



PACK SMALL

**PLAY
BIG**

**MUSIC
TABLES
PROPS
IN ONE TRIP**

**PACK SMALL PLAY BIG
LECTURE NOTES**

How to Pack Small to Play Big

Before you can perform you have to get to the gig so you need to pack all your props in an easy to carry bag, case, trunk, etc. This is how I pack all my shows. I have several shows and each of them are done the same way. This ensures I have all my props. They are protected and I can carry them into the venue with a minimum number of trips. Preferably 1 trip. In order to accomplish this I must pack small but I still need to play big and fill the stage. This checklist will help you do just that, by making sure you have all the essentials for a successful show.

1. Identify the case that will contain your show.

When I started out I used a viking case. I know many performers are using either a viking case or a similar style case. What I found was it was too big. It carried all of my show and several other props I had for "just in case."

I now use a brief case style case. I purchased it from Harbor Freight. They sell inexpensive tools and this was a case that they carried. I have a different case for each show. I do not need to repack the case. Each case contains a show. Below is a picture of the case I use in case you do not have a harbor freight near you. you can pick up a similar case.



Because this style case was much smaller than my viking case I could not carry all the props I carried before. That meant I did not carry all the JIC props. (Just In Case) All the time I carried JIC props. I never used them. So the reality was I did not need to carry them,

I have several of these cases, one for each show I do. The props are stored in them and all I need to do is grab the case. The whole show is inside.

2. A few basic props that can be used in a variety of ways

The case can hold an hour long show. I know because I do it all the time. You do not need a lot of props to entertain an audience. My friend Nick Lewin can do an entire Las Vegas show with what he has in his pockets when he steps on stage. I just am not that good. I need my case.

3. A few easy-to-learn tricks that can be performed quickly

As David Kaye aka Silly Billy has put it so well it is about the journey not the destination. In other words, your show is made of the routines you do. Yes the magic needs to be good. Yes you need to fool them. But you are taking them on a magical journey. And they need to enjoy the ride. Otherwise they will arrive at the destination grumpy and in a foul mood. That is you fooled them but they did not like it.

4. A keyboard stand to place the case.

I place a piece of plywood to put on top of a keyboard stand. That holds the case containing all my props. The plywood gives me a small table to temporarily place props as

they are being used. I can also place the phone containing the music behind it so it is out of sight.



I have covered the plywood with a crushed velvet but paint works well.

Having the case on the keyboard stand allow you to open the case and create a small blind spot from the audience. You can use it for switches and any other “sneaky stuff” you may need to do.

You can close the lid to the case and now you have a table top to temporarily place props.

5. Be sure of your time.

If you are doing corporate or school shows. Being aware of the time is critical. You do not want to go over time. School and companies run on a schedule.

To be sure I am aware of the time I place a small cheap watch inside the lid of the case so when I open the case I can see the time.

6. Light weight side table.

I worked a long time without a side table. I worked completely out of the case. The reason was I could not find a good inexpensive, light weight table that fit my needs. There are several good one Danny Orleans has some great easy to make table and stands. But what I found worked well is a toy chest from IKEA. It is a vinyl covered congregated plastic. I have used it for years and it has held up well.





I turn the chest on it end and place the lid to the chest on top of it to form a table top. To hold the lid from tipping when I place something on it I connect the lid to the end with Velcro.



What I like about this set up is there is a shelf in the middle Where I can put props to gab quickly. The table top lid give me a lot of space. More than any other side table I have seen anywhere. Plus it fold flat!

7. A small, but effective, sound system

Music and sound elevate your show to a higher level. Don't believe it? Find a behind the scenes edit of a movie or television show. The dialogue is all there. The blocking (movements) are all the same. But it falls flat. Music and sound effects create the mood. Here is a quote for Maya Angelou that expresses it well. "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Create emotion with music and sound effects and you will have a memorable show.

For my music player I use an old android phone. It is not on any cellular network so it will not be interrupted by calls or texts. But it can still access the internet via wifi. If you do not have an old phone you can use your current phone and place it in airplane mode. Then turn the Bluetooth back on. You need the Bluetooth to connect to an external speaker for amplified sound.

I searched a long time to find a music player that would do what I want and not cost an arm and a leg. I finally found what I was looking for. The software is Audio Cues. It is only available on Android. I can organize different music tracks and sound effect for different shows. It does the one thing none of the others did it will fade out if you end the track early. It does what I need how I need it done and it is free. I have not found anything yet for iphone, Sorry

The speaker system I use is a MOJO Bem I do not think they sell these anymore. But there are a ton of small Bluetooth speaker systems out there. Find one that has good sound and use it.

The last piece of the puzzle is a remote control. These are available everywhere. You can pick one up on Amazon. One piece of advice. Choose on that is is easy to know what buttons do what even if you are not looking at it. Often you will need to start, stop, and go to the next track by feel.

There you have the music component. It does not do voice amplification. But if you are playing in a venue that requires that you need a full sound system. Which is beyond the scope of these notes.

8. A basic costume to indicate you are the magician.

What you wear is important. What I wear depends on the venue and the show. But the point is this. Do not look like an average Joe off the street. You are special. So look like it.

For birthday parties and some preschool the children are anticipating your arrival So you need to be in character from the moment you step out of your car. That means you arrived dressed for the event.

If the venue calls for/allows for it I will change into my stage clothes after I load in and am set up. This is so my clothes are fresh and not wrinkled. Gigs such as birthday parties and preschools do not allow this convince. Some elementary school do and some do not. If you cannot change into you show clothes wear them in. But in every case make sure they are neat and fresh.

9. This is show BUSINESS

I carry a separate bag that contains the business needs. It needs to contain marketing pieces that include audience "Give aways." (a great marketing idea) Have a way to take credit cards. After all I do want to get paid.

Generally this bag does not have a lot in it so I have get to things quickly. I keep the business items separate from the magic items so I am never fumbling either in the show or when conducting business. I want to be in control at all times.

10. Who are you again?

Signage is important not only from a marketing standpoint but also from a decoration and mode setting point of view. I attach my sign to the front of the keyboard stand and the front the toy chest side table. They hid the ugly and remind the audience who I am.

The signs are vinyl so the can be rolled up and placed in a cardboard tube.



11. Put it on the truck

All of the items above are placed in a small hand truck. I attach everything to it by bungee cord. I roll the truck out to my car. Then I am off to the venue. Once at the venue I remove everything from the car as one unit and roll into the venue. An entire show in one trip.



12. All almost everything.

In almost every show I have items that need to be prepared ahead of time. I prepare them and place them in my pockets. These items are in a separate zip lock bag and label with the show name they are associated with.

So almost everything goes on the hand truck. Some items are in my pocket.

Well that is it my secret to packing small. The rest of these notes are dedicated to playing big. Below are three routines. It contains word for word script for three of my routines.

Magic Show

A CHILDREN' S MAGIC ROUTINE SCRIPTS

by

JD Stewart

CHARACTERS

MAGICIAN

TIME

The present

PLACE

Small stage

Coin Routine

(Magician is standing in front of seated children. Children are seated in the floor.)

MAGICIAN

Do you see this coin No? Really you can't see it. Oh here let me rub the invisibility dust off.

(Produce Coin)

There you go can you see it now. Sometimes it disappears and sometimes it just moves. It jumps behind my knee. Do you know why it goes behind my knee? Because I have a trick knee.

(Vanish Coin then retrieve from knee)

Do you know where it is this time? It went behind my elbow. Oops wrong elbow. Do you know why it went behind my elbow? It likes to hang out at joints.

(Vanish Coin retrieve from elbow)

Do you know where it went this time?

(Vanish; point to shoe; Pull from under shoe)

One more time.

(Coin through pocket)

Do you know why I do magic? That is where the big money is.

(Transform to a large coin.)

That's big money. Can't put it in a vending machine but that's big money.

Thumb Tip Blendo

(magician standing center stage)

MAGIC DUDE

I am going to need some help

(choose a helper. Helper comes stand stage
right of magician)

What is your name.

(helper gives name)

Lets welcome (helpers name) everyone

(magician leads audience in applause
magician hands 4 small silks to helper
Magic picks up small cape)

Do you know who Harry Potter is? Harry Potter is a young
magician in England. He goes to a school call Hogwarts. Harry
Potter as a cloak of invisibility. As long as he is behind the
cloak no one can see him.

This is the cloak of invisibility. As long as you are behind
the cloak no one can see you. See look

(place cape over helper's head)

He/she is gone.

(remove cape and tie it onto helper)

Every magician needs a hat

(*****)

Be careful with this one. Do not embarrass
the child

(*****)

Behind child's back pull out a disposable
diaper and place it on the child's head.
The children will laugh and start yelling
it a diaper.)

Its a hat I'll prove it. Do you wear diapers. See its a hat.
Ok where do you wear a diaper? On your bottom. You wear a hat
on your head. It's a hat!

(remover diaper from child and put it on
magican's head.)

See its a Hat!

(leave the diaper on head during most of the rest of the routine.)

Try this hat

(pull hat over head so the child's head in completely inside the hat. But magician does not notice)

Alright one at a time. One at a time. Show every one what you have. Hold them up one at a time.

(Look over a helper and notice the hat is over their head. Pull it up where it should be)

Alright one at a time. One at a time. Show every one what you have. Hold them up one at a time

(As helper hold of each silk magic dude yells out the color)

You have a red one. You have a blue one. You have a green one. You have a yellow one.

You have a red one, a yellow one, a blue one and a green one pick one and give it to me.

(helper hands magician a silk. Magician places silk in fist. match the patten to the color the helper hands magician)

The red one. Is the any reason why you choose the red one first.

(Wait for response. Actual answer is immaterial. Magician places silk in fist)

That's a good reason. You now have a blue one, green one and a yellow one. Pick one and give it to me.

(helper hands magician a silk. Magician place silk in fist)

Excellent, Excellent choice. Alright your choices are diminishing. Do you know what diminishing means. It means your choices are getting fewer and fewer, smaller and smaller less and less. You see I had to go to college to learn that word. You know that word already so you don't have to go to college)

(magician looks at adult)

I save he/her dad a bunch of money. You now have a blue one and a yellow one. Pick one and give it to me.

(helper hands magician a silk. Magician
place silk in fist)

excellent, excellent choice. I hate to be the bearer of bad news. But you have no choices the only one you can hand me is the yellow one

(helper hands last silk to magician)

I bet you kinda wonder why we went through all that don't you. I know I do.

(magician place last silk in fist)

We are going to make them disappear. But we are going to do it the hard way. They are going to disappear from your hands.

(place silks in helpers hand)

Both hands. Hold them tight

(Magician helps helper close hand. This is
to keep them from opening their hands)

Alright on the count of 3 they are going to disappear from your hand. Are you ready? One. Two. Three. And they are gone!

(when helper opens hand and reveals the
are still there. Magician quickly grab the
hands and closes them over the silks)

And they are back. Ok, ok something went wrong we'll try it again. Are you ready? One. Two. Three. And they are gone

(when helper open hand and reveals the are
still there. Magician quickly grabs the
hands and closes them over the silks.
Magician has look of embarrassment)

Ok, ok something went wrong. We need to to start completely over. We'll start from the beginning. You have a red one, blue one, a green one and a yellow. Pick one and give it to me.

(magician looks at the audience)

I am sorry something went wrong. I have done this trick thousands of times. And it always work. I'm sorry we are going to need to start over.

(Magician looks at helper and sees the
silks are fused together. He takes the now
one silk from the helper.)

When I said hold them tight I didn't mean that tight. How did you do that? Well give (name of helper) a great big hand

(Magician thanks helper and send him/her

back to their seat.)

Rope Routine

(MAGICIAN Invites a child up and then picks up a rope.)

MAGICIAN

Do you know what this is? That's right it's a rope. Have you ever seen the trick where a magician a rope waves his magic wand over the rope

(MAGICIAN cuts rope in half)

and suddenly, magically he has two rope!

(Answer does not matter)

Well Good! Because we're gonna let you do that trick

(Restore rope - fold rope in half and hand scissors to helper)

Take the magic wand

(Children yell its scissors)

No its a magic wand. I bought it at the magic store. They told me it was a magic wand.

(Children will continue to yell it scissors)

You mean they lied to me. Oh, man! Take the magic scesssors. See I have to say scesssors because I can't say scissors I have to say scesssors.

(child will yell you just said scissors)

No. I can't say scissors. That's why I have to say scesssors. Take the magic scessor and Open them up great big and wide.

(hold arms out stretched. This may cause child to spread their arms)

No the scesssors. And cut the rope.

(MAGICIAN is nervous then stops the child suddenly)

Cut the rope not my fingers. The white thing, the white thing That's the rope. The brown things they are the finger. It important to me you know the difference.

(hold ropes out again still nervous)

Let me help you

(Take the scissors and cut the rope. Keep

cutting until the ends are gone.)

Do you know how to make a magical gesture? All you have to do is wave your hand. And when you wave your hand you wiggle your fingers

(The child makes the magical gesture. Grab on end of the rope with one hand while holding the middle with the other.)

Look at that! One piece of rope again. Hold that end Hold that end.

(Child holds one end of rope while MAGICIAN holds middle and other end. Children will yell you are holding.)

Of course, I am holding it if I let go the people in the back can't see.

(Let go of middle reveal one piece of rope)

Would you like to see how that trick is done? The secret is all in the magic Scissors.

(Fold for Professor's nightmare Cut the top)

You see I don't really cut the rope. It looks like I cut that rope, doesn't it. But I didn't look I'll do it again.

(Cut the bottom loop.)

See it looks like I cut that rope. But I didn't. It's just one long piece of ...

(Realize there are three ropes. MAGICIAN is clearly embarrassed)

What I have are three pieces of rope all the same length. Hold out your hand.

(show the three equal length ropes. Put the ropes into the child's hand.)

Who knows some magic words? Have a banana? No, we don't live in Montana. Oh abracadabra. You know what? Magicians change the magic word every day. That way no one guess. Do you know what yesterday's magic word was? Abracadabra. Do you know what today's magic word is (use your magic word)
Everyone, make the magic gesture and say the magic word.

(give child a slight shake)

Did you feel the magic.
Based on answer

- Yes
 - You did? He's a bigger liar than I am
- No
 - Shake bigger - did you feel the magic?
 - No
 - Shake more did you feel the magic.

(Pull out the short piece of rope Look surprised then pull out the other two ropes)

What did you do? How did you do that? Well, I do not like being shown up in my magic show.

(Fold the ropes so the ends are even)

Look there all the ropes are the same length again. The ends all lineup. Oops

(Notice the middles are uneven. Fold the long loop so all the loops are the same lengths)

There you go all the rope are the same length again.

(Stretch ropes showing they are the same length)

See that's one. That's two, That's three. All three pieces of rope are the same length again.

Did y'all see how he did that? It saw. I was standing right here next to you I saw. He used that phony faked sleight of hand stuff. Didn't you? Yeah, I was standing right here and I saw.

So here I am to tie all three ropes together making your phony fake sleight of hand stuff completely and totally impossible. Hold out your hand.

(Place ropes in child's hand)

Everybody, make the magical gesture say the magic word
Did you feel the magic that time?
Of course not.

(Take the rope from the child)

Because I made your phony fake sleight of hand stuff completely and totally impossible. See it is just like it was before.

(Realize knot moved)

How did you do that?

(untie the knots)

Here's the short one. Here's the medium sized one. And here is the long one. Tell you what. Since you seem to like the ropes that length I'm gonna let you them the ropes that length. And I'm gonna let you keep the ropes

20th Century Silk

(Invite up adult in example adult is called Ms. Susie)

MAGICIAN

Ms. Susie I have something for you to do. Don't worry it is really easy. In fact it's so easy that when we're done you're going to go, "That's it?" I'm going to go. "That's it." So you have one line and it is.

(Point to Ms.Susie and wait for response)

Okay let me try this again. Ms. Susie I have something for you to do. It is really easy. If is so easy that we're done you're going to go, "That's it." And I am going to go that's it. So you have one line and it is.

(Point to Ms. Susie and wait for response.)

That's right. Obviously not a theater major.

Here you go.

(Pick up two red silks and hand Ms. Suise one)

Ms Susie has a red handkerchief. I have a red handkerchief. They are the same size the same shape the same color (Look back at Ms Susie and realize she is holding it wrong.) I'm sorry you need to hold it by these corners. I'm sorry its my fault I didn't tell. It's my fault. Ms. Susie has a red handkerchief. I have a red handkerchief they are the same size. They are the same shape they are the same color.

(Look at Ms Susie and realize she is holding it wrong.)

I'm sorry you need to hold it by the corners on the bottom. This is the top and this is the bottom. We'll try it again. Ms Susie has a red handkerchief I have a red handkerchief they are the same size the same shape and the same color

(Look at Ms Susie how has found some creative way to hold the red handkerchief.)

Ms. Susie you seem to be having trouble Can old it by just one corner. Can you hold this one by a corner. Now this is why you're here. I need you to tie them together so they come apart.

(Look at audience)

This is actually harder than it looks because they are kind of slippery. And that's what we a teacher do it. Because teachers/moms can do anything.

(Take the knotted silks from Ms. Susie)

That's pretty good. You ever been in the Navy? Boy Scouts? At least that's what you told your Dad.

Well Ms. Susie that's it!

Let's give her a big hand

Okay now we need some help.

(Call up a volunteer)

Hold on to that.

(Hand knotted silks to helper)

I have right here an empty bag.

(show bag to audience and to helper)

Take a look inside my bag. Do you see anything inside the bag?

(cover eyes of helper so they can only see inside of bag)

Do you see anything at all? Great Put the handkerchiefs inside the bag. All the way down into the bottom of the bag Now I've got a job for you. This is a difficult job. I know because I've been watching everybody. I need you to find someone, someone that you think we can trust. Is there anyone at all anyone that you think we could actually trust

(Roll up bag and place rubber band around it. Bring that person up)

I am told you are trustworthy. Is that true? All right. Here is what I need you to do. I need you to hold on to this bag and don't let anybody into it until I ask for it back. Can you do that? Good! And now I've got another job for you. This job is harder than job he had to do. You are the most trustworthy person But is there anyone else. Anyone we can trust

(Call them up pull out silver tub and yellow handkerchief.)

Okay I have right here at plain ordinary everyday common household cardboard silver tube. Take a look at that make sure it is a plain ordinary everyday common household cardboard silver tube. Is it a plain, ordinary, everyday, common

household cardboard silver tube? Now right here is a handkerchief. I want you to look at it and make sure it's the same size, the same shape, but a different color than the ones that Ms. Susie and I had. Is it the same size? Is it the same shape? Is it a different color? What color is it? That's right. Do you know why this handkerchief is yellow? Do you know what handkerchiefs to used for? To blowing your nose. And that's why this one's yellow.

(place yellow handkerchief in silver tube)

All right now you have one job and one job only and the is not not lose the yellow handkerchief. Can you do that okay

(hand tube to helper so they can see it it empty)

What?

(take tube and look through it so audience and see that it is empty)

What was your job? To not lose the yellow handkerchief
That's okay

(Turn to first helper.)

Did you bring your magic wand? You came to the magic show without a magic wand!? That's okay. That's okay. I sell Magic Wands Not to worry.

(hand helper breakaway wand)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. That was my fault. I obviously gave you the wrong size magic wand Let me measure you for you magic wand.

(pull tape measure from watch look at audience)

It's called measuring time.

(Measure different parts of the body hand arm nose rear. Etc.)

Okay I think what you need you need a small one

(pull very tiny wand and give it to helper)

Give it a wave. Give it a wave. That's too small. That's too small. Don't worry. Don't worry Don't worry I have a bigger one

(Exchange for a small wand)

Give it a wave. Give it a wave. That's too small. That' too

small try a bigger wand

(exchange wand of normal to large wand)

Give it a wave. Give it a wave. That's too small. That's too small. Don't worry. Don't worry Don't worry I have a bigger one (take wand from helper.

(Then grab Popsy Topsy Wand Ends pop off one at a time The middle fall off. Finally wand is ok)

Wave the Magic wand over the silver tube and the yellow handkerchief will return to the silver tube. One, Two, Three. The yellow handkerchief has returned to the..

(grab silver to and look through and suddenly realize the yellow handkerchief is not there).

try it again try it again

(return the tube to third helper.)

Wave the Magic Wand Over the silver tube and the yellow handkerchief will return to the silver tube 1 2 3 yes yellow handkerchief has returned ...

(grab silver tube and look suddenly realize the yellow handkerchief is not there. Look and the first helper and suddenly realize what is wrong.)

It's my fault my fault You are holding it by the wrong end. You see when you do that this is what happens.

(take bag from second helper and remove the yellow handkerchief tied between the two read handkerchiefs)

Let's give all three of my helpers a great big hand

(send all the helpers back)