Welcome to the Jim Kleefeld Sampler. This free book contains ten tricks culled from ten of Jim Kleefeld’s kidshow theme books. Whether you do Library Shows, School Shows, Civic Organization Shows, Company Picnics, Public Shows or even Birthday Parties, you will find plenty of wonderful material in these books.

Each theme show book has dozens of tricks and routines centered around a theme. Water Magic is full of tricks about the ocean, swimming, dolphins, fishing and boating. World Magic is full of tricks about world cultures like Spanish bullfighting, England’s Big Ben, Chinese money, French baguettes, and more. Dig Into Magic has tricks about moles, bulldozers, underground tunnels and dog’s buried bones. Architecture Magic is all about construction, landmarks and buildings, perfect for the 2017 Library Summer Reading Club theme of Build a Better World.

Each of the books comes on a CD in pdf format, openable and readable on any computer. Many are also available as a Combo Pack which includes both the CD version and a printed hard copy of the book. Besides the great stories, fun routines and wonderful explanations of tricks, what makes these books true gems is that each CD contains hundreds of pieces of original artwork that Jim has designed especially for you to use in making up the tricks.

Want a full-page picture of a girl who changes into a mermaid? The art and explanation for that is on Water Magic. Print the art on card stock and perform a bit of cut-and-paste, and you have a wonderful trick that uses the Out-To-Lunch principle in a clever way.

Want to make a big white snowflake disappear? Christmas Magic has the art you need. Just print the two square pictures of snow and the two round pictures of snowflakes and glue them over your Pizza Oven trick to turn it into a clever seasonal routine.

Want to drop loose, random orange and black alphabet cards into a box and pull out a cord strung with letters that announce Happy Halloween? It is on Halloween Magic.

Besides these nine books, there is also Be Creative @ Your Shows, a theme show book on creativity, Fizz, Boom, Magic! a theme show book on science, Pick Me! Pick Me!, a book on using volunteers, The Contract Book with information about using contracts in shows, and more.

All of these books and several more are available directly from Jim Kleefeld. In addition, Jim Kleefeld creates and produces a select few high quality props and tricks for children’s entertainers, and a small selection of quality choice material for working mentalists. His remarkable and unfathomable Classic Film Verite has become something of an underground legend and is used by mentalists and close-up workers all over the world.

Information, full descriptions and prices of all his books and products are on his website at JimKleefeld.com
Fix the Roof

You talk about how builders usually finish the roof on a house as the last outside project. Sometimes a roof will wear out and need repair or replacement. Offer to show the audience what is involved in trying to fix a roof.

You bring out a medium-sized paper bag, smaller than the size that grocery stores use. You claim that everything you need to fix the roof is inside the bag. You reach inside the paper bag and bring out a can labeled “Nails.” Set it down and claim that you will need some nails to fix the roof.

Again you reach inside and bring out a small bag, about the size of a lunch sack. It is folded flat. You open out the lunch bag and stand it on the table. You claim that you will use nails to fix the roof.

You pick up the can of nails and turn it upside down. Three nails drop out into your hand. You show them around and state that you will need a lot more nails than that. Drop the three nails into the small lunch bag. Hold out the can and ask the kids to say the magic words “Fix the Roof.” As they do, turn the nail can upside down again. Out pours a huge volume of nails which you dump into the paper bag.

The nails have magically appeared out of nowhere.

Next, you say that if you are going to fix the roof using those nails, that you will also need a hammer. Reach into the lunch bag, stir the nails inside and bring out a full sized hammer that is larger than the bag it came from.

Set the hammer on the table next to the Nail Can and the bag of nails. Say that you only need one more thing in order to fix the roof.

Reach into the larger bag and remove a 6-foot high ladder.

This routine uses Wayne Roger’s wonderful Appearing Ladder effect along with a couple of other effects combined into a cohesive and reasonable story line.

You will need to make a special Nail Can, but it is not hard. Use any clean can - a quart size works well, but larger or smaller might also work. You can buy new clean cans from Amazon.com, craft stores and sometimes hardware stores.
Print a clean large label that says “Nails” and glue it to the outside of the can.

Inside the can you will put a partition shaped like a half-circle and centered about half-way up the inside of the can. You can cut this out of heavy cardboard, foam core or coroplast. Use silver duct tape to secure it in the can.

Load the bottom of the can with nails. Actual roofing nails work well because they are short but have large heads. You can get aluminum ones which keeps the weight of the prop down. You may have to experiment with the number of nails you use. Too many and they will not all lodge under the shelf. Too few and your production of “lots of nails” is ineffective.

Put three loose nails on the shelf/divider you made so they fall out by themselves. Note from the two illustrations here that if you tilt the can to the right, the nails will coalesce under the half-width shelf remain in the can. If you tilt the can to the left, the nails will pour out the open side of the can and into the lunch bag. This will be your first effect.

Next, you need to buy a latex hammer from a magic dealer. These fold or roll down into a very small packet, but spring open quickly. A good one will stay reasonably flat when rolled up inside the folded flattened lunch bag, particularly if you put a rubber band around it. You can squish the bottom of the bag as you bring it out of the larger bag to keep the hammer flat.

Show the small folded flattened bag, then open it and stand it on the table. As you reach inside the bag to help pop it open, remove the rubber band from the latex hammer and let it partially expand. When you produce the nails from the can, pour them into the bag. Then reach into the bag and produce the rubber hammer, letting it open and unfold just before you remove it completely. Hold the hammer standing vertically on your table next to the lunch bag so the audience will register that it is larger than the bag it came from.

The only thing left to do is to produce a ladder from the larger paper bag where you kept the can of a nails and the lunch bag. Use Wayne Roger’s Appearing Ladder From Briefcase prop to accomplish this climactic ending of the routine. Set the ladder as per the instructions and place it into the bottom of the large brown paper sack. Place the nail can and the lunch bag on top of it and you are ready to go.
Excerpted From

Bug Magic

The Insect Detective

ROUTINE: The audience sees a tray sitting on your table. Upon it are several objects, large and small, covered by cloth. You uncover the tray, revealing a stick, a flat stone, a leaf, and three books. On closer inspection, the “books” turn out to be wooden boxes painted to resemble books. After showing the objects, you mention that insects like to climb on each of these in their natural habitats. You also state that often people like to read about these insects and where they live. Say that you are going to try a little experiment with several spectators and try to determine, by magic, who likes what in the insect world. Select three volunteers. Tell them that while your back is turned, they are to each select one of the objects upon which an insect would crawl. They should each also select a book title they might find interesting. Have them each put their object inside the book and close it so you cannot see who picked which object or which book holds which object. You turn aside while the spectators do so, and after a moment, turn back around. Retrieve each book from each spectator and return it to the tray, then cover all three books with the cloth. After a moment of intense and studious concentration, you proceed to tell each spectator which book they chose, and which hidden object they selected, giving a personality reading incorporating the object and the book’s name into their individualized message.

METHOD: The objects are especially chosen for their different properties. You can tell which object is inside which book by sound and feel. Giving the “personality readings” is just polite and optimistic cold reading. In other words, you make up something nice to say about everybody.

Obtain three identical wooden boxes shaped like books. These are readily available at craft stores, and may be painted or decorated to look like books about insects. You can paint the covers or just buy some insect books that have dust jackets and wrap those around the boxes.
Now select three objects that fit inside the boxes in different ways. For example, a stick just long enough to snugly fit in diagonally, a flat rock which will slide around but not roll, and a leaf which will flap quietly around inside the box. Thus you can tell with an ever-so-slight movement in handling the box which object is inside. Have a tray and a cloth for covering the objects. Set up the premise and select volunteers as described above. When you return the boxes to the tray, move them only enough to discover what is inside each, and quickly cover them up with the cloth.

Now do a cold reading based on which spectator selected which book title and which object they placed inside of it. For example, you might say, “Sarah, you chose the book on butterflies because you are like a butterfly. You happily flutter from place to place bringing a smile to everyone’s face with your bright and colorful ways. And you put the leaf inside of it because, like a leaf, what you like to do changes with the seasons.” Or, you might say, “Daniel, you picked the rock because you like things that are strong and solid. I can tell that other people often count on you. You put it inside the book on beetles because in some ways, you are like a beetle. Some people think you are tough, but most of your friends think of you as busy all the time.” Or, maybe your reading could be something like “Chris, you picked the stick because it is just a small part of a very large tree, like you are a small part of this big community. And you put it in the book about bees because you are a good worker.” Be sure to keep this part short and light - nobody at a kids show wants to see a mysterious Tarot Fortunetelling Seance.

By covering the books before you do the reading, you are surreptitiously inferring that you do not care to see who selected which book. Of course you do know, and that reveal will not be surprising to anyone at that moment, but the reveal of the inside object will be both magical and surprising. Later, the spectators may remember that you did all the predicting after everything was covered.
Airhead Elf

You bring out a cut-out figure of an elf. You remove his hat and it vanishes. You remove his head and it shrinks smaller and smaller until it vanishes. Then you replace his head with a balloon. When it bursts, his head magically returns. You make his hat reappear and replace it for him.

You probably recognize the plot as Steve Taylor’s Airhead Rudy routine. If you have this great prop, you have the makings of a great Christmas trick. You just need make only a small alteration and add a few things.

Let’s start by making Rudy into Elfredo by simply painting his pants green. Get some paint that is cheap and easy to use like Testor’s enamel for model making. Carefully brush on green paint to cover all of the blue. The outline is simple and with a model brush you should have no trouble staying in the lines. You can leave his shirt, arms, shoes and face(s) as is.

Now make him an elf hat. Cut a hat shape out of sturdy cardboard, thin plywood or masonite. Paint it red with white trim.

Cut a small rectangle of the same plywood and glue it to the center of the hat on the back side. Cut a larger rectangle and glue it to the small one. You have made a simple “hook” arrangement that will allow the hat to slip over Rudy’s head and stay in place. Check my diagram on the next page which shows the front, rear and side views of the hat. Make sure you use your Rudy head to align the back rectangles so the hat will sit in place properly on the head. The hat construction is show with front, back and side views. The finished prop should look like my Rudy/Elfredo pictured to the right. The hat should rest snugly in place, but slip on and off when you tug.

You will need a Devil’s Hank to vanish the hat. Since these are easy to find, look for a red one. Or, you might just buy two Christmas bandanas or handkerchieves and sew them together into the typical Devil’s Hank configuration. I found a red plaid bandana printed with Christmas lights all over it at Amazon for $8, but you might find a cheaper one in a Dollar Store.
One other visual aide is to print a Santa Workshop Window picture and glue it in place on the front of your TV vanishing box. Grab something suitable from the Internet. Place a balloon inside the empty section of the Vanishing Box. You can remove the knobs and antennae if you like, or just ignore them.

Here is my routine for the Airhead Elf.

Bring out the figure mounted in the base and with the Santa hat lodged in place.

*This is Elfredo, one of Santa’s Elves. Unfortunately, all the other elves call him Airhead Elfredo because he is always losing things. Do you see this nice elf hat?*

Point to the hat.

*That’s the third one Santa has given him. He’s already lost two. I think he takes it off when he thinks hard. Then he sets it down and forgets where he put it.*

Take off the hat.

*Santa even got him a nice bandana so he could wrap his hat and keep it clean in the workshop."

Show the Christmas Devil’s Hank.

*But the first time Elfredo wrapped his hat in the bandana…*

Put the hat inside the Devil’s Hank.

*…he lost it.*

Flip open the hank to show that the hat has vanished. Show both sides, then casually fold up the hank and set it down on your table, where you will be able to retrieve it in a few moments. Be careful that you do not clunk it hard and make a noise that will betray the wooden hat hidden inside. One way to do this casually is to grasp the hank in the very center, gripping both sides and the hat. Flip it upside down and shake it a bit as if flexing out the wrinkles. This is a casual sign to the audience that the hank is empty, but it also gives you a good grip on the hat and hank together. Lay it down sideways on your table. The extra folds help keep it quiet.

*Elfredo lost lots of things. He lost socks and mittens and suspenders. He lost the keys to his elf-locker. Once he lost his voice. He even lost a DVD of his favorite TV show, Lost. And one time, he lost his head.*

Remove the head and show it. This will be a surprising and funny moment for the audience, so pause to let the humor sink in.

*He thought he had left it in Santa’s Toy Workshop.*

Place the large head inside the TV/Workshop.
But when he went looking for it, all he found was a head for a big toy elf.

Bring out the medium head and put it on the figure.

*Then he lost the big elf toy head.*

Place the medium head in the TV/Workshop.

*But when he went looking for it, all he found was a head for a small toy elf.*

Bring out the small head and put it on the figure.

*Then he lost the small elf toy head.*

Place the small head in the TV/Workshop.

*When he went looking for that…*

Open the TV/Workshop and show it empty except for a balloon.

*…he couldn’t find any heads at all. All that he found was a balloon.*

Take out the balloon and put away the TV/Workshop. Blow up the balloon and fasten it to the headless figure.

*He blew it up and put it on top of his shoulders, but now he realized that when he lost his head, he had lost his face. So he painted on another face.*

Draw a face with a marker.

*Luckily Santa was always around to help Elfredo.*

Pick up the Devil’s Hank from your table where you had left it. Open it out fully and show both sides. Then grab it by the center, secretly holding the head, and gather up the four corners to form a bag. Regrip the top corners.

*Just like magic, he made Elfredo’s missing hat reappear.*

Reach in the bag and produce the hat.

*When he did that, then magically, Elfredo’s head returned as well.*

Release the re-appearing head, breaking the balloon.

*And Elfredo never lost his head ever again.*

Place the Santa hat on the figure’s head. Shake the Devil’s Hank once and spread your arms wide in applause cue mode.

The Santa’s Window artwork for the TV and the hat pattern is included on the disc with *Christmas Magic*, or you can easily substitute your own art.
This trick makes for a unique and interesting display as well as a fun interaction. You show a large map of an underground worm colony with tunnels and burrows for worms. Each burrow has a picture card of a bright colorful worm in it. The worms are each a different color—red, yellow, orange green and more. One of them is a regular brown worm—that’s Wendell. You remove the worms, mix them up and stick them back on the burrows. Nobody knows which color worm is where, Now you enlist the help of an audience volunteer to find Wendell. Have her point to any worm on the display. Give her a chance to change her mind. When she is satisfied, have her remove the chosen worm and show it to the audience. She’s right! Out of 12 different colored worms, she found Wendell!

The working is fairly simple. There is nothing special or gimmicked about the backdrop. It is simply a display board made to provide a place for the worm pictures. The worm cards are relatively innocent, as well, except that you actually have twice as many as the audience thinks. The 12 worn pictures you show are all different colors. You switch them for 12 pictures that are all the same color. No matter which one the child points to, it will be Wendell the Worm.

To make this trick you will need a school project display board. These are usually 36 high and 24 inch wide flat panels with two folded sections. They open up to 48 inches wide overall. You can find them made from either corrugated cardboard or foamcore.

You need to decorate the board as an underground habitat with tunnels criss-crossing through it and 10 or 12 different burrows or stations. My illustrations show an example of what it should look like. You can paint the image you want with poster paints, or cut and glue on ragged strips of brown craft paper, or use a white board and draw tunnels on it with brown markers.

The pre-made school project display board is a great way to build this trick cheaply and efficiently. The boards are pre-cut, fold neatly for packing and stand upright on your table top. But you could use another method for the display if you like. You can begin with a cork bulletin board. They come already framed and in several sizes. Plus, the cork looks a lot like dirt already.

Stand it on an easel and draw some tunnels and burrows on it with brown marker. You can stick your worm picture cards to it with simple thumb tacks or push pins. Bulletin boards do
not fold, so you might have a larger prop to carry in and out of the shows, but it will make for an impressive display.

You also need 12 pictures of worms in different colors. Grab a cartoon worm line drawing from the internet and copy it 24 times. Color 12 brown and 12 all different colors.

You can choose to make Wendell red or purple or use them in some other combination. Also print and glue a back design to all of the cards. Alternatively, you could simply glue your printed worm pictures onto brown paper so each would have an overall plain brown back. The point is that the worm cards must look all different from the front and all the same from the back. (You know, like playing cards.)

You now need some way to fasten the cards to the display board that will be temporary. One method is to use a foamcore board (not corrugated cardboard or corrugated plastic) and to push straight pins in the foam by each burrow. Punch a hole in the top of each worm card and you can simply hang them on the pins. They are easy to hang, and easy to remove. The only problem with this method is that you must remove the pins after each show in order to fold and pack the board.

Another display method is to put a small piece of double-stick tape or Blu-Tak on each burrow. Push the worm cards to the spot so they stick. Removing and replacing them is simple. The board can be folded and stored with the cards stuck in place, so you will not have to remove them between shows.

You could also use magnets on the board. Lay a magnet in place where each burrow will go, and glue a brown paper shape over it. The brown shape will hold the magnet in place and look like a burrow. You can print the worm cards and glue them to steel shim playing cards, or to two layers of paper with steel shim stock in between. This would be the most effective and secure method.

Once you have established a backdrop that looks like the underground, and a way to attach worm pictures to it, you need one more piece of equipment—a small box to hold the cards. Any flat open tray-like box will work, but it should be large enough to hold two stacks of cards side by side. For these cards, about 4.5x8 inches would work. Have all the Wendell cards laying flat in a stack at the right side of the box. Bring it out and drop all the colored worms in a stack on the left side of the box. Then just pick up the right stack.
In order to accomplish this, some time misdirection helps, and you have to watch your audience angles to assure that they cannot see into the box.

Present the display with the brightly colored worm cards stuck to it facing outward. Show the display and point out the worms in their underground home. Mention that they are all different colors. Only Wendell Worm is the proper color—brown—as a worm should be. Say that in a moment you will ask someone to find Wendell, but that first you will hide him.

Start removing the worm cards from the board. As you do, reach under your table and bring out the box with the 12 brown worm cards in it. Keep the box tilted back so the audience does not see anything inside. Begin dropping the colored worm cards face up into the box.

When you have all of them in the box, say that you are going to turn all the worms face down and mix them up. Grab the entire stack and flip them over. The 12 colored worms are now on the bottom and the 12 identical worms are on the top. There should still be a break or offset between the two piles. Grab the top 12 cards and hold them up back towards the audience. Press your thumb inside the box to keep the colored worm cards quiet. Put the box away carefully so it does not rattle and reveal that you left some cards inside. Now shuffle the cards in your hand.

Go to the display board and begin attaching cards, back outwards, to different burrows. Keep going until you have attached all 12 cards. It should look like you are being completely random. Keep mixing the cards until you are sure that the audience thinks they are well-mixed.

Now invite someone from the audience to help find Wendell. Remind them that there are twelve different underground burrows where he might be and that he is the only brown worm mixed in with all the other brightly colored worms. Have the helper point to any worm card on the board. Give them a chance to change their mind. When they are satisfied, have them remove the card and show the audience.

No matter which worm they pick, it will be a brown worm. Congratulate them on finding Wendell. You can hang Wendell back up on the board in the spot from where he was removed, or fold the board up with the cards inside and stow it.

Here is my complete routine.

*This is a tale about an odd worm named Wendell. He looks like this.*

Bring out the brown worm and show it to the audience.
If you saw Wendell you probably would not think he was odd. You might call him normal. But he was only normal to you or me. That’s because Wendell lived in a very unusual worm colony.

Bring out the display board. Stand it on your table and open it up.

Wendell lived in a magical Worm World where every worm was a different color. Wendell was brown, but he was the only one in the colony who was. The other worms were red and purple and green and orange and white. There was even a plaid one and a striped one.

Point to each colored worm as you mention them.

Now, as you know, worms do not stay in their burrows. They go in and out of their tunnels and burrows all day and night.

Begin taking the picture cards off the board.

These worms were always moving. Sometimes Wendell liked to sit and read. Sometimes he hunted fresh dirt. He stayed near the top some days and near the bottom other days.

Point out different burrow as you describe them.

In a minute, I’m going to see if one of you can come up and find Wendell.

Bring out the box and drop the cards inside.

Of course, Wendell is still moving.

Flip the cards over and remove the top 12. Put the box away.

I don’t know where Wendell will wind up today. He seems to travel back and forth quite a bit.

Shuffle the cards as you look for a volunteer.

I have decided who would be a good worm finder. It’s you.

Point to an audience member.

Could you come up and help find Wendell, please?

Set the cards down and greet the helper.

Hi. Thank you for volunteering to find Wendell. I’m Jim Kleefeld. What is your name? Glenda? Nice to meet you, Glenda. Wait here a moment while I put all the worms back in the burrows.

Attach the cards facing backwards to different places on the display.

Choose randomly, but move quickly. Don’t let anyone see the faces of the worm pictures as you hang them up.

Glenda, I don’t know who went where today. I know there is a purple worm someplace and a green one somewhere else. I know one of these worms is blue and another one is orange. It’s up to you to find Wendell. Remember, everyone thinks Wendell is the odd worm because he’s brown. But we know worms are supposed to be brown. Do you think you can find the Wendell amongst all these burrows?
Let her respond.

This will be hard, because 11 of them are NOT brown, and I don't know which color worm is where. You may have to think Magic to find Wendell. Which burrow do you think he is in? Just point to any one you want.

Let her point to one of the picture cards hanging on a burrow.

This one right here? Do you think that one is Wendell?

Let her reply.

Well, I hope you were thinking Magic, Glenda. Let's see if you found Wendell. Take that worm picture off and show everyone. If it's a brown worm, then they'll applaud like crazy for you.

Have her remove the card and show the audience. Lead the applause. Leave the rest of the cards attached to the board with their backs showing. Fold up the board and put it away.

This is a great show-and-tell story type of effect and will play well for children’s audiences, but do not make the mistake of thinking the magic stands on its own. In routines like this, it is important to explain what is magical about it. Remember that you have to verbally point out the magic in routines like this. If you do not specifically script your routine, the kids will simply think that one child chose one worm. You have to include sentences such as “There were 12 different colors, and they were all mixed up, and she found exactly the right one by magic.”

Wendell Worm art with lots of colored worms and the background display are all available on the Dig Into Magic CD, or you can substitute your own pictures to make this trick.
What more magical dream of young children than going to a fair, festival or theme park where they can ride and play and get lots of fun foods. In this routine, you tell about your childhood dream of going to the fair every year and eating ice cream cones, cotton candy and more. But one year, your dream turned out to be full of bad luck. Every time you bought an ice cream cone it spilled and every time you bought cotton candy it dropped. At last, your fun food wishes came true when you bought and ate a foot-long hot dog.

This is a variation on the venerable old Compass Trick, where you have a square with an arrow on it and every time you turn it over the arrow changes direction. In this version, after you flip the square over several times, you openly unfold it to reveal a kicker addition to the artwork.

To make this, find some good clip art of an ice cream cone, a cotton candy cone, an overturned popcorn tub and a hot dog three times as big as the ice cream cone and cotton candy. Print each of these on card stock. Then glue the cone, cotton candy and popcorn to heavier cardboard such as comic book backing board.

The cleanest way to make this prop is to configure the boards first and to add the art panels last. Lay out three squares of heavy cardboard. Separate them by about 1/4 of an inch. Then hinge them together by running a piece of white or red cloth tape over each seam. Turn the three-panel strip over and put another piece of tape on the seams on the reverse side. Check to make sure that you can fold both end panels back toward the center. You may need to slightly trim one or the other for them to overlap and lay flat.

With the three panels glued or taped, add the printed artwork as shown here with the ice cream upside down, the cotton candy at right angles and the popcorn spilling to the bottom.
Flip the entire piece top for bottom and glue the three hot dog pictures on the reverse side.

To prepare for the performance, fold the popcorn panel in first, then cover it with the ice cream cone panel. The reverse side of your folded square will show the cotton candy. The hot dog picture is hidden completely.

For the presentation, talk about your dream of food at the fair. Show the ice cream cone right side up. Turn the panel over, pivoting it diagonally from the top right corner to the bottom left corner and show the cotton candy right side up.

Say that you dropped your cone and flip the panel diagonally top left corner to bottom right corner to show the ice cream cone upside down. Then flip it again to show the cotton candy upside down.

You can continue from here to flip the panels over different ways showing the ice cream cone and cotton candy pointing to the left, pointing to the right, right side up or upside down. Patter about making a mess and losing each bit of food you bought. With the cotton candy pointing to the left (“It spilled!”) unfold the right panel to show that the ice cream cone is upside down alongside the cotton candy. Now unfold the left panel and explain that you also bought a big tub of popcorn and it spilled as well. Finally, flip the whole opened sign over and end by showing the giant three-panel hot dog.

It’s a surprise kicker ending and leaves you with hands apart in applause cue.

The dialogue here will give you a good idea of the patter to use for this routine. It’s not a full script, but I’ve included the premise of one.

When I was your age, I went to the County Fair every year. Since it only came around once a year, I dreamed about going all summer long. As soon as school was out, I dreamed about riding the Ferris Wheel, petting the horses, sampling the home-baked pies, and eating all those great-tasting, bad-for-your-health, only-at-the-fair foods like Belgian Waffle Sugar Platters, Deep Fried Snickers Bars, Mexican Funnel Cake, Chocolate Covered Corn Dogs, and Philly Cheesesteak on a Stick.

My folks liked taking me to the fair, but they never let me get the crazy wacky food I dreamed about. They usually let me have an ice cream cone like this one.

Bring out the board and display the cone right side up.

Or just one serving of cotton candy like this.
Flip the board over to show the cotton candy, right side up.

Of course, I was so excited to be living my dream, that I’d always drop my ice cream cone.

Flip the board to show the cone sideways.

And then I’d drop my cotton candy.

Flip the board to show the cotton candy sideways.

I could usually talk them into buying me a new cone…

Flip to show the cone right side up.

…and a new cotton candy.

Flip to show the cotton candy right side up.

But I’d usually drop the cone…

Flip to show the cone upside down.

…and then drop the cotton candy.

Flip to show the cotton candy upside down. You can continue a couple of times to show the cone and cotton candy positioned right-side up, then left, then right, then upside down again. But don’t overdo it.

I spilled a lot of food. I guess I was just nervous because I was finally getting what I had dreamed about all summer long. Finally my parents were so frustrated that I couldn’t hang onto anything, they bought me a big tub of popcorn. But I spilled that, too.

Open the panels to show the ice cream cone, cotton candy and popcorn.

At least I got to eat a hot dog before I left.

Flip the three-panel screen over to show the hot dog.

Let’s just say going to the fair wasn’t all I had dreamed it would be.

Flip the two panels toward you to close up the plaque and put it away.

All of the pictures you need can be printed directly from the Dream Magic CD, or you can substitute your own clip art pictures of ice cream, popcorn, cotton candy and hot dogs to make this trick.
I’ve used this often in Halloween shows because it gets a lot of kids up on stage and looks magical. You claim that you judged a costume contest in which there were twins and ask a helper to magically find the twin. Six kids each get to choose a mask from out of an envelope, the helper selects one, and you show that just one mask is left inside the envelope—a duplicate of the mask chosen by the helper.

First you need to secure several different masks. I use six, but you can do this with more or fewer. It helps to get masks all made by the same company in the same style so they are different faces, but look similar in quality and design. The best ones I have found to use are made of flat colored foam pieces and are sold by carnival prize suppliers like Oriental Trading or Kipp Brothers. These are easy to store and pack flat, yet look bright and colorful in display at the show. You will need six different masks, plus a duplicate of one of them. At $5 per dozen or so, you can just order two sets. It pays to have a duplicate of a second, different mask as well in case you have back-to-back shows at the same venue.

I remove the strings from the masks so kids do not get tangled up trying to put them on. The trick is just as effective if they hold the mask up to their face. Putting them masks on and off slows down the trick. Put the six masks and the one duplicate mask inside a large white or manila envelope. You may want to put a catchy cover picture on the front of the envelope to dress up the effect.

You can find ready-to-make kid’s Halloween mask images on the internet. Pick six simple designs and print the images on index card stock. Cut out the masks. Be sure to cut out the eye holes in the masks as well. Glue them to heavy cardboard or laminate them so they last longer. You could also glue each printed mask to a dowel or stick so the kids can hold them in one hand instead of trying to hold them up to their face.

There is no preparation, set-up, or reset. Here is my routine.

Last year I presented a magic show at a school just like this one and they asked me to judge the costume contest. Boy, was that hard.
I was doing OK until I notice that two people had on exactly the same costume. I asked one of the teachers about it and she said they were twins. Do you want to see the twin’s costume?

Bring out the envelope with the masks. Open it and look inside.

Actually, instead of showing you, maybe I can get one of you to find the Halloween twin.

Take the six different masks out of the envelope and leave the duplicate inside. Set the envelope on your table or upright on a card stand.

I have six different masks here, but only one of them is from a twin. Can I get someone to show us what a costume contest would look like with these masks?

Begin choosing six different helpers from the audience. I alternate boy-girl. I have the first three stand on my right and the next three stand on my left. So one side has boy-girl-boy and the other has girl-boy-girl. Ask each child their name and introduce yourself to them politely. Be sure to give each child a free choice of any mask.

I’ll pick some helpers. You can choose any mask you want and stand right here holding it up for everyone to see.

Some kids will put the masks in front of their face, others will hold it down by their waist. If anyone drops their hand to their side, ask them to hold the mask up so the audience can see it.

Now that we have six masks, it is not easy to see which one is a twin. The twin’s mask—the one that is exactly the same as one of these six—is still inside that envelope standing over there.

Point to the envelope with the prediction.

Now let me get someone who can find the twin.

Choose another helper from somewhere near the center or the audience. Have them stand in their place, not come up front.

You look like you might be able to help. Can you stand up right where you are? What is your name? Jenny? Well, Jenny, only one of these masks belongs to a twin, so we have to eliminate the other five. Point to these three kids on my right or these three kids on my left.

Here you are beginning a Magician’s Choice force. Be sure to ask the helper to “eliminate” some masks. If you ask her to “choose” she may bark out “The Witch. I think the witch is the twin.” Whichever side she points to, have that side step out of line. If the side has the force mask, have them step forward. If the side does not have the force mask, have them step backward. Then mention that she is doing well “eliminating” some masks.

These kids on my right? OK, then all of you step backward. Now, Jenny, you have nicely eliminated half of the masks, but we still have to find the twin. Actually, maybe it will help if you come up front.

Having her come to the front is an excuse to take the mask in her hand.

Jenny, reach out and take one of these three mask from one helper. Take any one you want and…

Watch while she is reaching for a mask. You will finish your thought differently depending on which mask she takes. If she takes the force mask, then you will say…

…and hold it up high.

If she takes one of the non-force masks, then you will say…

…and set it down over here on my table.

If there are two masks left, say to her…
Now, Jenny. So far you have eliminated four masks. Don’t think too hard. Just reach out and hand me one of these two masks.

If she hands you the force mask, hold it up high and say…

This one? This is the mask you choose?

If she hands you the non-force mask, set the mask on the table along with the other one and say…

That eliminates five masks. There is only one left.

Turn to the child holding the last mask and ask him or her to step forward.

You are holding the last mask. The only one not eliminated. Let’s see if that’s the Halloween twin. Jenny, would you go get that envelope I left over there, please?

Wait for her to retrieve the envelope.

The Halloween twin’s mask is inside that envelope. Let’s see if it matches the one you chose. Jenny, open the envelope and take out the mask inside. Hold it up for everyone to see.

Obviously, the mask will match the one left in line.

She did it! Jenny discovered the Halloween twin! Let’s give her a big round of applause.

Ask the other helpers to set their masks on the table and return to their seats. Thank them all and proceed with your next routine.

This routine will not work exactly the same way every time, as it depends on which side or which masks the helper chooses. You must keep aware and constantly guide the Magician’s Choice force so that the one remaining is always the force mask. Personally, I love doing this type of jazz magic. You have to keep on your toes and stay fresh in order to pull it off. Just remember that no one knows how it is supposed to end except you, so always act like whatever you do when the child makes a choice is your intended behavior.
Excerpted From

Hero Magic

Avenger Tracker

You bring out a rod with four designated markers for Iron Man, Captain America, Thor and the Hulk. You explain that this helps them keep track of who is in what part of the city. Any member who travels from one section to another causes another member to re-locate as well. Finally, Loki tries to destroy Central Avenue, but to no avail. The Avengers can always re-connect to defeat their enemy.

As you can see from the illustration, this is a routine for the venerable Pom-Pom Pole. Many performers have one already in their arsenal. Because each ball is usually a different primary color, this routine will play well with the SuperHero theme. It helps if your pom-pom balls are red, yellow, blue and green, because those colors are often associated with specific SuperHeroes. If you have a stick with different colors, you may need to rename one of the balls.

If your stick has a white ball, you can always dye it with standard fabric dye, available in most craft stores. Fabric spray paint is also available, but the consistency and application vary, so test out a product on some loose white yarn before you apply it to your expensive prop. Some cotton yarn may be dyed by simply dipping them in water with food coloring in it. Again, test your solution before using it on the actual prop.

Here is the Avenger Tracker routine.

Boys and girls, how many of you have seen the Avengers movie? Who has a favorite SuperHero?
Take a response or two. This helps get the entire audience involved in the plot of your routine.

You know, the Avengers have a special way of keeping track of each other. It works a little like this.

Bring out the Pom-Pom Pole. Slide your finger back and forth to indicate the pole itself.

This is Central Avenue.

Point to the four colored pom-pom balls.

And these are the techno-traffic indicators on their headquarters tracking display. This is Iron Man in his red suit. This is the green Hulk. This is Captain America with his blue (or white) shield. And this is Thor with his yellow hair. As you can see on the display, Iron Man has left Central Avenue and traveled to the south-east section of the city to fight a group of Loki’s henchmen.

Pull the blue ball down so the red one goes up.

When Captain America has to leave Central Avenue and go fight a villain in the southwest section of the city, then Iron Man races back to the Central Avenue headquarters.

Pull the red ball down so the blue one goes up.
He checks on his power supply and then runs back to the south-east to confront the enemy, while Captain America returns to headquarters. Each SuperHero’s movements are tracked with these indicators on the tracking display.

Pull the green ball up so that the red one goes up.

If the Hulk has to rush out to the north-east corner of the city, then Iron Man goes back to Central Avenue headquarters.

Pull the red ball down so the green ball returns to the pole.

Iron Man can keep catching up with criminals in the south-east and the others at Central Avenue can keep track of where he goes.

Pull the yellow ball up so the red ball goes up.

If Thor fights crime in the north-west part of the city, Captain America can track him by going back to Central Avenue.

Continue to pull balls to show the disparate connections, mentioning the Superhero and their location each time. Do not overdo this; a couple of repetitions are plenty. Then pinch the string at one end where a ball is down and pull the opposite lower ball down showing two balls on long strings below the pole.

Sometimes Iron man will be out in the south-east and Captain America will be in the south-west at the same time.

Pull the two top balls up one at a time.

And sometimes the Hulk will be fighting in the north-east at the same time as Thor is fighting in the north-west. Now you might think that the tracking display is made up of lots of interconnecting electric wires.

Pull the pole apart and show the empty interior to the audience.

But in fact, it runs on invisible impulses that not even Black Widow can see. It’s like radio waves connect the displays to keep them interacting.

Put the pole back together, reconnect the strings and let one long string slide inside. This returns the Pom-Pom Pole to its original state. Pull the four balls one at a time as you did in the beginning of the routine.
But those invisible impulses continue to operate the tracking display so all of the Avengers know when Captain America is in the south-west, when Iron Man is in the south-east, when Thor is in the north-west and when the Hulk is in the north-east. So how about a big round of applause for the Avengers and their invisible tracking display.

Wrap up the last remaining string around the pole and put it away to conclude the routine.

This routine takes advantage of the popularity of the several Avengers films that have been made in recent years. Kids are very familiar with the movies and the characters, so it should appeal to most audiences. But feel free to adapt it to other SuperHero or comic book characters if you have favorites. The Fantastic Four has also been featured in several films, and even though they all basically wear blue uniforms, you can find a way to distinguish them from one another by color.

If you are a DC comic reader instead of a Marvel fan, you might also be a fan of DC Comic’s The Justice League and want to use the colors to indicate Superman, Batman, Flash, Green Arrow, Aquaman or other DC Characters.

One nice component of this routine is that you do not need to modify, re-decorate, or alter this common and standard prop in any way. If you have a Pom Pom Pole trick of any kind, just toss it in your trunk and it is always ready to go.
This a way to use your Strat-O-Spheres trick for a sports theme. Start by taking your clear tube from the trick to a store that sells cheap toys. Party Centers, Dollar Stores and Five Below stores are good choices. They often sell small sports balls that are all the same size and just the right size for using in this trick. I have found several over the years that are painted foam, solid plastic, and bean-bag vinyl filled with loose beads. All you need are three different balls and a duplicate of one of them. The cost is minimal, as these cheap toys are usually three for a dollar.

Now print a cover for your tube. Grab some clip-art form the internet of simple pictures of the three balls you use. Stack the three balls in a tall row. You can print this on a plain white piece of card stock and just tape it in place over the red, yellow and green geometric design on the Strat-O-Spheres tube. Use regular cellophane tape and you can simply remove it after the summer season is over. A regular size piece of paper will not wrap around the entire tube, but since the audience never sees the back, it will not matter.

Suppose you use a soccer ball and a baseball and two basketballs. Load them into the tube the same order as the outside picture you made and with the extra secret basketball on top. Lift the outer covering tube to show three balls with the basketball on top. The extra basketball will remain hidden inside the covering tube.

Replace the balls into the tube in the same order as on the outer picture, and remove the cover tube. The basketball will have magically ended up on the bottom of the stack. This is exactly the way the Strat-O-Spheres routine works in the instructions, except you are using sports balls instead of red, yellow and green balls.

Continue with your standard Strat-O-Spheres routine and vanish the final ball. If you want, you can also print a picture of a baseball diamond, soccer field or basketball court and glue it on the front of the Gung-Ho box that you use to vanish the ball.
You show a box decorated like an aquarium. Then you show 10 different colored fish and drop them into the box. You shake the box to mix up the fish. Get out a fishing pole and offer to catch any fish called for. Choose someone from the audience and ask her what color fish she would like you to catch. Suppose she says “red.” Dip the end of the string into the box and instantly come up with a red fish. Ask another audience member what color he wants. Instantly dip the line in the box and come up with his selected color fish on the end. You can repeat this several more times, each time catching exactly the right fish named.

You will need a box decorated to look like a fish tank (or the ocean, if you like). About 8 x 12 x 6 inches high seems to work well. You also need ten different fish, ten duplicates of those fish, and a fishing pole.

The fishing pole can be any type. You can just use a plain wooden dowel with a string tied onto one end, a tree branch, or buy a cute toy fishing pole with colorful plastic parts. The only criteria is that it have a string with a magnet on the end.

To make the fish, you can find a simple fish picture on the internet in black and white line drawing form. Colorize it with software to make ten different color fish, or print the black and white line drawings and color them each with markers. You will need twenty fish, ten of each color and they must be double-sided, so you will need to print 40 fish altogether.

Glue ten fish, one fish of each color, back to back. Before you glue the other set of ten fish back to back, insert a metal washer or a small flat magnet between the two sides near the mouth. Test whatever magnets and washers you have to make sure they catch easily with the magnet on the end of your fishing rod. They should snap to the magnet quickly and hold fast. Make sure it is easy to hold onto the pole, swing the string near the fish and quickly catch and hold onto it as if you were fishing.
Now you have to gimmick the box. Glue ten separate pockets inside the box all around the sides. You can use regular white envelopes sealed shut and with one end cut off, or stick-on plastic pouches, or just a plain sheet of index card with a thin line of glue around three edges.

Glue three pockets on each side and two on each end so you have one pocket available for each different color fish.

Whichever method you choose, make sure that the fish slip in and out very easily. You do not want a tight fit. The pockets and fish should all be loose. If you have to, push a stick or ruler inside each envelope and wiggle it around to stretch it open more. You should be able to drop the fish in and slip them out quite easily. If you can turn the box upside down and all the fish fall out, they’re good.

To prepare for the show, just put a different color fish in each pocket and remember where they are. I think in terms of primary and secondary colors, so it is easy for me to remember that the one side has red, yellow, blue, the other side has green, orange, purple, the right end is black & white and the left end is pink and brown.

Now that you know where each fish is located, it is an easy matter to hold the fishing rod and lower the magnet into the box at the right place. Just practice it a few times without being close to the box or looking inside. You should quickly get the feel of being able to snatch out any color fish called for.

To present the routine, introduce the box and have the loose (non-magnetic) fish inside laying on the bottom. Pick them up and fan them out to show the different colors. Drop them all in the box and shake up the box. Be careful to shake it back and forth not up and down — you don’t want to dislodge the pocketed fish. Set it on your table a bit out of your reach and sight lines.

Bring out the fishing rod and ask anyone to name a color. Drop the string into the box and swing it toward the side of the box where you know that color fish is pocketed. When you feel it attract, come out with the right color of fish.

Remove that fish and set it aside. Ask another child to call out a color. You have memorized which pocket holds which color, so you should be ready to aim in the right direction as soon as you hear a color named. Swing the rod into the box and immediately come out with his chosen color.

When I made my first set of fish, I printed the art on index stock and then folded it across the fin line. Then I inserted a piece of comic book backing board in between the sides and glued all three layers together. It makes for a good, heavy fish. It also allowed me to cut a round hole in the center cardboard and insert the disk magnet inside, thus reducing the bulge of the magnet glued between the pieces. If you just use card stock and glue the two side together, you might want to laminate your fish after making them so they will last longer.
When making the set, print the fish first, then go looking for a box that is the right size. You want to make sure that it looks simple, but that it is large enough so that the audience cannot see inside. If the colored fish in the pockets are too near the top edge of the box, kids will see that you have duplicate fish. Remember, they think you are fishing for the mixed-up set of fish on the bottom of the box.

One variation is to use a four-panel folding screen instead of an actual box. In other words, a box without a bottom. Bring it out folded flat so the audience cannot see inside. Open it out and stick your arm through it to show it is bottomless. Then set it down and begin.

Be sure to have a back-up magnet on a string in case yours breaks. The neodymium ones are pretty tough, but ceramic and ferro magnets do break sometimes in transit.

Artwork for the colored fish and for the cardboard box/fish tank is available on the Water Magic CD, so you can simply print the art and make up the trick, or you can substitute a little paint and your own clip art of fish to make this yourself.
Atsa Summa Nice-a Spaghet!

If you want to present a program or themed show about world cultures, here is a routine with an Italian flair.

Most of us can do Professor’s Nightmare in our sleep, it is such a stand-up staple. Why not do it with yellow ropes that represent spaghetti? And then, produce some meatballs to go with it! You will need the standard three-rope Professor’s Nightmare set-up, some extra strands of the same rope, and two red sponge balls that are secreted in a handy place. You will also be using a gimmicked plate.

Use any regular dinner plate, preferably plastic with a nice Italian design. Turn it face down and use wide clear tape to fasten a square of card stock to the bottom. This will be a secret pocket to hole a pair of sponge balls. About a three inch square should work. First, tape one side down to the plate. Bend the card upwards in a shallow U and then tape down the other side, leaving a rounded gap to hold the balls. Tape across the bottom edge of the square as well. You might want to use a color of card that matches your plate, but it doesn’t have to be perfect, since no one should see it. You may have to experiment a bit with the size and depth of the card. Just make sure you can slide a couple of sponge balls in and out of this hidden pocket easily. Regular 2” red sponge balls should work fine, but if you already have 1 1/2” or something else, use them.

Cut three pieces of tan or yellow rope into the Professor’s Nightmare lengths. Mark both ends with a small unobtrusive magic marker dot so you can tell the ropes. You might want to use different color dots on each of those three ropes so you can tell which is which before you pull one off the plate. Now cut a few extra ropes to match the middle length.

Take out the plate full of yellow ropes, one long, one short, and one medium, plus the extra few “ringers.” Hold the plate with your thumb on top and fingers underneath, covering the secret pocket.

Let me tell you about the time I went to Italy. I love Italian food, especially spaghetti. I ordered a big plate of spaghetti and it came in long strands. I watched some other people in the restaurant eating it by twirling the strands around their fork. But to me it seemed like the strands were too long.

Pick up the long rope by one end and pull it upwards out of your hand, finally holding it at one end. Leave the short and medium ropes bundled with the others on the plate.
This looked like it would be hard to eat. So I used my fork to cut the strands. But I cut too much, so some of the pieces were tiny.

As you talk, set the plate down and pull up the medium and short ropes.

*Some were long, some were short, and some were just right.*

Hold up the three different lengths.

*Just then this Italian waiter saw me and started yelling, “Hey you! Whatsa you a-doing’ widda spaghetti? Datsa no how-a you eats-a da spaghetti. The chef, he make-a da spaghetti just-a right. Itsa done al dente for you. Den you chop it up like-a da barbarian.”*

Now you set up the three ropes in your hands in the proper order and perform the Professor’s Nightmare moves as you finish the story.

*But let me tell you what happens when a magician goes to Italy to eat spaghetti. I worked a little magic to make the waiter happy. I made all of my spaghetti come out exactly the same length.*

Drop all three “equal” strands on the plate and pick it up to display. Pick up three or four of the extra strands and show that they are all independent and the same length. While you are doing this, use your thumb to slip the sponge balls out of the pocket underneath the plate. Palm the two balls. Change hands and pick up a few more strands of spaghetti. Then drop all the rope and the two palmed sponge balls onto the plate. Tilt the plate to show the full plate of spaghetti and meatballs.

*The waiter was so pleased, that he gave me another plate — this time spaghetti with meatballs.*

In this version, you stat with three unequal ropes and then make them equal. Notice that because of the story line, you do not return the ropes to their original unequal lengths, as in some other versions of this trick. Making the spaghetti “right” again is the point of the routine. Producing the meatballs is enough of a surprise to add a kicker ending.

A sturdy plastic plate, three pieces of rope and a couple of sponge balls are all you need to make up a clever rope routine for a show about food, nutrition, or Italy. The trick is common and well-known and the ending is a big surprise to kids who may be familiar with the trick, so you have a winning combination with very little effort.

*World Magic* has literally hundreds more tricks, each with a focus on England, China, Spain, Australia, France or another country’s culture or history. Cut and Restored Baguette, Vanishing Bullfighter, Growing Boomerangs, Mis-Made Big Ben, Chinese Coin Escape, and many more are explained.
Thanks

Thank you for downloading and trying this Jim Kleefeld Theme Show Magic Sampler. All of the books represented here are magic theme show books. Each book presents dozens of tricks and routines that center around one specific theme.

Background

My two main sources of business are Library Shows and School Assemblies. For over 30 years, I have found rich rewards in performing for children and their parents and teachers in these two venues. Schools want programs that are strongly educational, but also entertaining, and I discovered that presenting a fun show that teaches sound concepts makes for a very viable performance career. I offer school assembly programs on Character, Anti-Bullying, Reading Motivation and more. These are all built around core concepts that I can teach to children in a fun and entertaining way.

Libraries want performers who can showcase books and reading, but they also want engaging entertainers who can return year after year with new and different programs. Every year since 1972, I have offered a new and different Magic Show, based on a theme, to libraries in my market. Because I change my show, the same libraries have me back year after year. Every summer the libraries in Ohio and many other parts of the United States offer a theme, I tie my show to that theme, whether it is Dragons & Dreams, Hats Off to Books, Build a Better World or Every Hero Has a Story. Because my show each year matches the library’s theme, I get rebooked year after year.

I wrote these books to help kidshow performers become better at changing their shows for repeat clients. If you want to book the same clients again and again, change your show. My theme show books can help you learn how to do that.

These theme show books are typically between 150 and 250 pages and have dozens of tricks and routines. In addition, all of the books come as pdf files on a CD or Flash Drive and include dozens, often hundreds of pieces of finished art that you can print and use to make up the tricks.

Christmas Magic and Halloween Magic are similar theme show books that center around those holidays and give you hundreds of routines and ideas on how to build special holiday magic shows.

Other Items

In addition to writing books for children’s performers, I offer a number of custom created kidshow props. These are usually props and routines that I have invented, produced and audience-tested in my own shows.

Show Packages

If you want to build your own show, you will find plenty of tricks in my theme show books. If you want a complete show that is already time-tested, I offer several show packages, including The No-Bully Zone, Tales From Beyond and Stately Spirits. These include an extensive manual, a full show script, a video of a live performance, materials you need to get started, and a performing license to present the show in your region.