



FAMILY ACTIVITY GUIDE

Houdini: The Elusive American

Mesmerize Your Family with Magic Tricks

Inspired by Houdini's story? You can create a magic show at home. We don't recommend locking yourself up in a tank of water, but here are other ideas:



Bend a Spoon with Your Super Strength

- 1 Announce that you will perform the awe-inspiring feat of bending a spoon with your bare hands.
- 2 Grab a spoon and hold it with the handle facing up and the bottom of the spoon resting on the table. Press the spoon down, showing "effort." Grasp the handle with both hands; make sure the top isn't peeking out.
- 3 Now gently let the spoon tip back toward you, keeping the bottom against the table. Your hands will shield the view from spectators, and it will look like the spoon is bending.
- 4 Announce that you will now straighten the spoon, and gently lift the spoon back to an upright position. Voila!



You can also look up the Israeli-born, internationally known "spoon bender" named Uri Geller. In his honor there's a park with a gigantic bent spoon in Old Yaffo, right next to Tel Aviv.

Make a Coin Disappear

- 1 Hold a coin in your right hand (if you're left-handed, reverse the directions). Announce to all that you are going to make it disappear.
- 2 Pretend to place the coin in your left hand, but keep your right thumb under the coin as you do so.
- 3 Now close your left hand and hold it up for your audience. It will look like you are holding the coin in your left hand, but it is still really in your right hand.
- 4 "Now watch," you can say as you slowly open your left hand finger by finger, keeping your audience's attention there as your right hand drops the coin in your pocket. The coin is *gone!*



A very Jewish way to finish off this trick is to step into the next room, remove the coin from your pocket, come back and announce that "mysteriously, the coin is back." Place the coin in your family's tzedakah box for a charitable donation – turning magic into a mitzvah (good deed)!

Use Psychic Powers to Guess the Card

- 1 You'll need an ordinary deck of cards. Count out 25 cards ahead of time.
- 2 Before you start the show, place those 25 cards at a slight angle on top of the rest of the deck. This allows you to see where your cards end, and the rest of the deck starts.
- 3 Cut the deck in front of your guests, splitting them at the 25th card.
- 4 Place the 25 cards face down on the table. Now ask one of your guests to choose a card from the ones remaining in your hand. Tell your guest to show everyone the card, except you.
- 5 Now ask your guest to place the card back on the stack you are holding. Add the other 25 cards on top of that stack.
- 6 Begin dealing the cards around the table, silently counting the first 25. When you get to the 26th card, hold it up triumphantly and say, "Is THIS your card?!" It is!



You probably don't want to reveal your secret – that you silently counted up to the 26th card. But it might interest you to know that 26 is a special Jewish number. Each Hebrew letter has its own number equivalent, and if you add up the letters that spell God's name – Yud (=10), Hey (5), Vav (6), and Hey (5) – it adds up to 26!