



THE PROOF IS IN THE PROPS!

BY: LEON MCBRYDE AND STEVE GILLHAM

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Class Notes:



Both Leon and I routinely entertain large groups of children. The venue can be anything from a someone's home, an HOA clubhouse or a large theater. Instead of Santa showing up to pose for photos and have quick visits with the children, we tell stories about the North Pole, reindeer, elves, how we do the things we all do as Santa. After Santa's story time we can do the photos with the children.

To get your feet wet, you can always start out with a small group and just start telling things about the North Pole. The children will be fascinated. They want to know everything they can about the reindeer, elves, etc... All you have to do is sit down and say, "Does anyone have any questions for me?" When they ask their questions do your best to answer them. Pretty soon you will start to connect the dots and the stories you tell will all hook together. As you do more of this the groups will get larger and the duration will become longer. After a while it really helps to have some basic tools to enhance the performance. Just don't think you have to start out with these tools.

TOOLS NEEDED:

- **PA System** – In our opinion, the best small PA on the market is the Mipro system. With this system you system you will be heard even with 200 children. System comes complete with best mic and stand when you order it from



http://www.proknows.com/MiPro_MA101_A_p/pa_ma101.htm

- **Backdrop** – You just never know where you will be asked to tell stories and there is nothing more distracting that having windows behind you, looking out over a parking lot. A backdrop will cost anywhere from \$100 to \$1000. Our favorite backdrop supplier is Tim Sonefelt at Wonder Imagery http://www.timsonfelt.com/store_products/index.php?app=cms&ns=display&ref=ste_backdrops The



art work on this backdrop is by Annette Thompson at www.AngelKissedDesign.ca/shop/ and was sent to Tim so it could be mounted to one of his frames. You really need to check out both of these people. They work well together.

Music for Your Story Time – Once you get some stories and a nice backdrop the next thing you want to add to your stories is music. It is absolutely amazing what a difference the right music makes for certain stories. Imagine watching a movie without the soundtrack. It would lose something. Wait until you have some experience before adding this effect. Sound controllers that work with pocket remotes are Show Cues and One Track. Check them out here:

- **ShowCues** <http://mojosoftwareonline.com/showcues.htm>
- **OneTrack** <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/onetrack-backing-tracks-for/id425807868?mt=8>

Once you start telling stories, you start to realize that the children would like to see proof. It's not that they don't believe you but ask yourself this question, if you had a reindeer with a red nose that was famous all over the world to children everywhere, wouldn't you carry a photo with you to show the children? If you don't get excited and show them some of the things that you are talking about, eventually they are going to start wondering why.



PROPS WE USE:

1. Reindeer Photos – You only need nine but find nine to show. Google “reindeer images” and you will be amazed. You won't find a Rudolph but photo shop makes that possible.
2. Fairy dust box – If you talk about fairies and fairy dust, you'd better be able to show some real fairy dust.



3. Magic Drawing Board – by Axtell. Of course we don't ever use the word magic. But for drawing a picture of Bernard this is a great story. <http://www.axtell.com/mdb.html>



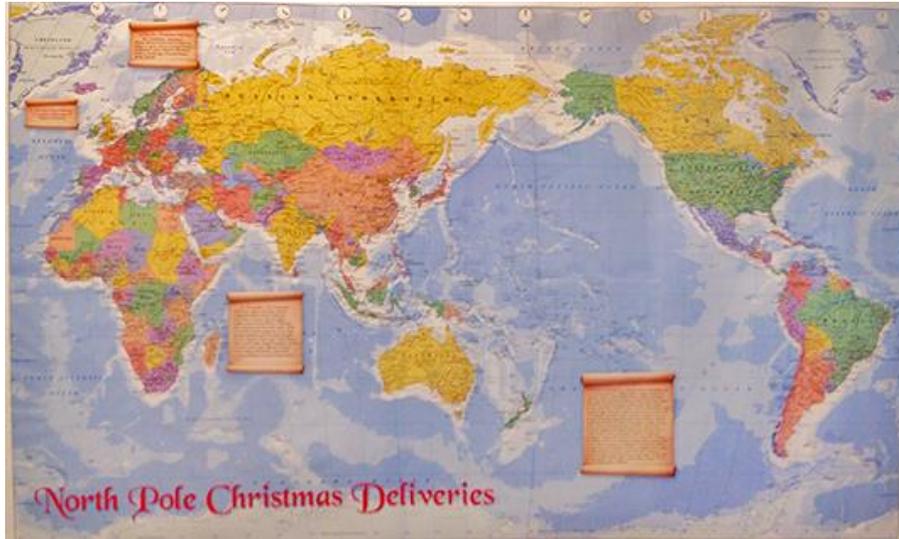
4. Snowman Making Kit – A funny story with a prop we modified after purchasing from Smokey Mountain Magic. <http://www.smmagic.com/?product=stratblocks-christmas> We didn't feel the theme was perfect so we modified ours.



5. Mother of all Diamonds story – an interesting twist on the story of why Santa Claus gives out coal. An example of what is known as "Gift Magic" although we don't use that phrase with the children.



6. North Pole Deliveries – a special map for demonstrating to the slightly older children how we do it in one night.



7. Mr. Studley's Tool Box – Brought all the way from the North Pole to show the children. Mr. Studley is a master toymaker in the woodworking shop and this is the tool box he uses. Over 440 tool are in this box and everything has a place.



8. Fizzlepop's Tool Kit - Fizzlepop is the head of the electronic toy department and has custom made many of his own tools. They do things that other tools don't do anywhere in the world. You can get a



good 45 minutes of play from this prop alone. The "Cell Phone Fiasco" is really funny. Developed by our friend Tim Sonfelt.

Wonder Imagery
presents

\$39



Cell Phone Fiasco

Cell Phone Fiasco

A magician could never compete with Santa when it comes to true magic. However, Santa can use a little "magician's" magic to create a memorable moment for an audience. Santa offers to add a little memory to an audience member's phone. The phone is borrowed and a magical Elf tool, aka finger with a light, is waved over the phone. Santa exclaims that he is adding to the memory on the phone by erasing everything on it. Insert laugh. Santa takes a closer look at the phone and the glass falls off as well as inside of phone. Insert laugh. Maybe Santa can restore the memory and the phone with a little more waving of the Elf tool. Santa puts all the parts back in place and just like magic the phone is repaired and handed to the helper. Insert applause. Comes with everything, just borrow an audience member's phone and we'll explain how to do the rest.

9. The Lost Star – Another prop from Smokey Mountain Magic. <http://www.smmagic.com/?product=the-lost-star> Great story for Santa to tell the children all about the important part of Christmas.



This is just nine of some of our favorite props. There are many more. Once you start telling stories about the North Pole, you'll never stop.

If you need some help with routines and story developing, Steve's book, "Santaology, The Art of Being a Great Santa Claus!" has many of his and Leon's routines with descriptions on how to use the props in story form. You can order a copy of the book from Steve by emailing him: sgillham@nc.rr.com