Character & Kingdom

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Preface

When it comes to using magic tricks (or “Illusions”) as a teaching tool, there are many important aspects to consider.

1. **The trick must work!**
   
   The trick you do must work and be done correctly to be most effective. If you are attempting to present a lesson through an illusion, but the effect does not work correctly; your audience will be much more mesmerized by the fact that you messed up the trick than they are focused on your message.

2. **You must be confident performing the trick.**
   
   If you are not confident performing the trick you cannot focus on the message you are presenting. And, if doing the trick correctly requires you to stop talking and completely focus on the slight you are trying to accomplish the effectiveness of your message will be diminished.

3. **The message must be clear.**
   
   Don’t forget the point of doing the trick! If the point is actually to share a message in a captivating way then don’t just practice the trick. Be sure to also practice the message you are communicating.
Introduction

Recently I was reading a small book by Lance Burton called *Advice*. In the book, Lance emphasizes the fact that for us to become better performers we must perform often. This is great Advice! The more we perform an act, routine, or effect the better we should become.

As I thought more about this, I realized that one of the challenges many of us face is the reality that we are often performing in different venues. It could be a school one week, a library the next week, and a church the next day. These different performing situations often require many different illusions. It is certainly an excellent idea to have a wide array of effects you are able to perform. Over time our magic should progress, as should our magical repertoire. At the same time, more tricks means more practice time. Time is often a precious and limited commodity.

Another limited resource for most of us is budget. We may have plans and aspirations to add many different effects and illusions to our shows. Yet, sometimes our dreams temporarily exceed our funds!

One great way to double your practice time is to find effects that work excellent in more than just one venue. If you can do a trick in a school during the week, and then present the same trick (with a different message) in a church on the weekend, you are getting twice the value out of the same trick. Double the practice time means you
are likely going to improve much more quickly. The more you improve, the more opportunities will be available for you as a performer.

This leads to the focus of this book. *Character & Kingdom* was expressly written with the intent on finding illusions that are fantastic for more than one venue. Certainly, opening effects and tricks that are simply presented for fun and entertainment always have a wide appeal. More difficult to find are versatile message tricks. Tricks expressly used to share in a character building program that emphasize positive decision making, anti-bullying, saying yes to what is right and no to what is wrong, etc. Or, in a ministry program, tricks that are used to present a Biblical message.

In this book, every trick that is shared is presented with both a lesson for character building programs and a lesson for ministry programs. Even though two different lesson ideas are given for each effect, the props are exactly the same.

My hope is that these ideas will help you increase your effectiveness and expertise with these illusions. Which, in turn, will hopefully lead to even more time to further develop your magic.
Chapter One: The Rainbow Kettle

The Effect: From a simple kettle water is poured into multiple clear glasses. Every time the water is poured a different color comes out. The lid is taken off of the kettle to reveal a beautiful rainbow streamer inside. The different colors are poured back into the kettle, yet they pour out as clear water.

The Secret: A watertight compartment has been fastened inside of the tea kettle. Water is placed
around this compartment and a silk streamer is placed inside of the compartment. Small drops of food coloring are prepared ahead of time in each of the clear glasses, which creates the illusion of color pouring. When the water hits the food coloring it changes color. After the streamer is removed from the compartment, the colored water is then poured in (keeping it separate from the clear water) and clear water is poured out the front.
Character Lesson:

Have the confidence to know that YOU can do what others may think you cannot accomplish!

Presentation

I have something to show you today, and I am sure you are going to be impressed. Are you ready to see it? Here it is (introduce the kettle). I know, at first it doesn’t seem like much. But, there is something very interesting about this small pot, or “kettle”. The amazing thing about it is this (Begin pouring the water into the different glasses, creating different colors). Every time I pour from this kettle, I get something different. At first, I may pour and see a red color. That would normally make us think that whatever is inside the kettle must be red. But, the next time I pour I get something blue! And, then green! Again, I pour from the kettle- and this time it is yellow! It seems that no matter how many times I pour out of this kettle I get something different. I don’t know about you, but after I see so many different colors come from the same kettle it makes me wonder- what is inside? Let’s take a look (open the kettle and begin to remove the streamer). Look at this! It is not just one color at all- it is an entire rainbow!

It really is incredible to see all the amazing things that happened with what we thought was an ordinary pot. In fact, life is often like this. Did you know that each and every one of you have the potential to accomplish some
amazing things in this world? There are times when other people look at us and maybe think there isn’t anything special about us. In fact, unfortunately, there are times when others even say hurtful things to us that discourage us. The reality is that sometimes we don’t realize the potential that we have right away. Just like we didn’t realize at first all of the great things that would come from that kettle. I believe that whether or not you know what your gifts are, each of you has the potential to do great things!

Today, I want to be sure that each of you know that you can accomplish some awesome things in this world. You can make a difference! So keep trying, be persistent, and always do your best.
Kingdom Lesson:

Matthew 12:34b  NIV  “The mouth speaks what the heart is full of.”

Presentation

Have you ever heard it said that if you can find the end of the rainbow you will find a pot of gold? Well, what if you actually went to all of the work to find the end of the rainbow only to realize you went to the wrong side! What would you find then? You would still find a pot, just not a pot of gold. The pot might be more like this kettle. Today I brought a kettle with me that was found at the end of the rainbow. When you pour from the kettle something amazing happens. Let me show you (demonstrate for the audience the fact that a different color is poured each time by pouring the water into clear glasses with the food coloring secretly added). We may start with blue, but the blue liquid quickly changes to red, then green, and now some orange. In fact, if I continue to pour I may even find a little yellow. Look- there is even some purple inside!

I started to wonder why this was happening, but then I looked inside the kettle. And, do you know what I found? (Reach inside the kettle and pull out the streamer- if you have loaded the streamer by zig zag folding it, it will create a beautiful appearance) A rainbow! There was still a part of the rainbow inside this little pot. You see, the fact
that all of this color was inside the kettle meant that all of that color (indicate the colored glasses) was able to come out!

This reminds me of a verse in the bible that says “Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.” Whatever we have deep inside of us is what will come out of our mouths too. If we are full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and gentleness. And, if we truly care for others- those things will be reflected in the words that we speak.

It is up to us to make a choice. People in this world may pour good things into us (begin pouring the colored water back into the inside compartment- the same compartment where you just removed the streamer). They may do their best to fill us with words of encouragement and kindness. People may share with you the life-changing message of Jesus. But, if we ignore the kindness that others share with us, if we ignore the message of Jesus, and if we choose NOT to let those things remain in our heart. Then, our lives will continue to be ordinary and plain (pour more clear water out from the kettle until it is gone). I hope today you will let the word of God remain in your heart and let good and encouraging words flow from you.
The Effect: A small hat is placed onto the head of a volunteer from the audience. The hat continues to grow bigger and bigger until it reaches a point in which it covers up nearly half the volunteer's body!

The Secret: The Bongo Hat is really more of a special effect than a trick. The secret is simply in the way the hat is folded up to continue to unfold and grow. It is also made from a special paper that gives it durability to last for years and years.
Character Lesson:

*How you treat others is your choice. You can choose to be a bully, or you can choose to encourage. Make the right choice!*  

I always begin this trick by bringing up a volunteer from the audience. After the volunteer is on stage and shares their name the trick is introduced. For this effect, the character in the story I tell always has the same name as the volunteer that is chosen. In this example, we will call our volunteer “Sam”.

Presentation

*Sam, I am so glad you volunteered to help me today. I have a story to share with you. It is a story about a young man who’s name was Sam. Wait a minute—your name is Sam! Well I’m sure this is a different Sam. The Sam in this story was about this tall (place your hand at the same height as your volunteer). Wow! That is the same height as you! But, I am sure this must be another coincidence. The reason is that the Sam in this story was not as good at making right decisions as I am sure you are. In fact, this Sam was a bit of a bully! For the Sam in this story it started as something small - like this small hat (introduce the hat and place it on the volunteer’s head). Sam really wasn’t a bully a first. But, one day something happened. Sam was outside with his friends. His friends began saying*
some very mean and hurtful things to some other kids. Sam did not join in on the name calling, at least not on this day. But, Sam also did not speak up and tell his friends to stop being so mean. Sam didn’t think he was doing much wrong, He figured this was a small problem and not a big deal. In fact, Sam, can you make that hat fall off your head? (Have the volunteer shake their head and make the hat fall off). Just like you were able to easily make that hat fall off, Sam thought maybe this problem with his friends would just go away on his own. Unfortunately, it didn’t. His friends continued to be bullies. After watching his friends mistreat those around them time and time again something happened (open the hat to next larger size). Maybe Sam just began to be more comfortable, or maybe he wanted to be like his friends. I’m not sure exactly what caused it, but soon Sam began to join his friends in the name calling and bullying. That problem that began as something small was starting to get bigger. But, Sam thought he was still in control. He could stop doing this at anytime (have the volunteer make the hat fall off again, then open the hat to the next size). What Sam didn’t realize is that his judgement was beginning to be clouded. He couldn’t quite see straight anymore! More and more often he began to say and do hurtful things to those around him. The problem was beginning to get out of control! What began as something very small, was now a very big problem (open the hat again to the largest size, be sure the audience sees the patterned side of the hat first). Soon it was as if there
was a monster inside Sam (turn the hat around showing the monster face) that he never knew was there!

Now, this is just a story (remove the hat and begin folding it back up). I really appreciate you being willing to have some fun with us today and help tell that story. And, I know this is not a story about you, Sam. I know that you are not like the Sam in this story who did not make good decisions and chose to be a bully. I am confident that you are much different. Rather than being someone who says and does things that hurt others, we can choose to encourage others. We can choose to stand up for what is right when we see people around us that are bullying others or treating them in a disrespectful way. Sam, I know that you are one of those people who chooses to make a positive difference in this world. Each and every one of us can make good choices. The next time you are tempted to bully others the best thing you can do is resist that temptation from the start, when it is very small (by now you should have hat folded back up to it’s smallest form. Hold the hat up, then put it away). If you choose to do the right thing from the very start, the problem can never become too difficult to handle. Sam, you were an awesome volunteer today. Please give Sam one more big round of applause!
Kingdom Lesson:

James 1:12 NCV “When people are tempted and still continue strong, they should be happy. After they have proved their faith, God will reward them with life forever. God promised this to all those who love him.

The ministry lesson for the Bongo hat begins in the same way as the character lesson, with a volunteer from the audience. After the volunteer is on stage and shares their name the trick is introduced. For this effect, once again we will call our volunteer “Sam”. The routine is essentially the same, but rather than bullying the lesson is about temptation.

Presentation

Sam, I am so glad you volunteered to help me with this today. I have a story to share with you. It is a story about a young man who’s name was Sam. Wait a minute—your name is Sam! Well I’m sure this is a different Sam. The Sam in this story was about this tall (place your hand at the same height as your volunteer). Wow! That is the same height as you! But, I am sure this must be another coincidence. The reason is that the Sam in this story was not as good at making right decisions as I am sure you are.

One day, Sam was with his friends. Sam’s friends began to say some things that he knew they shouldn’t be
saying. And, Sam was tempted to do the same. At first, it was a very small temptation—like this small hat (introduce the hat and place it on the volunteer’s head). Unfortunately Sam gave into the temptation. Sam said to himself “It’s okay, this is not a big deal, I am in complete control. I can stop doing this at anytime.” (Have the volunteer shake their head and make the hat fall off). What Sam didn’t realize is that the small temptation began to grow into a bigger one (open the hat to next larger size). After giving in the first time, it became easier and easier to give into temptation again. Not only was Sam saying things he shouldn’t say, he also began doing things he shouldn’t do. Sam still thought he was in control (have the volunteer make the hat fall off again, then open the hat to the next size). What Sam didn’t realize is that his judgement was beginning to be clouded. He couldn’t quite see straight anymore! More and more often he began to say and do hurtful things to those around him. He was choosing to use words he should not use. He was taking things from others that didn’t belong to him. The problem was beginning to get out of control! What began as something very small, was now a very big problem (open the hat again to the largest size, be sure the audience sees the patterned side of the hat first). Soon it was as if there was a monster inside Sam (turn the hat around showing the monster face) that he never knew was there!

Now, this is just a story (remove the hat and begin folding it back up). I really appreciate you being willing to
have some fun with us today and help tell that story. And, I know this is not a story about you, Sam. I know that you are not like the Sam in this story who did not make good decisions. I am confident that you are much different. In life, every one of us will be tempted to do what we should not do. But, God has promised us that we will never be tempted beyond what we can handle. The best thing you can do is resist the temptation from the start, when it is very small (by now you should have hat folded back up to it’s smallest form. Hold the hat up, then put it away) and never let it become a bigger problem. Always know that whatever you face in life, God will be with you every step of the way to help you make the right decision. Let’s all give Sam one more big round of applause.
Chapter Three: Block Thru Brick

The Effect: A solid block is examined and signed by a volunteer. The block is placed into a solid tube. A separate tube is shown and a barrier is placed between the two tubes. The block is seen to instantly pass through the barrier and the second tube!

The Secret: There is an additional hollow block that the audience does not know about. When the solid block is first placed into the tube, it is
switched out for the hollow block. A small hole in the back of the tube allows you to hold the block in place. The solid block remains in the tube (which is now held below the barrier). The hollow block goes in the top, and the solid signed block drops out the bottom.
Character Lesson:

There are times in life when we all face obstacles and challenges. Even when it seems difficult, you can break through the barriers you face!

Presentation

Every person in this room today has followed a different path to get here. For some, the path has been relatively easy. For others, the path might be more challenging. Today, I want to share with you something very important. No matter what your life has been like up until this point is not the issue. What you do with your life going forward is what really matters. To share more about this with you I am going to need someone to help me (At this point, go into the audience and have someone write their initials or sign their name on the block- we will call this volunteer “James”). James has signed his name on this block. I hope that most of the time in your life, James, things go rather smoothly. It is nice to be able to through life with ease. Just like this block can easily pass through this tube (pass the block through the tube, switching it for the fake block). Unfortunately for all of us there are times in which things are not quite so simple. Each of us have certainly found ourselves in difficult situations in life. It could be that you face challenges in your home life. It might be that in school you always do your very best but never quite seem to do as well as others around you.
Maybe some really unfortunate things have happened to you or to people in your family. None of us like to face those difficulties. But, the fact is that sometimes it seems as if we have run into a brick wall (introduce the brick, and place it on top of the tube that now contains the solid block, the block should be held at the top of the tube next to the brick). When we face challenges in life we may even wonder if we are facing an impossible situation. Sometimes it seems as if our situation is hopeless. Other people may discourage us and put us down. Maybe you feel that the problem you face is one you cannot overcome. Today, I am here to encourage you. I want each and every one of you to know that you can make it. You can persist! And, no matter how big the challenges and situations in front of you might be... (balance the second tube on top of the brick. Then, as you drop the fake block through the top tube release the real block so it drops out. The small ridge in the top tube will hold the fake block inside, and also allow you to show both tubes empty at this point) you can make it through! So, never doubt yourself. Always do your best and know you can overcome the challenges in front of you. You can do what others might have said was impossible!
Kingdom Lesson:

Philippians 4:13 NCV “I can do all things through Christ, because he gives me strength”

Presentation

Life can be very challenging, don’t you think? There are times in life where everything seems to be fairly simple. Other times in life things seem to be quite a bit more difficult and complicated. I’d like to talk a little bit about this today, but I am going to need someone to help me (At this point, go into the audience and have someone write their initials or sign their name on the block- we will call this volunteer “James”). James has signed his name on this block. I hope that most of the time in your life, James, things go rather smoothly. It is nice to be able to through life with ease. Just like this block can easily pass through this tube (pass the block through the tube, switching it for the fake block). Unfortunately for all of us there are times in which things are not quite so simple. In fact, sometimes it seems as if we have run into a brick wall (introduce the brick, and place it on top of the tube that now contains the solid block, the block should be held at the top of the tube next to the brick). When we face challenges in life we may even wonder if we are facing an impossible situation. Sometimes it seems as if our situation is hopeless. The truth is that no matter how difficult, challenging, and hopeless the situation might seem. We can know that with
God, (balance the second tube on top of the brick. Then, as you drop the fake block through the top tube release the real block so it drops out. The small ridge in the top tube will hold the fake block inside, and also allow you to show both tubes empty at this point) nothing is Impossible!
Chapter Four: Beads Apart

The Effect: Two clear glasses are displayed, each containing a different color of beads. The beads are then mixed together in the same glass. After passing the beads behind your back, the beads are immediately shown to be back in their original glasses.

The Secret: In one of the glasses, the beads are actually attached together by a string. The string is attached to the bottom of the glass. When that glass is turned upside down the loose beads (of the other color) will return to their original container while the beads attached by a string remain in their own glass.
Character Lesson:

Are You Willing To Be Different?

Presentation

When we look around it is very easy to see that each of us are different. Of course, some of us are tall and some are short. Some are “average” they might say. All across the world there are people with different color skin, people who speak different languages, and people who are different in many other ways. All of our physical differences really don’t matter. There is one difference that does, but it is a difference that you cannot see just by looking at a person. The difference is that there are people in this world who choose to make right choices and people who don’t. A person’s outward appearance will not tell us if they are a kind, helpful, and compassionate person who helps others or if they are someone who hurts others with their words and actions. Sometimes I think it would be a whole lot easier if this difference was easy to be seen. Like these two glasses of beads for instance (hold up the two glasses). In one glass are green beads, and in the other are pink beads. Just by looking it is easy to see that the beads are different colors. In the world there are people who make good decisions and those who don’t, but it is not so easy to tell them apart. The truth is that we are not separate like this. Rather, we all go through this world together (pour the loose beads into the glass with the beads
attached to the bottom and begin to mix them together). It is very easy for us to even get mixed up at times and begin allowing others who make poor choices have an influence on our lives. We begin to let the people around us; as well as the things we see on TV, the internet, and other places begin to negatively impact us. Sometimes we make choices we shouldn’t make because we give in to what others are doing. Every one of us needs to make a choice. That choice is to do what is right even if you are the only one. Even though we live in a world where we have both positive and negative influences (place the beads behind your back and pour the loose beads back into their original glasses, then bring the beads back out) we can choose to be set apart, to do what is right, and to make good decisions. We can choose to spend time with others who make good decisions too. Each of us can choose to always stand up for what is right.
Kingdom Lesson:

Romans 12:2  NLT “Do not copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know that God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing his will really is”

Presentation

Romans 12:2 says not to copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is. You see, when we decide to live our lives for Jesus Christ we are set apart for Him. It is kind of like the beads in these glasses. The colors have been separated. The green beads are in one glass and the pink beads are in the other. But, the thing is, when we make a decision to live for Jesus Christ it does not mean that we are immediately physically separated from this world and taken to Heaven. We are still here together with many other types of people (pour the beads together into the same glass). We face many of the same obstacles and challenges. The decision we must make is that even though we are in the world we should not be conformed to it. This means we
should not copy the behavior and customs of this world. In other words, there should be a noticeable difference in our lives. Now, even though these beads are all mixed together, you can still tell there is a difference. Our difference may not be in physical appearance, but we can be different in our thought life and in our actions. The things we think about others and what we choose to focus our thoughts on should be things that please God. When we focus on God, spend time with Him, and worship him; our thoughts will overflow into the rest of our lives as we seek to serve the Lord in all we do. We can also choose to treat others with love and respect, just as Jesus would. And, we can know that one day we really will be set apart for Him and with Him. It will happen quickly, (place the beads behind your back, and pour the beads back into their original glass) in just the blink of an eye. God will separate those who belong to Him (bring one glass full of beads out to the front) from those who do not (bring out the other glass). Make sure you make the decision to live a life set apart for Jesus Christ.
The Effect: A small metal tube, two nails, and a balloon are handed out for examination. The balloon is then placed inside the tube and the nails are pushed through the balloon without harming it!
**The Secret:** The metal tube is constructed with special grooves on the inside. These grooves are the secret to the trick. When the nails are placed into the tube, the tip of the nail follows this groove around the balloon and out the other side. The balloon gets compressed, but does not pop.
Character Lesson:

*Sticks and Stones may break my bones, and harmful words do hurt!*

Presentation

Have you ever heard it said that sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me? That is a lie. Harmful words do hurt. The things that we say to others and that they say to us can hurt us. We may feel that our confidence has about as much resistance to the hurtful words that others say as this balloon might have to these nails. It seems that there is no chance this fragile balloon could survive a puncture from these nails. Today, we are going to see if it can or not.

Another phrase you may have heard is “having thick skin”. This means that someone is less likely to let criticism and harmful words have an impact on them. To have “thick skin” you must have confidence in yourself. This metal tube could represent a person who has the ability to resist the criticism of others, their “thick skin” (place the tube around the balloon). With this tube the balloon has more protection, but it is still not completely protected. There are holes where the nails can get through. No matter how thick we think our skin is, and no matter how confident we are, words can still get to us and hurt us. It would be great if we could go through life and never have anyone say or do anything that might hurt
us, but in life those challenging things sometimes happen (grab the nails and begin to press them through the tube and around the balloon as described in the trick instructions). The important thing is that when you face those challenges, you don’t let them burst your self-confidence. Always know that no matter how anyone tries to discourage you or put you down, you are very special. There are unique qualities that you have that no one else might have. You can overcome challenges and discouragement and truly make an amazing difference in this world. And, always remember that words do hurt! Choose your words carefully, and choose to say kind and encouraging things to those around you!
Kingdom Lesson: The Armor of God

Ephesians 6:10-13  NIV  “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

Presentation

Did you know that you are extremely valuable to God? When we make the decision to live for him we can know that God has an amazing plan for us. But, the reality is as Christians we are in a battle. Now, this is not a physical battle against human beings but a spiritual battle against the evil one. He has plans to attempt to destroy those of us who are Christians. In Ephesians 6:10 Paul teaches us about putting on the armor of God. We must put on the belt of truth, the chest armor of righteousness, shoes of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit. Today, this metal tube is going to help us think of that armor. Of course, God’s armor is much stronger than this! The Bible tells us that we need to be
prepared for the attacks of the evil one. These nails will be our version of those attacks today. As you can see, these nails will pass through the center of the tube (pass the nails through the tube so the audience can see them go in).

What would happen, if there were something inside that tube when the nails went in? It might not be good! Let’s see what happens to this balloon (inflate the balloon and place it inside the tube). Like a balloon, we may sometimes feel very fragile. We may even doubt that we would be able to resist temptations and stand up for what is right. There may be times when things come against our life and the evil one tries to harm us. If we have the whole armor of God on we can be protected. It does not matter what comes our way (pass one nail through the tube - around the balloon), It does not matter what kind of persecution we face (pass the other nail through), and the trials we face don’t matter either. No matter how the evil one tries to tempt us, you can be protected with the armor of God.
The Effect: A small bag is shown to be empty. Then, a box of flowers is produced. This happens three separate times. When all three boxes of flowers have been produced it seems there is no way they ever could have fit in the bag to begin with.
The Secret: Each of the small boxes can be folded flat and has one side that matches the inside of the bag. Before beginning, the boxes are preloaded in the bottom of the bag. When you hold the bag up for your audience to see, they are actually seeing the top of the box of flowers. Now, when you are ready to produce the flowers, simply reach into the bag, lift up the top flap on the flower box, and pull up on the ribbon. Repeat twice more for a great effect.
Character Lesson:

*Where you start does not determine where you finish.*

Presentation

Today I brought along something beautiful that I would like to show you. In fact, I have it here inside this little bag. Take a look (show the bag). Ok, maybe at first it is difficult for you to see the beauty. But the reality is that to see the real beauty in something it often takes time. There are many beautiful things in creation that begin as something very small. In fact it is a seed buried in the dirt, something we do not even see, that later blooms into something beautiful (reach into the bag and pull out the first box of flowers). That seed later becomes a beautiful flower. The same is often true in our lives. At first, we may wonder if there is anything worthwhile in our lives. Is there anything beautiful that we can offer? Even though we may not see it at first, we can know that each of us does has something wonderful to offer (pull out the 2nd box).

In the same way that a small seed can become something amazing, each of us can do amazing things too! Sometimes we might feel that we don’t have the same advantages as someone else. Maybe we seem to face more challenges and obstacles in life than those around us. But, just because things don’t always start out the way that you
you would want in life (show the bag empty one last time), always remember (produce the final flowers) that you can accomplish amazing things in your life.
Kingdom Lesson:

*I Corinthians 12:4-6 NIV*  “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.”

Presentation

Today I brought along something beautiful that I would like to show you. In fact, I have it here inside this little bag. Take a look (show the bag). Ok, maybe at first it is difficult for you to see the beauty. The reality is that to see the real beauty in something it often takes time. There are many beautiful things in creation that begin as something very small. In fact it is a seed buried in the dirt, something we do not even see, that later blooms into something beautiful (reach into the bag and pull out the first box of flowers). That seed later becomes a beautiful flower. The same is often true in our lives. At first, we may wonder if there is anything worthwhile in our lives. Is there anything beautiful that we can offer? Even though we may not see it at first, we can know that each of us does have something wonderful to offer (pull out the 2nd box). In fact, in I Corinthians 12 we learn that each of us has a gift. We may wonder if our gift matters as much as somebody else’s. Maybe we even look inside our self (show bag again) and
no matter how hard we search we just can’t see that there is anything good in us that God can use. But, each of us was created for a purpose. You can know that even if right now you do not think there is anything beautiful, God says in Ecclesiastes 3:11 that He will make everything beautiful in His time (pull out last box of flowers). God has created each of us in a beautiful way and for a beautiful purpose!
Chapter Seven: Nesting Boxes

The Effect: A volunteer is given a coin, which they mark in a way that makes it easily identifiable as theirs. The coin is placed into a small box. The coin vanishes from the box and then reappears inside another box. This box happens to be the inner-most box in a series of boxes.

The Secret: The coin is actually stolen away after it is placed in the rattle box by the volunteer. The rattle box is gimmicked in a way that allows you to shake it and create the sound of a coin rattling just by lightly pressing the
bottom of the box (this make the audience think the coin has not left the box). After stolen away, it is loaded in the nesting boxes. The nesting boxes are gimmicked in a way that allow you to load the coin quickly into the innermost box while keeping it inside all of the other boxes.
Character Lesson:

*We can accomplish much more working together as a team, rather than doing everything on our own.*

For this effect, I once again begin by selecting a volunteer from the audience. This time, we will call our volunteer “Sarah”.

Presentation

*Sarah, I am so glad you volunteered to help today. I know that you are going to do a great job. In fact, I am so confident that you are going to do a great job helping me today that I would like to pay you. Here is a quarter. Sarah, this quarter is just for you. Now, there is a chance that you may accidently drop that quarter. If that happens, we want to be sure that whoever finds it knows that it is yours so they can give it back. Here is what I would like you to do. Take this marker and put your initials on the quarter or draw a picture on either side. Now that you have done that, this quarter is different from every other quarter in the world. It is the only quarter just like this. That makes it pretty special. This quarter is special for another reason too. It is special, because today it is going to represent your life! Of course, Sarah, your life is worth far more than a quarter. Even if I had all the money in the world I still could not give you enough to tell you how*
valuable your life is. Your life is a treasure. In fact, we want to keep your treasure safe, so let’s place it in this treasure box (place the quarter inside a rattle box or other device of your choice, and secretly steal it away).

The same is true of every person who is here today.

Your life is a treasure! There are some amazing things about each and every one of you. Some characteristics and qualities you have that make you different from other people. Some of you may be really good at sports. Others might always get good grades in school. There are some people who are good at helping out when there is a need, or they are great at noticing when someone else needs encouragement and they say or do something to brighten their day. Maybe you are one of those people. Whatever your unique gifts and abilities are, they give you the power to impact this world in a way that maybe nobody else can.

The only thing is, we all have to make a choice. Some people choose to live their life in a way that helps and encourages others. Others choose to ignore other people. They don’t care about what is best for everyone, they only care about themselves. Rather than sharing their gifts with those around them and choosing to be a part of the team, they choose to be selfish—even when it means somebody else’s feelings might be hurt. Instead of saying kind things to encourage others, some people choose hurtful words to bully those around them.

Sarah, today I am going to give you a choice. You can choose to keep your quarter for your self. If you do
that, it would be like saying that you don’t care about those around you. You just want to do what is best for you. Or, Sarah, today you can choose to trade your quarter for something else (as you reach to introduce the boxes, load the quarter into the boxes). Inside this box I have something that represents what happens when we choose to care more about ourselves. Rather than just doing everything that we want to do, we care about doing what helps those around us also. So, the choice is up to you, Sarah. Do you want to keep that quarter to yourself or trade it for what is inside the box?

At this point the volunteer will either choose to keep or trade their quarter. Usually they will choose to trade it. When they do, the response is: That’s a great decision. When people don’t make that decision and try to just life their lives for themselves (open the rattle box to show the quarter is gone) they don’t get the most out of life. In fact, it is then that they lose. Look carefully- the quarter is gone! But, you decided that rather than keep your quarter to yourself, you wanted to trade it for what is inside this box. Let’s go ahead and see what’s inside the box.

If the volunteer chooses to keep their quarter rather than trade for the box, I proceed as follows: That is a choice some people make. Some people think they do not want to be a part of the team and they don’t care about others. Rather than show respect to those around them they are selfish and only want to do things for themselves. But, unfortunately, when we make that choice (show the
rattle box to be empty) we lose. Now, let’s see what you would have had if you had chosen to trade. Let’s find out what is inside the box.

(From this point, no matter what choice the volunteer has made, the patter is the same).

Let’s take a look inside the black box. Sarah, if you would, please take the rubber bands off of the box. Open the black box for us please. Inside the black box is.... a yellow box. Ok, wait a minute, there must be something more than just another box. Let’s look inside the yellow box. Inside the yellow box is... a green box! Are you getting nervous Sarah? Maybe you traded your quarter for just some empty boxes. Let’s see if there is anything better. Open up the green box for us. Inside the green box is... a blue box! Yes, it’s another box! Hopefully we are getting closer to something else. Let’s look again. Inside the blue box is... a red box! Remember, Sarah. You were given a quarter that represented your life. You were willing to trade that quarter. Instead of being selfish and only doing what you wanted to do you chose to be respectful of others too and do what is best for everyone. Let’s try one more time and see if you made a good decision. Inside the red box is... (at this point, have the volunteer pour out the contents of the red box into their hand. Act as if you are just as curious to see what is inside). Two quarters! Wow! And, wait- look at that! Is one of those the exact same quarter you marked on just a bit ago? It sure is. The truth is that when we decide not to be selfish and only do what
we want to do; but instead choose to use our gifts to help others too, it is then that we end up with far more than we ever would have had trying to do everything our own way. Sarah, you made a great decision today. I want you to keep both of these quarters to remind you of that great decision (If the volunteer did not make the right decision, I still say “Sarah I want you to keep both of these quarters today to remind you of what the best decision really is). And, all of this applause is for you as well.
Kingdom Lesson:

Mark 8:36 KJV “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

The kingdom lesson for the nesting boxes flows similarly to the character lesson. The overall emphasis changes to a choice between living your life in a selfish and sinful way or living life God’s way.

For this effect, I once again begin by selecting a volunteer from the audience. This time, we will call our volunteer “Sarah”.

Presentation

Sarah, I am so glad you volunteered to help today. I know that you are going to do a great job. In fact, I am so confident that you are going to do a great job helping me today that I would like to pay you. Here is a quarter. Sarah, this quarter is just for you. Now, there is a chance that you may accidently drop that quarter. If that happens, we want to be sure that whoever finds it knows that it is yours so they can give it back. Here is what I would like you to do. Take this marker and put your initials on the quarter or draw a picture on either side. Now that you have done that, this quarter is different from every other quarter in the world. It is the only quarter just like this. That makes it pretty special. This quarter is special for
another reason too. It is special, because today it is going to represent your life! Of course, Sarah, your life is worth far more than a quarter. Even if I had all the money in the world I still could not give you enough to tell you how valuable your life is. Your life is a treasure. In fact, we want to keep your treasure safe, so let’s place it in this treasure box (place the quarter inside a rattle box or other device of your choice, and secretly steal it away).

The same is true of every person who is here today. Your life is a treasure! There are some amazing things about each and every one of you. Some characteristics and qualities you have that make you different from other people. Some of you may be really good at sports. Others might always get good grades in school. There are some people who are good at helping out when there is a need, or they are great at noticing when someone else needs encouragement and they say or do something to brighten their day. Each and every one of you has been created by God, and God has created you for a reason and a purpose.

The only thing is, we all have to make a choice. Some people choose to live life their own way. They really don’t care about God’s plan. They choose to do things that are wrong and say things they shouldn’t say. Rather than follow God’s plan they ignore God and try to get by in life doing their own thing.

There are other people that make a different choice. The choice they make is to honor God and give all the gifts
and abilities He has given them back to Him by choosing to live life His way.

Sarah, today I am going to give you a choice. You can choose to keep your quarter for yourself. If you do that, it would be like saying that you don’t care about God’s plan. You will do what you want to do regardless of what God says is right or wrong. Or, Sarah, today you can choose to trade your quarter for something else (as you reach to introduce the boxes, load the quarter into the boxes). Inside this box I have something that represents God’s plan for your life. Rather than just doing everything that we want to do, we can choose to be willing to give all of our gifts and abilities to God and follow His plan. So, the choice is up to you, Sarah. Do you want to keep that quarter, your life, for yourself. Or, do you want to trade it for God’s plan for your life?

At this point the volunteer will either choose to keep or trade their quarter. Usually they will choose to trade it. When they do, the response is: That’s a great decision. When people don’t make that decision and instead try to just live their lives for themselves (open the rattle box to show the quarter is gone) their life doesn’t matter very much. Look carefully - the quarter is gone. Mark 8:36 says “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world yet lose their own soul?” But, you decided that rather than keep your quarter to yourself, you wanted to trade it for God’s plan for your life. God’s plan is
represented by what’s inside this black box. Let’s go ahead and see what’s inside the box!

If the volunteer chooses to keep their quarter rather than trade for the box, I proceed as follows: That is a choice some people make. Some people think they do not want to follow God’s plan. They would rather try to live life their own way no matter the consequences. But, unfortunately, when we make that choice (show the rattle box to be empty) we lose. Now, let’s see what you would have had if you had chosen to trade. Let’s find out what is inside the box.

(From this point, no matter what choice the volunteer has made, the patter is the same).

Let’s take a look inside the black box. Sarah, if you would, please take the rubber bands off of the box. Open the black box for us please. Inside the black box is.... a yellow box. Ok, wait a minute, there must be something more than just another box. Let’s look inside the yellow box. Inside the yellow box is... a green box! Are you getting nervous Sarah? Maybe you traded your quarter for just some empty boxes. Let’s see if there is anything better. Open up the green box for us. Inside the green box is... a blue box! It’s another box! Hopefully we are getting closer to something else. Let’s look again. Inside the blue box is... a red box! Remember, Sarah. You were given a quarter that represented your life. You were willing to trade that quarter and instead of living life your way your were willing to live life God’s way and follow His plan.
Let’s try one more time and see if you made a good decision. Inside the red box is... (at this point, have the volunteer pour out the contents of the red box into their hand. Act as if you are just as curious to see what is inside). Two quarters! Wow! And, wait- look at that! Is one of those the exact same quarter you marked on just a minute ago? It sure is. The truth is that when we decide to live our life for God and follow His plan it is then that we don’t lose at all. In fact, it is only when we make that choice that we can begin to experience His true blessing. And we always end up with far more than had we tried to do things our own selfish way. Sarah, you made a great decision today. I want you to keep both of these quarters to remind you of that great decision (If the volunteer did not make the right decision, I still say “Sarah I want you to keep both of these quarters today to remind you of what the best decision really is). And, all of this applause is for you as well.
Chapter Eight: Sweet Transformation

The Effect: A glass full of sugar is placed into a solid tube. When the glass is pulled out, the sugar has transformed into candy - sweet!

The Secret: The glass is actually a double glass with a thin compartment on the outside. This thin layer is filled with sugar, which hides the candy that is in the inside compartment. The glass goes into the tube. As the glass drops out the bottom, the layer with the sugar is secretly removed under the cover of the tube. The audience now sees the candy!
Character Lesson:
Don’t Waste! Go Green and Recycle!

Presentation

How many of you like sugar? Me too! Only, I don’t really like sugar like this (show the glass full of sugar). Drinking a glass full of sugar would not be a very pleasant experience! Thankfully this is not the only way that sugar is available to us. Sugar is used in many different ways. It can be used as a sweetener, for baking, and even to keep flowers fresh. Most of us would not prefer a glass full of sugar, but we probably would like sugar in a different form (pass the sugar through the tube as explained in the instructions and change it into candy). How about candy instead!

Just like there are many uses for sugar, there are other things that can be used in multiple ways too. Sometimes we are able to use an object one way, and then use it again in a different way. When we do this it is called recycling. Each of us has the ability to make our planet a better place by choosing to recycle. That means that instead of throwing away things like paper and milk cartons we can recycle those types of things so they can be used again in a whole new way.

When we choose to recycle together we can make a difference! Every ton of paper that is recycled saves 17
trees. Recycling benefits the air and water too! So make a
difference to the earth, in your school, and in your
community by choosing to recycle today!
Kingdom Lesson:

Psalm 119:103 NIV “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”

Presentation

In Psalm 119 verse 103 the Bible says “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” It is amazing to know that when we study and learn about God and take in his word we can begin to experience something very sweet. Today I have a glass of sugar to remind us of what God’s word can be like to us. God’s word, the Bible, is right there waiting for us to take it in. We have an incredible opportunity to study the scriptures that God has given us and to fill our lives with the truths and promises that are there. It is up to us to make the choice. The sweet goodness that is God’s word is right there, we have to choose to take it in. When we do choose to bring God’s word into our lives (place the sugar into the can and change it into the candy) sweet things can come out of our lives too!
The Effect: The performer blows bubbles into the air and pops them one by one. Then, after blowing more bubbles, the performer reaches up and seemingly grabs a solid bubble from the air.
The Secret: The innocent looking bubble container is actually gimmicked. The bottom of the container is hollow and holds the solid bubble. This bubble is held in place with your pinky finger as you hold on to the container. Then, when you are ready to make the bubble appear, simply allow the solid bubble to drop down into your hand. Move the bubble container into your opposite hand, then reach up and produce the bubble (it is best to do this as you reach for a bubble of similar size).
Character Lesson:

Don’t forget the important lessons that you have learned today. Instead, grab on to their truths and hold tight to what really matters!

The miracle bubble is a great trick to use as a follow up that enforces the message that you have previously shared. Here is a way in which you might do that:

Presentation

We have had a great time together, and we have talked about some very important things. Unfortunately, to some people the truths that you have heard today will end up being like bubbles (begin to blow bubbles and watch them pop and disappear). Bubbles are fun to watch and look at, but they are quickly gone. When it comes to showing respect, encouraging one another, and making good decisions some people look at as a good idea— but then they forget about it. Like a bubble that is here and then gone they choose to make a positive difference for just a day and then go back to whatever else they are doing. My hope is that you will not forget about these things I have shared with you (blow more bubbles into the air). Do not let them go in one ear and out the other! Choose to grab a hold of these truths (reach into the air and produce the solid bubble) and apply them to your life today and everyday!
Kingdom Lesson:

*Hebrews 13:8 NIV “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”*

Presentation

Is there any thing in life we can truly rely on? The fact is that we often go through our lives looking for something to bring us joy, peace, and a meaningful life. There are many things out there grab our attention (begin blowing bubbles) and seem to be just what we need. These might be possessions like a newer car, a bigger house, the right clothes, or some other material possession. But like these bubbles, they might look great for a moment, but soon they disappear and certainly do not lead to lasting happiness. Even though there are many things in this world that fade away or disappear (blow more bubbles and pop a few), it is great to know one thing will never fade away and never change. There really is one thing worth holding onto (reach up and produce the solid bubble). That one thing is Jesus Christ. Hebrews 13:8 says Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
The Effect: A necklace is shown on a stand. It is taken off the stand and placed into a small bag. The necklace then vanishes from the bag and reappears back on the stand.
The Secret: There are two gimmicks that make this trick possible. The first is the bag. The bag actually has a hidden pocket that the necklace vanishes into. The second gimmick is the jewelry stand. A second necklace is hidden on the stand under the part that holds up the necklace. When the first necklace is removed the stand is covered with a cloth. When the stand is squeezed the second necklace slips into place on the stand.
Character Lesson:

All of us will be tempted to do things we know are wrong. When you are tempted, be sure to make the right decision.

Presentation

One night a boy had a very interesting dream. He was sure that he had met the boy in his dream. The boy seemed very familiar, but he was not quite sure who he was. Then, he realized he did know who the boy in the dream was. He knew the boy in the dream, because he was the boy!

He was not sure that he liked this when he realized it. In his dream he was doing something that he knew was wrong. You see, every day on his way to school the boy passed a jewelry store. When he looked inside the store he could see a very beautiful and valuable necklace (show the necklace on the stand to the audience). Everyday as he passed the store the boy would stop and look at the necklace. He wondered what it would be like to have something so valuable. If he had something like that, he thought, he would sell it and be able to buy anything he wanted. In his dream he was walking past the store. He looked inside and noticed that for the first time that he could remember, nobody was there! Slowly he opened the door to the store, he tiptoed across the showroom floor, and he secretly grabbed the necklace off of it’s stand (take the
necklace off of the stand). Before anyone could see he placed the necklace into a small bag (place the necklace into the bag), turned and placed a cloth over the display in the hope that nobody would notice the necklace was gone. Then, he ran away!

When he awoke from his dream he wondered if it was true. The dream had seemed so real! He was afraid that maybe he had done something wrong and that now he was going to be in some major trouble. He had to know. Quickly the next morning he packed his things and headed to school. The store was open as he walked by, so he looked inside. When he looked, he noticed that the cloth in his dream that was placed over the necklace stand was still there! He slowly opened the door to the store and quietly walked in. Then it hit him, the bag! He pulled out the bag and looked inside (show that the bag is now empty) and thankfully there was no necklace there. Now, there was just one more thing to check. He lifted the cloth off the of the stand- (lift the cloth and show the necklace has reappeared) and the necklace was still there! Thankfully, it was just a dream!

In this story, the boy was lucky enough to learn his lesson without ever really doing the crime. Hopefully for each of us it can be the same. If you know it is wrong- don’t do it! Don’t let the dream in this story become a nightmare for you!
Kingdom Lesson:

Romans 6:23  “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Presentation

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placed the necklace into a small bag (place the necklace into the bag), turned and placed a cloth over the display in the hope that nobody would notice the necklace was gone. Then, he ran away!

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In this story, the boy was lucky enough to learn his lesson without ever really doing the crime. Unfortunately for us, sometimes it is more than a bad dream. There are times in which we really do make the wrong choices in life. We do things that go against what God has instructed us to do. Maybe we steal, lie, cheat, or even simply say things we should not say. We often wish we could go back and do things differently, but too often the damage is already done.
The good news is that no matter what we have done God is willing to forgive us. We have all messed up and we have all sinned. The price that we owe for committing those sins is Death. Not physical death, but a separation from God. Even though that is the price that we owe, God sent his son Jesus into the world to pay the price for us by dying on a cross for our sins and rising from the grave. The gift that he gave us is eternal life. Even though we have all sinned, you can know that you can be forgiven!
An ordinary table, a simple book, a packing crate. Or, so you might think. The reality is that things are not always as they appear, especially when illusionists David and Teesha Laflin are on stage. David and Teesha have a unique ability to take what we may think is normal and do simply incredible things. That ordinary table begins to float through the air. As you think of one word in a simple book your thoughts are revealed- before you say a thing. A person is handcuffed, tied up in a bag, and locked inside a solid packing crate. Just seconds later, that same person is now out of the handcuffs, out of the bag, and standing on the crate. Yet, all the locks are still in place. Did that really just happen?

Since 2002, internationally recognized illusionists David and Teesha Laflin have entertained and inspired audiences all across the United States and in several foreign countries through their creative blend of both classic and cutting-edge illusions. Their programs have been featured at numerous conferences and conventions throughout the world and have reached large-scale audiences through their television appearances.
More than simply entertainers, David and Teesha are also gifted speakers. They are quick to point out that everything they do is simply an illusion. Only God can do real miracles. The high-energy and fast-paced show that they present captivates audiences. People simply cannot help but stop and pay close attention to what they are doing. As they watch the amazing things that happen, their attention also focuses in on the message David and Teesha share. Through their illusions, the reality of the love of God is revealed in a way that people of all ages connect with. And, this, is their ultimate goal. David and Teesha have a desire to bring families together for an experience they will never forget. An experience, that may just change their lives forever.

To find out more about David and Teesha Laflin, visit:
www.davidandteesha.com

For Products by David and Teesha and Laflin Magic, visit:
www.LaflinMagicStore.com