

Powerful Gospel Illusions

Here are several illusions/magic tricks that I've used over the years that:

1. Get huge reactions from the audience
2. Are simple to do
3. Have a powerful message to go with them

Healed

Note: This is actually part 1 of a 2 part trick. Part 1 is an awesome trick in its own right and you definitely do NOT need to do both parts to wow audiences. I have decided to not reveal the second part of the trick because the person I learned it from makes his living by selling DVDs on how to do the full thing. Although, I'm sure there are places where you could find it all for free (e.g., Youtube). The man's name is Andres Moden and the trick is called Healed and Sealed. In fact, if you'd like to see the trick in action you can youtube/google "healed and sealed."

The Illusion:

A empty can of coke is presented to the audience. They can clearly see that the seal has been broken and when you try and dump some more soda into a glass that has a little bit in it already, nothing comes out. With a wave of your hand over the soda, the seal reforms. Now you crack open the can and the audience is shocked to see it full again as you pour out more soda!

What you need:

1. Any can of soda.
 - 2a. A black piece of paper (a black napkin works really well). Nothing too thick.
- Or
- 2b. A black DRY ERASE marker
 3. Scissors and pen (if using option 2a)

What you do:

There are two ways to do this trick and some pros and cons of each.

Option 2a:

Take a can of soda and open it. Rip off the metal mouth tab so that you have a template (save this template for unlimited future use).

Get a black piece of paper—really, you want a thin piece of black napkin—and use the metal template you just ripped out to trace the outline of the tab. Now cut that outline out. You should have a close copy of the metal tab.

Get another can of soda and wet the metal mouth tab slightly and place your piece of black paper over it so has to give the illusion of a hole.

You may require some tweaking/cutting to get the paper to fit nicely on the top. You are trying to get the illusion that the tab is open. It does NOT have to be perfect but you should avoid wrinkles in the paper and jagged edges (the mouth opening should be pretty smooth).

Option 2b:

Take a black dry erase marker and color in the mouth piece of the can. Done.

Presentation:

Walk out with the “empty” can in one hand and a clear glass with a little bit of soda in it as if you had been pouring the can into the glass and drinking it. Try and pour some more of the soda into the glass and realize the can is empty. The audience should be able to see that from the black hole but briefly turn the can to them to show them.

NOTE: do not hold the can directly for them to inspect it for several long moments. There is no need for this. Simply make it a casual act, as if you are nonchalantly saying “Oh look, empty.” Probably 99% of people won’t notice the fact that the soda tab is not lifted up slightly—plus, it will be hard to see that anyway from the angle that you show them. Even if they do happen to notice, it will probably not register with them that if the can was truly open, the tab would be sticking up slightly.

Put down the glass and wave your other hand over the top.

2a: I hold the can in my right hand (dominate hand) and wave my left hand over the top. After making 2 or 3 passes, I use part of my finger to scoop off the thin piece of black paper. The action of rolling it off squishes it, making it tiny and easily concealed. The paper will now be stuck on your hand (remember to attach the paper using a bit of water—this will help it stick!). In order to hide it, I pass the soda can from my right to my left. I now have my left fingers around the can and in between the fingers and the can is the tiny bit of paper. Show the audience that the can has been restored.

Finally, crack open the can and pour out some soda.

The main advantage 2a has over 2b is that it is very clean and can be done very quickly. The black piece will not be noticed with a little practice. However, 2b does not require as much set up and there is no paper to try and hide.

2b: Complete all the steps of 2a except that instead of removing paper, you wipe away the dry erase.

I recommend you practice this because using too much dry erase (to make the opening really thick and black) can be hard to completely remove. You do not want to show the audience the top and have some stray black marks on it—it would ruin the effect. On the other hand, if you use too little of the marker and you will see some shiny spots on the tab. This isn’t that big of a deal depending on how closely you allow the audience to inspect the can.

The nice thing is that the dry erase on your fingers (after you wipe the top) is easily rubbed off.

NOTE: Make sure to have your sleeves rolled back when you wave your hand over the can to “heal” it or the audience will think you are hiding something.

Sample message:

Don't mind me, I'm just having some refreshing (name of soda). Anyone here like (name of soda)? *audience response* It tastes really good...oh...it's all gone. Well I guess I don't have any more need of this can. I can just crush it up and throw it away. Anyone ever feel like that? That you just pour out everything inside of you until you are empty and then you just get crushed up and thrown away?

There are a lot of people in this world who feel used up and broken. But there is God who is a healer. There is a God who, when you feel used and empty, is there for you. To fill you back up with His Spirit. To give you strength and power to go on.

The Bible says, in Isaiah 53:5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Jesus died for the broken and the used up. The price for our healing has already been paid. All we have to do is ask Jesus to touch us and put our faith and trust in him.

(heal soda can)

He is willing and able to heal us—just like he did with the leper. One touch from his hand and the leper was healed. And not only that, but when Jesus touched him, the leper was made whole (crack open the can and pour out some soda).

The full trick:

In the full trick from Andres Moden (remember, I've only given you the first part), you show the empty can, you then crush it in your hand, then you heal the top (in the manner described), and then while you are still holding the can, it begins to fill back up and return to normal. You then crack the top open and fill up your cup with more soda. I think the second part of the trick is worth getting but it does take a little more practice to master and the first part of the trick is pretty powerful by itself.

Secret Message

Note: This may at first seem gimmicky and obvious but for all the other “professional” tricks I've done this one always stumps the kids. I have several older youth who love to come up to me after the show and tell me how they think I did the tricks but this one, somehow, has them stumped. You may have played with this “trick” as a child but it honestly still gets a good reaction.

The Illusion:

A blank piece of paper is shown and then crumpled up and thrown on the ground. It is later picked up and ironed out and a secret message appears on it.

What you need:

1. Lemon juice and a little water
2. Piece of white paper
3. Iron and ironing board
4. Paint brush or Q-Tip

What you do:

Mix a little bit of water* with some lemon juice (can be squeezed from a lemon or from a bottle of lemon juice—lemonade will probably not work). On the white piece of paper, paint on a simple message (e.g., “Holy Ghost” or “God loves you!”) with the lemon juice/water mix. Allow to dry. Once the paper is dried, you turn the painted areas brown by applying heat. An open flame would work but there is a danger of burning the paper. Supposedly you can also use a light bulb but it seems to me to take forever. The best way that I’ve found (and it goes along with the trick) is to use a hot, **dry**, iron.

*Note: Play around with the mixture. I think I use about a half teaspoon water to a table spoon juice. The reason you add water is that if you would just pure juice, the writing would faintly show up. Now, this is actually not a problem if some of the writing can be seen. The audience won’t be closely inspecting the paper and if you only show them the back of it and wait until after you’ve crumpled the paper up and then smoothed it out to show both sides, the wrinkles in the paper will hide the faint lemon juice lines.

Presentation:

Show the audience the blank piece of paper, talk with them about how there is nothing on it (see sample presentation for some ideas), crumple the paper up and let it fall to the floor. Talk about how God can change things. Pick up the paper and try and smooth it out. Show the audience both sides. It’s still very wrinkly so go to the iron (which has been on this whole time) and iron it out. Practice the timing/technique of this but after a few moments the proteins in the lemon juice break down and will become brown. Act surprised and show the audience.

Sample message:

(As part of our Children’s Church program I was trying to write a poem. I came out holding the blank piece of paper and acting like I was going to write on it. My juice mixture was pretty strong and there were faint lines on one side so I didn’t immediately show the audience both sides.)

“Let’s see: Thank you God, I love you the **most**. Thank you for giving meum...a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Oh no, that doesn’t rhyme! Um...Thank you God, I love you the **most**. Thank you for giving me...a lot of French toast. Well that rhymes but...it isn’t quite right. Oh, I’ll never get it!” (*crumple paper and throw on floor—the audience has not seen both sides yet.*)

(By this time the children were shouting out ideas but if they are not you can simply ask them to help. Eventually, some will say: Holy Ghost if they’ve been around church at all. If not, you can have a helper suggest it or even come up with it yourself)

“(responding to the audience suggestion) Thank you for giving me the Holy Ghost? That’s a great idea! And it rhymes too! But...look at my paper (uncrumple it and show both sides; the

wrinkles hide the faint lemon juice lines)...it's all messed up. Wait, I know how to fix it! (*iron the paper—this takes several moments so continue talking*) You know, this iron is pretty hot but it needs to be to take out all the wrinkles in this paper. Hmm, you know something? The Bible says that God's Spirit is like a fire shut up in our bones! Do you ever get really excited about something and you feel like you have ants in your pants and you get all wiggly? Well, sometimes we can get really excited about God and what He is doing in our lives and it's like ants in our pants or fire shut up in our bones—we just want to jump and shout and sing! That's the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost!

(*look down at paper*) Oh look, I'm getting the wrinkles out! (*look closer in surprise*) Wait a minute! What was that poem? "Thank you God, I love you the most. Thank you for giving me the Holy Ghost." Guys, look at this! (*show the paper which now has "Holy Ghost" written on it*)

Another Idea would be to talk about how the Bible is God's word and how some people don't think that it's worth anything or don't get anything out of it—it may as well be just a blank piece of paper to them (crumple paper). BUT, if we search out the word of God (start ironing) and have faith in Him then we can begin to see what His message is to us: I Love You.

Locked Away

The Illusion:

*An audience member selects a card from the deck, shows the rest of the audience the card, places the card back in the deck, and shuffles the cards. The deck is then placed inside the box of cards, sealed, and given to the audience member to place in his/her pocket. The magician reaches into the pocket and in **a second** removes the correct card from the shuffled deck that was placed inside the sealed box.*

What you need:

Any deck of playing cards

What you do:

Although this trick should **definitely be practiced**, I've come up with a routine that allows you to be somewhat slow at the moves and no one will know what you are doing!

If some of the directions seem unclear at first, read through them all and then go back. Having a deck of cards on hand to work through the steps is good too.

Step 1. Get an audience member. It is preferable to get someone with a front shirt pocket. Pant's pockets can work but, depending on how tight they are, might be a pain to deal with. You could also have a man's button up shirt on hand for the member to put on but it might cause them to think the shirt is part of the gimmick. In other words, it's a much stronger illusion if the person has his/her own pocket to use. Second important thing: it is nice to have a member who can shuffle. It is fine if they can simply hand rearrange the cards though. You can shuffle too but again, the less you touch the cards the less it will seem that you did something "tricky."

Step 2. Have the helper take any card from the deck and memorize it. Show the other audience members, but don't show you. If the helper messes up and shows you simply have them take a different card.

Step 3. Fan out the deck with the picture side (numbers and face cards) face down and have them put the card anywhere in the deck they want, but only stick it in half way.

Step 4. Mark the card. Your fingers will be concealed by the deck if you are holding it right. Your thumbs will be on top (back of the card where the pattern is) where the audience can see them. Slide the chosen card over to where you can bend up the bottom corner with one of your fingers (I use my right hand middle finger). NOTE: *this move takes practice and the pros can do it in an instant. I am not a pro so I've developed a way that I can safely take a little longer to do this and not have people get suspicious—see Sample Message for my method.*

Step 5. With the corner bent (but not folded over). Tell them to push the card into the deck.

Step 6. Tell them to shuffle the deck.

Step 7. Take the deck from them and turn it to look at the edges until you find the spot in the deck with the crease. The corner that you bent will show up. Practice this. If the corner doesn't show up, you haven't bent it enough.

Step 8. Cut the deck to that card. You can either put the marked card on the bottom of the deck or the top. I recommend cutting the deck so that it is on the top however.

Step 9. Grab the box the cards came in. Have the member inspect that box to make sure there aren't any hidden compartments.

Step 10. Place the deck inside the box so that the marked card is on the side where the main flap fits into (*this might be confusing at first, read on and try it out and you should get it*). As you fold down the large flap take your thumb and pull the side of the box open so that you can fit the flap in. At the same time, pull the marked card over as well.

Now you have a sealed deck of cards with 51 cards on one side of the flap, and 1 card on the other side of the flap. Note: On most decks you will be able to let the audience inspect the box and they won't be able to tell that there is **one card between the flap and the bottom of the box**. However, some brands may have different patterns on the box and the card and so there may appear to be a break. Either use a different brand (Bicycle works well) or don't let the audience see that part of the box.

Step 11. Carefully place the sealed box inside the members pocket.

Step 12. After explaining what you are going to do, quickly reach inside the pocket, pull the exposed card and reveal.

Sample message:

(Choose an audience member) Every day we have different thoughts and actions, some good...some not so good. We are always making choices. The Bible talks about how when

people sin, they want to hide it away. Put it deep down where no one else will see it. They think that even God doesn't know what they are doing or thinking.

I have here a deck of 52 cards. We are going to pretend that these cards represent different thoughts or actions and I'm going to let you choose any one that you want. Now when you take the card, don't tell me what you've taken because it's going to represent your "secret sin"—but you can show everyone else so that they know what you are looking at (*member takes card and shows it to audience*).

Now, you have a secret sin in your hand and you don't want me to see it so you are going to put it anywhere you want in this deck—but only put it in half way because I want to explain something.

(As you are talking about this next part you take your time to slide the card over to your finger and bend the corner)

Remember, each one of these cards represents all the thoughts and feelings and decisions we make every single day. The secret sin here is buried in amongst all these other thoughts and feelings—but it's kinda exposed. I can see which card is sticking out even though I can't see what's on it. When there is sin in our lives we sometimes try and hide it as much as we can so I want you to shove the card down into the deck. (*member does so*)

Now it's buried. But...I kinda saw where it went so even though I haven't seen what's on the card I could, in theory, go through the deck right here and maybe find out what it was—so I want you to shuffle it up (*or you could say: so I'm going to shuffle it up*).

(as you take the card back, look for the crease and cut the deck) Now that we've shuffled it, it's definitely buried here, and I've even cut the deck to make sure there is no way I could find out what the secret sin is. But we won't stop there. If I really wanted to, I could go through the entire deck, one card at a time and examine each one to see where the sin is. We don't want people to do that with our secret sins—we want to lock our sin away deep in our hearts.

(take out the box, have the member inspect it, place cards in box and then place in member's pocket)

NOW the sin is really safe. It's buried deep inside his/her heart and locked away. I don't know what the sin is and even if I did know, I can't get to it.

But the Bible tells us of a God, who will not force Himself on us—He won't force His way into our hearts and demand that we confess the sin—but if we allow Him to work in our lives, if we surrender our thoughts and our actions to Him He is well able to heal us and to take away our sin.

(ask member if you can reach into their pocket, when they say yes say:) In a single moment of surrender, God can reach in* (*reach in and quickly grab out card—don't show audience the card yet, you've just performed an awesome trick already—getting a card out of a sealed box. The next awesome trick is that it is the correct card*) and take away our sin. But we have to allow Him to do so.

What was the card that you chose? (*member responds, confirm with the rest of the audience that the member is correct. Flip over the card and reveal it to be correct*).

*you could hype up the fact that the box is sealed before you reach in and take the card. That way the first part of the trick will get a bigger reaction.