

Society of Young Magicians Leader Handbook

(Revised 10/1/2018)

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY OF YOUNG MAGICIANS

Society of American Magicians members credited as co-founders of the S.Y.M. include Edward Schuman, S.A.M. National President 1968-69; Donald Lea, National President 1977-78; Raymond Corbin, National President 1984-85; Dan Rodriguez, National President 1993-94; Dick Laneau, and Wendell Gibson. Those S.A.M. members saw a need to give youth an opportunity to learn the art and ethics of magic.

- 1984 - The youth program is founded, named the Society of Young Magicians, and the monthly publication would be called The Magic SYMbol. The first 4 SYM Assemblies were formed in the home cities of co-founders, including SYM Assembly #1 in Nashua NH, SYM Assembly #2 in Westminster MD, SYM Assembly #3 in Denver CO, and SYM Assembly #4 in St. Petersburg FL.
- 1984 – The S.A.M. appoints Wendell Gibson as the first Program Director of the Society of Young Magicians. He serves in that role until 1991.
- 1987 – S.A.M. National President William Andrews appoints S.A.M. First Vice President Father Cyprian Murray to draft a constitutional amendment to permit S.Y.M. members to join the S.A.M. The vote passes unanimously in July, 1988. At that time, other S.A.M. members had established S.Y.M. Assemblies in a total of 31 cities.
- 1991 – Margaret Dailey, S.A.M. National President 1990-91 is appointed S.Y.M. National Director and serves in that role until 1999.
- 1991 - Using a major grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc., 22 S.Y.M. Assemblies are established in Central Indiana. The funding also includes producing several television public service announcements featuring Harry Blackstone, Jr.
- 1994 – The S.A.M. Convention expands its offerings with new activities for youth, including the "Leaders Workshop," "Autograph Party" with professional magicians, and "Kids Doing Magic for Kids."
- 1995 - S.Y.M. Board Members develops the Youth Protection profile form to be completed by the leader of each S.Y.M. Assembly. The comprehensive vetting process includes interviews, character references and criminal background check before anyone can become an S.Y.M. Leader.
- 1999 - Char Bontjes Gott is appointed S.Y.M. National Director and serves in that role until 2002.
- 2002 - Jann Wherry Goodsell, S.A.M. National President 2000-2001 is appointed S.Y.M. National Director and serves in that role until 2016.
- 2016 –Dan Rodriguez, National President 1993-94, is appointed S.Y.M. Executive Director and currently serves in that role.
- 2016 – The Magic SYMbol is re-launched as a digital online publication updated weekly.
- 2018 – S.Y.M. Child Protection Policy is revised and mandatory child protection training is launched for S.Y.M. leaders and support volunteers

A more detailed history of the S.Y.M. is featured in the September 2015 issue of M-U-M Magazine.

YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

Non-Discrimination

SYM membership is open to youth from the age of seven *through* the age of 17 with a demonstrated, serious interest in magic who are able to function age-appropriately in a cooperative group environment. The S.A.M. and the SYM complies with all applicable anti-discrimination laws and does not illegally discriminate against or give preferential treatment to any individual or group on the basis of age, race, gender, color, economic status, ethnicity, linguistic heritage, cultural background, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability or ability, medical condition, religious creed, marital status, employment status, housing status, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other characteristic, status or distinction that is protected by law in the selection of members and volunteers for SYM's youth programs and services. The SYM is committed to providing a balanced, safe and educational environment for all participants and volunteers. SYM firmly believes that everyone should be treated equally and fairly.

Youth Protection

The SYM strives to create a safe and secure environment for its youth participants. We encourage participants and parents who may have concerns to let us know so we can ensure the issues are addressed. The guidelines and procedures set forth below represent our effort to ensure all SYM leaders, volunteers and youth members understand the expectations of the SYM. All SYM Assemblies are responsible for creating their own Youth Protection Policies and adhering to them; the following guidelines and procedures apply to everyone, including leaders, volunteers and SYM members.

Zero Tolerance Policy Against Abuse

Abuse of any kind shall not be permitted within our organization. SYM does not tolerate any form of abuse, whether physical, sexual, emotional or verbal, or any other misconduct from our leaders, volunteers or youth members. Physical or sexual abuse is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, striking, hitting, kicking, biting, spitting, indecent gesturing, lewd remarks, indecent exposure, unwanted physical contact, any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching, innuendo or suggestions. Emotional or verbal abuse is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of foul, demeaning, threatening or bullying language or making abusive statements about a person's race, gender, religion, nationality, color, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age or any other characteristic.

Barriers to Abuse

Every activity sponsored by the SYM should be monitored to ensure no youth or group of youth is alone without an SYM leader or other approved adult. Unless an emergency exists, no adult shall take a youth alone to bathrooms or any other secluded setting. When traveling with youth participants, youth should be paired with other youth of the same gender and similar age group. Sleeping, bathing and clothes-changing accommodations must respect the privacy of the youth. Youth shall be empowered to trust their feelings, and SYM leaders and volunteers shall make clear that their concerns are important by listening to them. Open communication between youth and parents or between youth and other adults in the organization may help reveal early warning signs of abuse.

Mandatory Reporting of Abuse

Part of your leadership responsibility is to be alert to any activity or condition that could threaten the safety of our youth. All persons involved with SYM shall immediately report to local law enforcement authorities any good faith suspicion or belief that a youth is—or has been—physically, sexually or emotionally abused or neglected or exposed to any form of violence, threat or sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation includes the possession, manufacture or distribution of youth pornography, online solicitation, enticement, or showing of obscene material.

The reporting party shall also submit a written report to the SYM Executive Director within 24 hours of first notification. The report shall include a narrative of the reported abuse or concerns, actions taken by the reporting party, witnesses to any inappropriate conduct, and any other relevant information. Finally, leaders, volunteers and SYM members are encouraged to contact the S.A.M. National Administrator at 303-362-0575 to address any questions about this policy, its purpose, or the SYM's expectations.

Responding to Reports of Abuse

The SYM will respond promptly to any and all allegations of abuse within this organization. Information will be communicated to law enforcement authorities for investigation and shall be reviewed by the organization's directors. The alleged offender may be notified of the allegations and dealt with appropriately, after consideration given to guidance by law enforcement authorities or other professionals on appropriate notification measures.

Any person accused of sexual or physical abuse may be asked to resign voluntarily. If the accused member does not resign voluntarily, a majority vote during an executive session at any regular or special meeting of the S.A.M. National Council may suspend that member immediately, until further notice. Such suspension may occur regardless of any civil or criminal finding relating to the alleged abuse because the continued presence of the accused person could damage the reputation of the organization and could be construed as being harmful to the participants.

An accused person who is later cleared of the charges may apply to be reinstated within the organization. Reinstatement is not a right, however, and the S.A.M. makes no guarantee that he or she will be reinstated to his or her former role.

Mandatory Youth Protection Policies include:

- Two-deep leadership (2 adults at all activities, at least one must be an active adult S.A.M. member)
- No one-on-one contact
- Respect of privacy
- Separate accommodations
- No secret organizations
- Appropriate attire
- Constructive discipline
- Youth leader training and supervision
- Member responsibility
- Parent Responsibility
- Assembly responsibilities
- Prohibition of hazing
- Prohibition of bullying

All SYM leaders and volunteers must comply with these policies. Violations of these policies put the S.A.M. and SYM at risk and will result in disciplinary action, including expulsion from participating in SYM activities and revocation of membership in the S.A.M.

Meeting the Needs of Child Abuse Victims

At some point, an SYM member may confide in you or tell you that they have been abused.

- DON'T panic or overreact to the information disclosed by the child.
- DON'T criticize the child.
- DON'T promise not to tell anyone.
- DO listen intently and obey the no one-on-one contact policy.
- DO respect the child's privacy.
- DO make sure the child feels that he or she is not to blame.

Sexual Molestation by Adults

Child molesters are the people who sexually abuse and exploit children. They are usually not strangers but are most often adults or other juveniles who were trusted and known to or by the children they victimize. The SYM Youth Protection policies are designed to help you detect inappropriate behavior of molesters.

There are several methods child molesters use to persuade children to give in to molestation. Although force is used in a few cases, molesters most often use a "grooming" process. The grooming process is usually focused on the child's needs and vulnerabilities, but may often focus on the child's parents as well. The molester might offer the parents free babysitting services or make friends with them to gain their trust to be alone with the child. Characteristically, the grooming process with the child will begin with seeming innocent touching, such as nonsexual hugging, patting the back, and massaging the neck. The molester usually seeks a child who needs affection or attention and makes that child feel special by spending a lot of time with them and by giving gifts and money. The goal of this extra attention is to build the child's (and parents') trust.

When the molester senses that the child has been sufficiently conditioned to the physical contact and has an emotional bond, the physical contact becomes more intrusive. The contact may be under the guise of sex education or playing inappropriate games. It may prey on the child's emerging curiosity about sexuality or allow the targeted victim taboo access, i.e., violating rules, drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes—all to create a “special relationship.” Photography is often used, perhaps under the ruse of having the child pose for pictures. Molesters are skilled at manipulating children by incorporating the child's ambitions into their strategies. When an adult looks for opportunities to spend a lot of time alone with a child, attempts to isolate the child, or lavishes gifts and/or money on a child for no apparent reason, the child's SYM leader, assistant leaders and appointed volunteers need to intervene.

Sexual Molestation by Other Youth

Approximately one-third of sexual molestation occurs at the hands of other children. Youth four to seven years older than the target victim might manipulate the younger child with coercion, size, or knowledge difference. If a child tells you about club initiations, gangs or the use of intimidation or coercion or bullying in which sexual activity is included, or if a child tells you about inappropriate sexual activity by other children, whether by deception, pressure, or force, this is a form of sexual abuse and you need to take steps to stop the activity by reporting it to the SYM leader or assistant leader. This form of sexual misconduct is serious and cannot be ignored. Children who molest other children need professional help. This activity is not just “kids being kids.” It must be stopped and reported immediately to the SYM leader.

Youth Protection Strategies for Youth Members

The Society of American Magicians has adopted age-appropriate personal safety messages for our youth. For all SYM members, we stress the 4 Rules for Personal Safety. For teenage SYM members, we teach the “3 R's” of personal safety.

The 4 Rules of Personal Safety encourage all children to seek adult help in making personal safety decisions. The rules are as follows:

1. Check first with a parent or another trusted adult before changing plans or accepting anything from anyone.
2. Go with a friend in order to be safer and to have more fun. For SYM members, the friend should be a parent, another trusted adult, or an older child approved by the parents.
3. It is my body, and I have the right to say “No” to anyone who tries to touch me anywhere that makes me feel uncomfortable or to do things that I think are wrong.
4. Tell a trusted adult whenever I am hurt, scared, or made to feel uncomfortable.

3 R's of Personal Safety

1. Recognize that anyone could be a child molester and be aware of situations that could lead to abuse.
2. Resist advances made by child molesters to avoid being molested.
3. Report molestation or attempted molestation to a trusted adult.

Bullying

Bullying always involves one person or group trying to intimidate a target (victim)—often repeatedly. It might involve a physical act: hitting, kicking, biting, or shoving. It might also involve verbal or emotional abuse: teasing, put-downs, name-calling, hazing, hurtful joking, or intimidation. Bullies also sometimes use racial or sexual slurs or make threatening gestures. Bullying usually takes place out of the sight of adults and away from meetings. As a result, children frequently don't show how much bullying upsets them and often remain silent. The bully often threatens reprisals for “telling.” The victim also may think adults won't or can't help him, or they may feel ashamed for not defending them self. Bullying is not a “right of passage” or simply part of growing up. The fear and anxiety of bullying causes kids to not only avoid bullies but also the places where they hang out, including SYM activities. And far from “toughening up” targets of bullying, bullying can devastate their self-esteem and self-confidence. If the behavior continues, the victim may suffer long-lasting feelings of isolation and sadness—even depression. Bullying even affects groups, as other members might wonder if they will be the next targets. Bullying in all forms is prohibited in the SYM.

The National Council of The Society of American Magicians has determined that various chat rooms and social media have been improperly utilized as outlets for cyber bullying which targets magic, magicians and youngsters who are interested in magic. The Society of American Magicians opposes and condemns cyber bullying in any and all forms, including but not limited to, all forms of hate speech, the use of words that attack physical appearance, gender, religious belief, sexual orientation or nationality.

Steps to Stop Bullying

- SYM leaders and support volunteers should always be on the lookout for bullying behavior.
- Stop the actions and protect the target from danger.
- Identify the behavior in a calm tone and say that it's not OK.
- Speak with the target.
- Encourage the target to tell his or her parents and SYM leader.
- Tell the SYM leader or designated assistant leader of the bullying incident.

To reduce the likelihood of bullying in an SYM assembly meeting, create an antibullying culture throughout the meeting by always modeling mutual respect, kindness, and inclusion and never solving problems through aggression. SYM leaders, assistant leaders and appointed volunteers should always model positive feedback and demonstrate how to connect constructively with one another.

Screening Adult Leaders

All SYM leaders and assistant leaders who will be supervising youth shall undergo a complete background check at least every 3 years. Background checks may include, but are not limited to, multi-jurisdictional criminal record checks, an FBI fingerprint check, a National Sex Offender registry check, driver's license check, and a Social Security trace. The ability to work or volunteer with SYM is contingent upon satisfactory results of those checks. The national office of the SYM will initiate and cover the cost of all screenings for active SAM members. Non-member leaders and assistant leaders may be asked to pay the cost of their own screenings.

SYM leaders and assistant leaders will be required to participate in periodic youth protection training offered by the SYM. Adult volunteers and parents are also invited and encouraged to participate in these trainings. The national office of the SYM may cover the cost for any adult attending youth protection trainings.

Conduct at the Conclusion of Meetings

It is strongly urged that the adult leaders of assemblies adopt a strict policy with regard to the means of departure at the conclusion of each meeting, communicate that policy to S.Y.M. parents, and enforce the policy. The basic elements may include the following:

A requirement that members be picked up by a parent or other authorized adult, except in cases where other arrangements have been made (e.g., situations where all members go home by school activity bus or where older youth may appropriately depend upon themselves with prior policy or parental approval).

The use of a specified location for the members to wait, under leader or other adult supervision, until picked up and to assure that they are met by parents or other authorized adults. This commitment by the leaders will ensure that the assembly meetings will always be fun and safe.

It should be noted that although these policies are very important and prudent, it is not necessary to imagine a tragedy in order for these steps to make sense. Both adults and children can have unexpected needs for assistance (parent arrives late or forgets; child becomes ill), and it is both necessary and a great comfort to have supervising adults who are familiar with the youth in attendance. It is sometimes stunning, but understandable, the terror that can be felt by a child in a period even as short as five minutes when a parent is late and the child feels forgotten. Such fears can ruin for the child the wonderful experience of a successful assembly meeting.

LET'S ORGANIZE AN S.Y.M. ASSEMBLY

To charter a new S.Y.M. assembly, you must have at least 5 S.Y.M. members and 2 adult S.Y.M. leaders that are active S.A.M. members, one of whom is 21 years of age or older. All SYM leaders and assistant leaders who will be supervising youth shall undergo a complete background check at least every 3 years. Background checks may include, but are not limited to, multi-jurisdictional criminal record checks, an FBI fingerprint check, a National Sex Offender registry check, driver's license check, and a Social Security trace. Adult leaders are also required to read and sign the S.Y.M. Sexual Harassment and Child Protection Policy, and attend child protection training, as required by the S.Y.M.

You can print out and complete the Charter Application form available in this SYM Leader Handbook or request the form from the S.A.M. New Assembly Coordinator. *See national contact list in the back of this S.Y.M. Leader Handbook.*

Mail the completed charter application with appropriate fees to the S.A.M. National Administrator. *See national contact list in the back of this S.Y.M. Leader Handbook.* Once the charter application has been received, an assembly number will be assigned and your charter will be approved at the Annual S.A.M. National Council meeting.

Another option is to re-activate an existing S.Y.M. assembly that was previously chartered in your area. Contact the S.A.M. National Administrator for more information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who should belong to our S.Y.M.? *All youth from the age of 7 through 17 with an interest in magic are invited to join the S.Y.M.*

What strategies of recruitment who have been most effective? *Fliers are always effective. You may distribute them through magic shops, schools, and libraries. Call the local newspaper and ask to have the entertainment reporter come to a meeting.*

What is the optimum size for an S.Y.M. Assembly? *Small groups of 8 to 10 work best (children learn better with close instruction). However, more leaders or older, experienced youth may help with a larger group.*

Where is the best place for us to meet, and who will arrange for that? *S.Y.M. Assemblies should meet in a public location. Ask your local school, church, library, assisted-living home, or shopping mall. Many of these locations will give you a room for free; however, you may offer a free show performed by the youth in exchange. The leaders or parents of your S.Y.M. Assembly, or someone from your local S.A.M. assembly may a contact for a meeting location.*

What day should meetings happen and for how long a time and how often? *The S.Y.M. parents and support volunteers should help you decide when to meet and the time. Meeting once a month gives the youth time to work on what they have learned at the meetings. One hour should give you enough time to cover everything. However, the amount of time you will need to teach your group may depend on the size of the group or what you are teaching. You might tell the S.Y.M. members that you will come early and stay late for that extra help they may need.*

What kind of meeting format will be most effective? *Set a time at the beginning of each meeting for S.Y.M. members to perform a program and earn their awards in the Achievement Pin Program. You may use the rest of the meeting for guest lectures and to teach new effects. At the end of each meeting, the youth can ask questions on what they have learned, show tricks, or talk about magic.*

Who should call S.Y.M. members and their families for reminders? *Leaders should delegate tasks such as reminder calls and other activities to Support Volunteers. It is hard to do it all yourself, so you will need support to make your S.Y.M. Assembly the best it can be.*

Who will be responsible for keeping our records and information? *The S.Y.M. leader may delegate this task to a Support Volunteer; however, the S.Y.M. leader should always maintain a copy of all records pertaining to the S.Y.M. Assembly.*

How can we best work with S.A.M. members who will help with instruction? *Email members from your local S.A.M. Assembly, asking them to come to teach an effect. Always have a backup plan in case your presenter cancel.*

Should the meeting include refreshments, roll call, dues collecting? *The time and day that you meet may determine whether or not you wish to serve refreshments. You can delegate this task to one of the adult volunteers. You may collect dues, if you wish. They may help offset the cost of supplies; however, if the dues are too high, the youth may not want to join.*

Where are the resources and guidelines to insure our success? *Keep reading! This guidebook is filled with advice on making your S.Y.M. a wonderful and magical program for the youth in your area. The members of the S.Y.M. are the future of the S.A.M.*

YOUR SUPPORT VOLUNTEER GROUP

If there is a secret to building a successful SYM Assembly, it is having outstanding leaders that can work with youth and a wonderful group of adults to support the leaders. We strongly recommend that each leader form such a group. Start with an S.A.M. Assembly to secure individuals to teach different effects to the SYM members. Now is the time to get the SYM parents involved in helping. When a new member joins the SYM, give the parents the Supporting Volunteer Application (available in this handbook) and ask them to fill in the spaces where they can help and return it to you or the lead volunteer in charge of delegating these tasks.

There are many support volunteer roles, e.g., attending meetings, substituting when the leader is absent, suggesting programs and activities, and listening to comments and suggestions from members and parents. On the following page, you will find a Support Volunteer List that you may copy and use for your SYM assembly. Short descriptions of these roles are listed below. Some of them got mixed up, so I put it back together the way I thought it should have been.

- Setup/Cleanup—Helps to set up and clean up
- Performance Locations— finds-locations for the S.Y.M. to perform.
- Historian—Collects and preserves historical documents, the charter, photographs and newspaper articles.
- Greeter—Greets everyone upon arrival and keeps the meetings moving by greeting late arrivals.
- Teaching—demonstrates or assembles effects.
- Newsletter—Prepares and mails notices and newsletters.
- Recorder—Maintains necessary records.
- Caller—Organizes phone/email list of parents. Don't directly contact S.Y.M. members without parental permission.
- Librarian—Checks out books, DVDs and props.
- Picnic—Organizes an annual S.Y.M. picnic.
- Dues—Collects local dues, if applicable.
- Special Duties—Let the parent volunteers determine what they would like to do.

Your support volunteers may gather informally after meetings, exchanging ideas, agreeing upon responsibilities, and making decisions. Other people may join in, and their input should always be considered.

MOTIVATING SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

Encourage your Support Volunteers to want to do things by recognizing and rewarding their accomplishments.

Praise in public. Point out the good parts of participation. Be considerate. Give credit where it is honestly due. Demonstrate interest in and appreciation for all Support Volunteers. Do the personal extra things—a written note, a reference, a phone call. Make your wishes known by suggestions or requests...not orders.

When you name a suggestion or request, be certain to explain the reasons for it. Let Support Volunteers in on your plans and programs, even at an early stage.

Remember that the leader sets the style for the Support Volunteers. Class is contagious.

Show Support Volunteers that you have confidence in them and that you expect their best efforts.

Ask individual Support Volunteers for their council, help and ideas and then use the stuff.

If an idea from a Support Volunteer is adopted or rejected, tell the originator why. Write it out.

When you are wrong or make a mistake, admit it publicly and privately.

Keep Support Volunteers informed about everything, especially what affects them.

Make personal contact before and after meetings to encourage participation.

Give Support Volunteers tasks to do immediately. The interest level will be highest at the beginning. Encourage them early on in order to generate enthusiasm.

SUPPORT VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

The following is a list of volunteer jobs that your SYM leader needs filled to operate a successful SYM assembly. By becoming a Support Volunteer of the Society of Young Magicians, we can make this an outstanding experience for every young member. Please place a check next to the area in which you would like to help and return it to the leader. If you have any questions on the responsibilities of any performance, please ask.

- SETUP/CLEANUP—Helping to set up and clean up.
- HISTORIAN—Collecting and preserving historical documents.
- TEACHING—Helping to demonstrate or assemble effects.
- NEWSLETTER—Preparing and mailing or emailing notices and newsletters.
- RECORDER—Maintaining necessary records and track attendance.
- CALLER—Organizing and staffing a telephone call or email list.
- LIBRARIAN—Responsible for checking out books, videos, and magic props.
- PICNIC—Helping to organize an annual S.Y.M. picnic.
- PERFORMANCE LOCATION—Finding locations for the S.Y.M. to perform.
- GREETER—Keeping the meetings moving by greeting late arrivals.
- DUES—Establishing and collecting local dues.
- OTHER _____

Parent Volunteer Name _____

Child's Name _____

Full Address _____

Parent Phone Number (Day) _____ (Night) _____

Parent E-Mail _____

CREATING A CURRICULUM

As an S.Y.M. leader, you have plenty of homework ahead of you. You and your support volunteers should pre-plan the agenda for your first 1 or 2 year(s) of meetings. The following recommended topics should include the fundamentals and basic skills and covers each category in the achievement pin program. However, you are encouraged to develop upon what is there and to add your own ideas for teaching these skills. Topics should include cards, coins, silk, paper, sponge, rope, animals, mentalism and general magic. You should also include teaching tricks and sharing performance tips from *The Magic SYMBOL* magazine. Time should also be dedicated to reviewing the S.A.M. Pledge. Some S.Y.M. assemblies have their members recite the pledge at the start of each meeting.

ACHEIVEMENT PIN PROGRAM

The S.Y.M. Achievement Pin Program allows S.Y.M. members to explore 9 areas of magic, demonstrate skill in these areas, and receive recognition for their accomplishments. The progressive nature of the Achievement Pin Program also measures how young magicians are advancing in their magical journey. As candidates work from Bronze, to Silver, to Gold, they will learn valuable leadership skills aimed at increasing confidence in all areas of life. S.Y.M. advisors are available to help candidates work toward earning their pins and to ensure that candidates meet all requirements. S.Y.M. members who do not belong to an S.Y.M. assembly will be able to receive help from advisors via postal mail or electronically.

How you embrace this program is up to you and it enhances and expands the S.Y.M. mission and makes S.Y.M. membership more attractive to young people. On the local level, the pin program can enhance your meetings. You can hold a pin test night when members test for pins and an award ceremony when they receive them. You can turn these events into shows!

Complete details are available on the S.A.M. website at www.magicsam.com/page/SYM_Pin_Program or contact the S.Y.M. Pin Coordinator for more information. *See national contact list in the back of this S.Y.M. Leader Handbook.*

PLANNING FOR VARIETY

Most meeting should follow the same agenda:

- Recite the S.Y.M. Pledge
- Show Time
- Teaching and Practice
- Conclusion

As time passes, you may need to vary your approach. New members will generally need to learn fundamentals that advanced members have already learned. Occasionally, the advanced members may help teach. This is good in moderation, but not at every meeting, or your advanced members will be shortchanged.

Having knowledgeable magicians among your Support Volunteers allows you to split the group for instruction. Sometimes it is possible for each section to work on the same basic objective. Beginners can learn an easy card force, while advanced students earn a more difficult force. Another way to add variety is to invite local magicians to present programs highlighting their skills. These special meetings should open with the members show. Then the guest magician performs and teaches an effect.

In the summer, your S.Y.M. may have a picnic to showcase the talents of the members to family and friends. Be sure to invite members from the S.A.M., along with guests from the past. It is important to have everyone in the group do something. If you have new members or young members that are not ready to perform a trick, have them emcee the show.

Variety may include a backup plan if something falls through at the last minute. You should keep a folder with an assortment of other types of magic and related items. When something goes wrong, you can go to the folder to find material to teach.

The following is a list of such items: Rubber Band Magic, Linking Rings, Liquid Magic, Balloon Magic, Thimble Magic, Magnet Magic, Animal Magic, Bizarre Magic, Bags and Boxes,

Escapes, Pyrotechnics, Black Arts, Optical Illusions, Science Magic, Kid Show Magic, Magic at the Dinner Table, Magic at School, Walk-Around Magic, Developing a Character, and Costuming.

Allied Arts: Ventriloquism, Felt Pictures, Origami, Puppetry, Clowning, Face Painting, Balloon Art.

Although many of these ideas are covered or touched upon in your regular curriculum, you may use a meeting to cover it more in-depth.

A ONE-HOUR MEETING

The one-hour format has several benefits:

1. It forces you to plan your meeting carefully. The general objective is to develop a love of magic and an understanding of the skills needed to become proficient. You will have to decide what specific objectives should be covered within the allotted time.
2. By starting on time and ending on time, you encourage members and their parents to be prompt.
3. A one-hour meeting makes it convenient for parents to stay and helps stimulate their involvement. Several parents may begin to develop their own interest in magic!

TIME STRUCTURE Always come early and always stay late.

RECITE THE S.Y.M. PLEDGE (2 Minutes)

Have a large poster or banner made with the S.Y.M. Pledge and display it at the front of your meeting area. You could also print the pledge on paper and hand out to attendees at the start of each meeting. The goal is for all S.Y.M. members to memorize the pledge and understand its meaning.

SHOW TIME (10-15 Minutes)

Magic is an art that must be practiced. Each meeting should include a time when members can perform the effects that they have been practicing. A great resource for new effects is to have a member demonstrate a trick or share an idea from the Magic SYMbol. You should encourage prospective members to bring magic to perform. Most of them will already know an effect and will be eager to impress. Set the rules to limit each person to one effect or routine. You want to give everyone equal attention and an opportunity to perform if they want to perform.

Use this time to help your young magicians develop skills for becoming good audience members and on-stage volunteers. It is your job to teach the youth how to watch a performance and be respectful to the performer, be engaged, using appropriate applause and laughter and no heckling, booing, or distracting behavior.

TEACHING AND PRACTICE TIME (30 Minutes)

This is the time that the leaders or your guest teacher shows an effect that takes some practice but isn't too difficult. You will probably need to furnish the materials, so be prepared.

CONCLUSION (15 Minutes)

Demonstrate the magic that will be taught at the next meeting and tell your members what to bring. Spend a few minutes discussing what you have covered and remind them to practice. Remind and encourage your members how to access The Magic SYMbol magazine available at www.magicSYM.com. Announce the time and location of any special events that they may wish to attend. Hand out application forms and information packets about your S.Y.M. to all new guests. Thank the guests for coming to your meeting and invite everyone to return.

The Magic SYMbol and M-U-M Magazine

S.Y.M. membership includes a digital subscription to The Magic SYMbol. This publication is updated weekly and is written for the young magician and is packed-full of great magic education, including tricks, performance tips, features and S.Y.M. news from around the world.

S.Y.M. membership also includes access to the digital version of M-U-M Magazine – the official monthly publication of the Society of American Magicians. S.Y.M. members have the option to upgrade their membership to include the paper version of M-U-M mailed to them each month.

Youth that have reached 3 years of S.Y.M. membership will be awarded the book **MAGIC IN MIND – Essential Essays for Magicians**, Edited by Joshua Jay. This 550+ page hardcover book assembles 30 of the greatest thinkers in the history of magic, each one discussing an essential aspect of magic. Presentation, effect, magic as art, putting an act together – It's all in this book! Upon renewing the 3rd year of membership, the book will automatically be sent to the young member along with their membership card. *If you know of any 3-year S.Y.M. members that have not received this book, contact the S.A.M. National Administrator.*

Follow these steps to access the SYM Website and The Magic SYMbol Online Newsletter

Go to: www.magicsym.com

Enter your Username and Password (See below)

Click on SYM Youth

Click on MAGIC SYMbol Online

Login default credentials:

Default Username: Your email address listed in your S.A.M. profile *

Default Password: SAM followed by your 5-digit member #), i.e. SAM12345

If you cannot login, contact the National Administrator at: Manon@magicsam.com

** We do not collect email addresses for our S.Y.M. members – only their parents, if they provide it. The default username is either the parents email included with the membership application, or the default username is the 5-digit membership # followed by @magic.bz, i.e. 12345@magic.bz. Members can change their default username and password.*

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