, you walk into your meeting and place a locked box in the middle of the group. You explain that the best way to learn is by working together. You take a moment and share how the best ideas and solutions come from a group of people with a shared vision. You also explain that this is one of the foundational concepts of scouting.

You further explain that if everyone does a good job working together you will share what's inside the box. The end of your meeting comes and you tell the group that the box with the special surprise is locked with a combination lock. You suggest one more attempt at teamwork. You ask three scouts to give you a one digit number. You take the three digit number and have the group perform the following calculations.....

3 Digit Number:

Reverse Number:

(Subtract the smaller # from the larger #.)

1st Number:

- 2nd Number:

Result =

**Reverse the result
and add together.**

+

**GRAND
TOTAL**

--

The group takes the result and uses those numbers to attempt to open the combination lock. As soon as the 4 numbers are spun into place the lock pops open. The result of TEAMWORK!!

Needed: You need a box that can be locked, plus a four digit resettable combination lock. You can usually find these in any store that sells suitcase accessories. I have a nice black and gold Master lock that cost me about 4 dollars. You'll also need something for the kids to put in the box. I'll leave it up to you as to what you want to reward them with (I use a healthy snack like a bag of broccoli....not really). Oh, and it would be a good idea to have a few copies of the above worksheet.

Step-by-Step Instructions : This is a wonderful motivational tool and the best part is, IT ALWAYS WORKS! The key to this interactive tool is to set your combination to the number 1089. That's all there is to it. The rest is a mathematical principle. Any three digit number selected and put through the mathematical calculations shown at the beginning of this description, will total 1089.

There are 2 exceptions...

#1. The number can't be composed of the same 3 digits (i.e. 444). Because when the subtraction takes place you get zero.

#2. The first and and last digit can't be the same (i.e. 292 or 383) because you will again get ZERO.

To put it simply, don't use any number when reversed gives you the same number. Other than those two stipulations you will always get 1089. So briefly I show the locked box explain there is something special for the class inside if they work well in class. When the time comes I ask three scouts to give me three different numbers. Then I walk them through the worksheet. When they get the number I give the box to a student to set the tumblers to the number they "randomly" calculated. Imagine their surprise when the lock opens.

Afterthoughts: One important thing to remember in the calculation process is that zero is a number! For example, let's say the number they give you is 290. When you reverse the number you get 092 not 92. Always include the zero in the calculations!

Some Sage Words Of Advice For The Rookie Magician....

Learning magic takes some time and it does take practice. Trust me kids will eat you alive if you don't practice. Now I have worked hard to make these effects as clear as possible but I know sometimes on paper it loses the impact. So that is why I developed the course Hocus Focus...more on that at the bottom of the page.

Also, let me address two important questions that pop up after sharing these wonderful techniques.

1. Should I share the secret of these wonderful tools with the students of my class?

It is part of human nature to want to know how things work. We are drawn like insects to a light when it comes to secrets. That is one of the reasons why these techniques work so well. People are intrigued, that's why the National Enquirer and the like sell millions of copies, people need to know. However, the drive to know the answer can be excruciating for some (especially kids) and it is time to consider the question...how did you do that? Now the answer, is not simple, and in the end only you can decide what course to take.

I guess the easiest way to consider the potential answer lies in looking at the pros and cons of revealing your secrets.

PROS

*You can give the secret in the framework that this is a very special exception for your class. Making them feel that you are treating them in a special manner.

*You can use the secret as a motivator for a particular assignment. Offer the secret when they finish.

*It is an ideal way to extend conversation between you and the students.

*It shows how committed you are as a teacher, going the extra mile...learning such clever techniques .

CONS

*These techniques are really very simple. No matter how clever they appear your students will think...anyone can do that (when they know the secret)!

*They are free to use this technique when you give away the secret.

*It may dilute your lesson plan, the focus may shift from objectives and the lesson plan to remembering the solution to your effect.

*People enjoy a mystery and when you explain how it works the mystery and magic are gone....it really is a disappointment

*You really lose the message each technique supplies when you give away the secret, it reduces the technique to a trivial puzzle instead of a knock-out way to get the focus on your lesson plan.

Well, those are some of the pros and cons but only you can determine what works best for you. It may come down to a case by case basis. Maybe there will be great benefit in sharing your "secrets" in one instance. On the other hand, it may be better to leave them intrigued with the HOCUS FOCUS. These techniques have power. I am not willing to sacrifice the benefit they afford me just to satisfy the curiosity of a few students. Now mind you, I'm not saying I never teach a trick to my students, quite the contrary. There are tons of books out there that teach simple magic tricks that you can use as a "giveaway". So in this way if the class pushes you for the solution you can offer another clever item that they can do and you are willing to teach. In this way, you address their request and don't undermine the content of your lesson plan.

Another thing you may be able to do is use some traditional lines that magicians have been using for ages:

How did you do that? Very Well! OR Can you keep a secret? So can I!
OR Years of practice and self-denial!

What more can I say, it really comes down to what you are comfortable doing so take a few moments and think about what will fit your presentation best.

2. What if I use all the ideas in your workbook what then?

First and foremost don't forget your own creative ability (you can put a new spin on the tricks in this workbook). Now go to the library and get some books on magic and see what effects could be used in your next activity. Or if you want you can always contact me and I would be glad to give you some ideas. (As part of the course I include a 30 minute consultation for FREE).

WHAT COURSE YOU ASK?

The course was originally designed to help teachers in the classroom setting but it is full of wonderful ideas that would be very helpful to the Scout Leader. It consists of a large workbook, 3 support videos and an audio supplement. You can learn more about it and order it at:

<http://www.hocusfocusguaranteed.com>