

Magic in Pack Ceremonies

Denver Area Council 1994 POW-WOW

October 22, 1994

1. Magic Sugar Cube

Materials: Clear glass of water, sugar cube, pencil

Set up: Clearly and darkly mark the letter "W" (for wolf or webelos ceremony) or "B" (for bobcat or bear ceremony) on one side of the sugar cube. Be sure that the letter is very dark.

Effect: Letter appears to transfer from a sugar cube dropped in water to the back of the hand of the participants.

Scenario: Tell participants that the letter will magically leave the sugar cube and be printed on the hand of the scouts who are worthy to advance in rank. Drop sugar cube in water and have one scout place his hand over the top of the glass; other scouts place their hands on top of the first. Tell the scouts to concentrate on their new rank. After a 15 seconds or so, have the scouts take their hands away and look at the top of the hand that was over the glass. The letter appears on the hand.

How it's done: Before placing the sugar cube in the water, make some excuse to dip your thumb and fingers in the glass ("Boy, this sugar cube sure is sticky ..."). Wet your thumb and press hard over the letter to ink the bottom of the thumb. Then, assist each boy in placing his hand over the glass, pressing your thumb to the back of his hand while doing so. You will then have "stamped" the letter onto the back of the hand. As long as it is done quickly and the boys are focused on the sugar cube, they will not notice the effect of the thumb on their hand.

2. Removing color from liquids.

Materials: Food coloring, pitcher of water, 2 glasses, liquid bleach

Setup: Place one drop of food coloring in bottom of one glass, 1 teaspoon of bleach in the other. Place glasses so that the audience cannot see the advance preparations.

Effect: Water poured into a glass changes color

Scenario: Water is poured into an "empty" glass and immediately changes color. The colored water is then poured into another "empty" glass which then turns back into "water."

How it's done: Water poured into first glass changes color on contact with the food coloring. Color is bleached out of water in the second glass. Be sure to hide the base of the glass with your fingers so that the coloring and bleach in the glasses cannot be seen.

3. Color-changing liquids (yellow-green-blue)

Materials: Yellow and green food coloring, pitcher of water, 4 clear plastic glasses, liquid bleach

Setup: Four clear glasses: one empty, one with a drop of yellow food coloring, one with a drop of green food coloring, one with 1/4 teaspoon of liquid bleach. As in above, be sure audience cannot see the preparation or the bottom of the glasses during the trick.

Effect: Water changes colors from clear to yellow to green to blue as the liquid is poured into successive glasses.

Scenario: Water from a spring at a nearby Boy Scout camp has the special properties of changing into Cub Scout colors if boys have completed all of their requirements for their badge of rank. Water is poured from a special receptacle into the first glass. Water turns yellow when poured from first glass into second; water turns green when poured from second glass into third ("Are you boys sure that you completed all of the requirements for the _____ badge?"). Water turns blue when poured into last glass, indicating the boys have in fact completed the final test for their badge of rank.

How it's done: First glass is empty so water is clear when poured into the first glass. Water turns yellow when added to the glass with the drop of yellow food coloring; yellow water turns green when added to the glass with a

drop of green food coloring; green water turns blue when added to the glass with the liquid bleach (the yellow color is bleached out of the green water, leaving the water blue in color.)

4. Multi-colored liquids.

This trick requires the use of chemicals normally available at scientific supply stores; in fact, most chemistry sets will contain the required chemicals.

Materials: 6 clear plastic glasses, sodium carbonate, yellow and blue food coloring, white vinegar, phenolphthalein solution, liquid bleach

Setup: Prepare the glasses as follows:

glass 1: pinch of sodium carbonate dissolved in 6 ounces of water

glass 2: 1 drop yellow food coloring

glass 3: liquid phenolphthalein (made from powdered phenolphthalein and rubbing alcohol); keep covered as solution evaporates.

glass 4: 1 drop blue food color

glass 5: 1/4 full white vinegar (be sure to palm the bottom half of the glass until you begin pouring.

glass 6: 1/4 full liquid bleach

Effect: "Water" is poured into different glasses, each time changing to a different color. Color sequence is clear, yellow, red, purple, green, clear.

Scenario: Similar to the above except more glasses with more colors.

How it's done: Same as above. Reactions between chemicals in solution produce the different colors. Be careful to dispose of the last glass quickly as it does look like water but is really heavily laced with chlorine bleach (the last thing you want to happen is for a scout to come up and taste the "water")

5. Magic balloon.

Materials: Large balloon (at least 8 inches in diameter when inflated), dry ice

Setup: Small piece of dry ice inserted into balloon.

Effect: Balloon continues to inflate, even after being tied closed.

Scenario: Balloon is partially inflated at the beginning of the meeting and tied. By the end of the meeting, the balloon has become even more inflated.

How it's done: The dry ice inside the balloon slowly vaporizes when added to warm air. Partially blowing up the balloon provides enough warm air for the process to occur.

6. Magic water test.

Setup: Styrofoam or paper cup (not plastic!) with slush powder ("Aqua-gel", "Joke-gel") in bottom of cup. Approx. 1 teaspoon of powder per 4 ounces of water. Slush powder is available at magic supply stores and novelty shops (usually in the gag gift section with the pepper gum, plastic vomit, etc.)

Effect: Water is poured into a cup and then inverted over the boys' heads without spilling.

Scenario: Final test for boys advancing in rank. Pour water (I use water colored with blue food coloring) into the glass and tell the boys that if they are ready to advance in rank, then the spirit of scouting will protect them in this final test. Turn the cup upside down over the boys' heads.

Variations: Have parents hold small cups with gelled water over each boy and have the boys stick a straight pin through the bottom of the cup. Be sure that the cups are held above the sight of the parents as well so that they cannot see the gelled liquid inside.

How it's done: The slush powder causes the water to gel on contact and will not pour/leak from the glass.