Christmas magic tricks for kids

Peabody blog · Games · updated 2026-10-30

Eight easy magic tricks for kids to perform at the holidays, with a vanish, a prediction, two card tricks and paper, and a ten-minute family show.

The best Christmas magic tricks for kids are ordinary tricks with a holiday story told over the top: a coin that hides like a present, a card that finds the present, a prediction written before anybody unwrapped anything, and two paperclips that join like a paper chain. Here are eight from the Peabody Magic Shop that suit a holiday table or a family show. All eight are Apprentice level, which the shop defines as a trick that works the first try, and none takes more than five minutes to learn.

One thing to be clear about: the tricks are exactly as the shop teaches them. The Christmas part is only the patter, what your child says while doing them. I haven't touched a single step, so if your child would rather say something else, the trick still works.

The eight

- Trick: The Linking Paper Clips · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 2 minutes · You need: A strip of paper and two paperclips
- Trick: The Hole in Your Hand · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · Learn it in: 1 minute · You need: A sheet of paper
- Trick: The Water Vanish · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 2 minutes · You need: A glass, water, a coin and a saucer
- Trick: The Vanishing Pencil · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · Learn it in: 5 minutes · You need: A pencil and a table
- Trick: The Crystal Ball Prediction · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 3 minutes · You need: A deck of cards, paper and a marker
- Trick: The Magic Mind Reader · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 11 · Learn it in: 5 minutes · You need: A deck of cards and a helper
- Trick: The Instant Knot · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 6 to 11 · Learn it in: 5 minutes · You need: A piece of string or yarn
- Trick: The Answer Is Always 3 · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 6 to 11 · Learn it in: 2 minutes · You need: Nothing

The ages come from the grades each trick is written for, the way every page in the shop works them out. A five-year-old can do six of the eight; from six, all of them.

A vanish, a prediction, a card trick and some paper

A vanish. The Water Vanish is my favourite for a holiday table, because everybody already has a glass. A coin sits under an empty glass; fill it, put a saucer on top, and the coin is gone when you look through the side. It is light bending in the water. For patter, try: "This coin is for somebody's stocking, and it's very good at hiding. Watch." Get everyone down to table height first; from above, where grown-ups look, it doesn't work. Like every Potion Lab trick, it carries the shop's line: a potion is for looking at, not for drinking.

The Vanishing Pencil is the other vanish, done sitting down. Three taps on the table, and on three the pencil has gone, until you turn round and it is tucked behind your ear. "This is the pencil for writing wish lists. It's shy. It doesn't like being counted."

A prediction. The Crystal Ball Prediction is the shop's own pick for a first card trick: you write a card down before anybody touches the deck, somebody cuts wherever they like, and it is the card you wrote. For the holidays, fold the paper in half like a gift tag and say "I wrote this before anybody unwrapped anything, so nobody can say I made it up afterwards."

A card trick. The Magic Mind Reader is the card that finds the present. A helper takes any card, shows everybody but you, buries it and cuts the deck, and you deal through and pull it out. "A deck of cards is like the pile under the tree. Everyone's present is in there somewhere, and the deck always knows whose is whose."

Something with paper. The Linking Paper Clips is a strip of paper folded into an S with two paperclips on it. Pull the ends and the clips jump into the air, joined. The trick's own tips say to try three clips and a longer strip for a little chain, which is a paper chain if ever there was one. "It's the holidays. Nobody should be on their own."

The Hole in Your Hand is a sheet of paper rolled into a tube. Each person looks through it with both eyes open and sees a hole in their own palm. It takes one minute to learn, and the gasps come one at a time round the table. "It's a snow telescope. Look through it at the window, and keep both eyes open."

The Instant Knot is a challenge: tie a knot in a string without letting go of either end. Nobody can, then your child does it in one move. "A knot for the presents, and I never let go."

The Answer Is Always 3 needs nothing at all. Everybody thinks of a number, does four sums in their head, and your child names the answer. Its tips call it the trick for a dinner table.

A ten-minute family show

Every show in the shop follows the same seven steps, and the magic show page has a builder that drops the tricks your child ticks into the right slots. Here is one way to fill them from the eight above:

1. Opener, about 30 seconds: the Linking Paper Clips. Quick, visual and no helper.

2. Hello, about 30 seconds: a stage name and a catchphrase, no trick. The magician name generator gives a name in three taps.
3. Helper trick, about two minutes: the Magic Mind Reader, with a grandparent as the helper.
4. Everyone trick, about two minutes: the Answer Is Always 3, with the whole table doing the sums at once.
5. Wow trick, about two minutes: the Water Vanish.
6. Closer, about three minutes: the Crystal Ball Prediction, the one practised most.
7. Bow and goodbye, about twenty seconds: magic word, one second of silence, bow, "Thank you!" Then stop.

The seven steps add up to about ten minutes. The printables page has a show poster with blanks for the date, the time and the room: print it and stick it on the door an hour before.

If your child wants a trick done to them first, Flick's Mind-Reading Machine does five online, from the 21 Card Trick and the secret number cards to guessing one of forty animals and three predictions, then shows the secret. And Pick me a trick asks four questions with three boxes each, and Flick, the rabbit who runs the shop, hands over one that fits what is on the table.

Questions grown-ups ask

Can a little brother or sister join in?

As audience, yes. Two of the eight use small things: the Water Vanish has a coin and the Linking Paper Clips has paperclips, and both trick pages carry the shop's line to keep them away from little ones under four. Pick them up straight after. The Hole in Your Hand is the one to hand a toddler: a rolled-up sheet of paper and nothing small.

What if a trick goes wrong in front of the whole family?

Every trick in the shop has an out, the line to say when it doesn't land, written on its page. If somebody spots the Vanishing Pencil go, wink and say "that was the practice round". A child with one funny line ready is never stuck, and family audiences are kind ones.

Do we need to buy anything?

No. Every trick here uses things already in the house: paper, paperclips, a pencil, a glass of water, a coin, a deck of cards and a bit of string. The Answer Is Always 3 needs nothing at all.

Peabody (peabody.kids) is free through the end of 2026, and the Magic Shop needs no sign-up. What a child learns stays on their own device; the only thing sent is an anonymous count when a trick is marked as shown to somebody. For the quiet evening after the show, the library has stories to read aloud.