

THE BIRTHDAY KIT

Part of "Fully Booked" — A Cris Johnson Production

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The One Sentence That Books More Birthday Parties Than Your Entire Show

Let me start with the single most valuable thing I know about this market — because if you remember nothing else, remember this.

In the birthday market, you almost never lose the gig because your magic isn't good enough. You lose it because you quoted **one naked number** — and the second a busy parent can line your price up against the cheaper guy down the street, you've turned yourself into a commodity she's never seen perform.

Here's what changes everything: you don't quote a price. You quote a **ladder of three packages**, and you let one **marquee trick** — a single sentence the parent can instantly picture — pull her up to the middle or top tier. Mine is *"I float the birthday child in the air."* I have booked more shows off that one sentence than off any review, any video, or any number of years on stage.

Get the ladder and the marquee right and the conversation stops being about price and starts being about which experience she wants for her kid. That's the whole game in birthdays. This kit hands it to you.

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What You'll Get In This Kit

By the time you finish working through this kit, you'll have:

- A clear picture of **how birthday parents actually buy** — and why this market is nothing like libraries or schools
- A **website contact form** built to capture the date, venue, and headcount so you can quote the same day
- A **three-package ladder** that uses one "marquee" trick to pull parents up to your middle and top tiers — so you almost never sell the cheap one
- The **exact email** to send when a party inquiry hits your inbox — including the packages
- An **information checklist** so you never show up to a surprise venue
- A **deposit-and-confirmation flow** that locks the date and gives the parent skin in the game
- A **shorter follow-up sequence** tuned to the birthday market's days-not-months sales cycle

- Word-for-word **responses to the most common parent objections** — especially "another magician is cheaper"
- A **party-planning itinerary** you send every booked parent (start the show 30 minutes late — here's why)
- A **post-show referral engine** — because in this market, referrals are the whole game
- The **add-on and upsell strategy** — goodie bags, longer shows, live animals, and using every party as a lead funnel into schools, daycares, and corporate

A note up front: I started my full-time career in the birthday market in 2003, built it into a six-figure business, and got back into it recently after a decade away — booking parties at fees more than double what I used to charge, with zero price resistance. I've always said the birthday party market is the *most challenging* market for a kids' entertainer, because the whole psychology is "let the kids have fun" with no built-in pressure to behave. But it's also the market with the **lowest barrier to entry** — you need almost no testimonials to start — and the fastest way to make real money quickly. This kit is the exact system.

Let's go.

— Cris

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Start Here: The Move That Books the Gig

Before we get into how birthday parents think, let me hand you the core move this kit is built to deliver — so you can use it on your very next inquiry.

When a party inquiry lands, you don't reply with a price. You reply — same day — with **three packages**:

1. A stripped-down base package that exists mainly to make the middle one look like the obvious choice.
2. A middle "most popular" package carrying your **marquee trick** ("*I float the birthday child in the air*").
3. A top package that stacks a second marquee, a personalized moment, and the extras.

Then a couple of quick questions about the venue and headcount, and one gentle line about the deposit that holds the date. The parent stops shopping on price and starts picturing her kid floating in the air — and books. The full word-for-word email, the package table, and the exact pricing rules are in **Section 3**; the one-page menu you hand her is in **Section 5**.

Everything else in this kit makes that one email land harder: who this buyer really is (Section 1), the contact form that feeds it (Section 2), the fast follow-up tuned for a days-not-weeks market (Section 6), and the referral engine (Section 9) that turns one party into the next three.

***Your 2-minute quick win:** write your marquee trick as a single, picture-painting sentence right now — the one thing you do that a parent can see in her head the instant she reads*

it. That sentence is going to sell your middle and top package for you. Nail it before you read on.

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Section 1: How Birthday Parents Actually Buy (and Why It's Nothing Like Libraries or Schools)

Before any templates, you need to understand this buyer, because the birthday parent is a completely different animal from a librarian, a school principal, or a corporate planner. Get the buyer wrong and every template in this kit will feel off. So slow down on this section even if you're experienced — the templates only make sense once you understand who's on the other end of the inquiry.

Why the birthday market is worth your time

A lot of magicians look down their nose at birthday parties — "oh, it's just a birthday party." I've never bought that. Here's why this market is worth working:

- **The lowest barrier to entry of any market.** You need almost no social proof to get started. A good website, good phone skills, and a good show, and you can book parties even with zero testimonials. No other market lets you in this cheaply.
- **You can make a lot of money, fast.** When I crossed the six-figure threshold, it was built on the back of birthday parties (plus schools and corporate). The fees have only gone up since.
- **It's mostly weekend work.** Saturdays and Sundays, maybe Fridays. That makes it perfect if you've still got a 9-to-5, or if you only ever want to be a part-time performer. I built my whole career on the back of the birthday and daycare markets while I still had a day job, then went full-time.
- **It makes you good, fast.** There's no substitute for live reps. Book a lot of parties and you'll be a far stronger performer in a year than someone doing four shows a year ever will be.
- **It feeds every other market.** Every party is full of adults who can hire you for the next thing — a family reunion, a company picnic, their own kid's party. More on this lead-funnel idea in Section 10.

Who actually books you (and the psychology you're up against)

The buyer is almost always a **parent — in my experience, usually the mom.** (Not a gender rule, just my honest experience; yours may differ.) She's busy, she's juggling a hundred things for this party, and she is the entire decision-maker. There's no committee, no director, no board. The decision happens in **days, sometimes hours** — the opposite of the library cycle where I mail in January for July.

Here's the central thing to understand: **this is the most psychologically challenging kids' market there is.** In a school, a library, or a daycare, there's built-in pressure on the kids to behave. At a birthday party, the entire point is to let the birthday kid and their friends have *fun*. No teacher, no rules, no structure.

That creates real challenges for the performer — and it shapes how you have to build and sell your show.

The venues — and why you must ask before you quote

You're not performing in the same place every time. You could be in any of these, and each one changes your show:

- **Home parties.** Best case: a finished basement or dedicated party room where you can set up in peace. Worst case: a tiny house or apartment with kids running everywhere and nowhere to move them. Ask if there's a backyard, a basement, a separate room.
- **Party centers.** Great *if* they have a dedicated party room. A nightmare if they expect you to perform out in the open with arcade games beeping and kids everywhere.
- **Restaurants.** Fine if there's a dedicated party room. If it's "between the tables and chairs in the regular dining room," your show will not work — and you need to know that before you commit. (I once had one booked where I asked the mom three times whether it was a dedicated room and couldn't get a straight answer. That uncertainty is exactly what your contact form and checklist are designed to eliminate.)
- **Community centers, VFW halls, church basements.** Usually bigger rooms — often a blessing, because you can herd the kids to one side and set up on the other.

The takeaway: **the venue determines whether your show even works.** That's why your inquiry process has to capture it early (Sections 2–4).

Same-age vs. mixed-age parties

Two flavors, and they change your set:

- **Same-age parties** — the birthday kid invites the class, so everyone's roughly five or six. Easy to plan a show for.
- **Mixed-age parties** — mostly cousins and siblings. You might have toddlers plopped in front of you, plus pre-teens and 10-to-12-year-olds, all at once. Harder. You have to build a show that plays across a wide age range. (This is also why having a few lines that land with the *adults* — without ever going blue — is gold. My friend Tommy James has a great one: a kid yells at him and he goes, "Stop yelling at me, you sound like my wife." Funny for the grown-ups, clean for the kids.)

The realities of the room

A few hard truths that every template downstream is built around:

- **Limited attention spans.** Five- and six-year-olds have a rudimentary understanding of magic at best. The show has to be fast-paced, interactive, fun, and funny. A ten-minute silent manipulation act set to music will lose them in ninety seconds.

- **Sugar.** Sometimes the birthday parent hands out candy and cookies *before* the show. It's madness. Part of your job (see the itinerary in Section 8) is gently steering the timeline so the sugar comes after you perform.
- **The birthday child is the star — and often the wildest kid there.** Astute parents love a performer who makes their kid the center of the show. So build in lots of interaction with the birthday child. Just know that child is often the most overstimulated, least-focused kid at the party. Embrace it and move on.
- **Tight angles.** You're frequently boxed against a wall with kids on three sides. Lean on angle-proof material.
- **Fast setup is a selling point.** When I started I was hauling photography backdrops and live-animal tricks, with a 30–35 minute setup while kids ran around me. I got smart and stripped it down — now I'm set up in five to eight minutes, even with my chair suspension. Parents notice and love it.

Birthday fees — my story, and how to set yours

Here's exactly how I did it, because it's the most useful pricing lesson I can give you.

When I went full-time in 2003, I needed to set fees in a new city. So I dug up the local free parenting magazine — the kind in the rack at the grocery store, packed with ads from clowns and magicians — and **I called several of them pretending to be a birthday parent** and asked their price. Almost everyone was around **\$75**. Even back then I couldn't make a living on \$75 shows. So I did the only sensible thing: I bet on myself and started at **\$125**. And I got work. By the end of that year I'd built multiple packages running **\$125 to \$300**, with most parents settling into the **\$250** middle.

Then I left the market for over a decade. When I came back recently, I **immediately raised my prices well above the old numbers** — and booked six parties with **zero price resistance**. Four of those six came from referrals. (One parent saw me at a library, three more came from those parties.) The lesson: the fees in this market have gone up, and most performers are charging too little out of fear.

Two rules for you:

1. **Do the parenting-magazine trick in your own market** (you can do it online now — competitors' websites, third-party booking sites). Find the floor, then price *above* it. Never anchor to the cheapest guy.
2. **Raise your fees when your weekend is full, or when a client tells you you're cheap.** (I had a childcare client recently say "we keep waiting for you to raise your rates!" — so I did.) If you can't say the new number out loud without flinching, raise it 10% instead of 20%. But raise.

What's different about birthdays vs. other markets

Quick rules that separate birthday inquiries from library or corporate ones — these inform every template that follows:

Topic	Birthday Parties
Quote speed	Fast. Parents are deciding in days. Quote same-day.
Pricing logic	Package ladder, not a single number. You quote three tiers and let the marquee trick pull them up. (See Section 3.)
Deposits	Yes — always. Unlike libraries, you require a deposit to hold the date. Parents have no loyalty; the deposit is skin in the game.
Loyalty	Low — until they've seen you. A stranger will jump ship for a cheaper magician. A referral or repeat parent wants <i>only</i> you. Your job is to convert strangers into believers.
Sales cycle	Days, not months.
Social proof needed	The least of any market. Don't wait for a wall of testimonials to start.
When you work	Weekends — Saturdays, Sundays, some Fridays.
Upsells	Huge. Goodie bags, longer shows, balloon animals, live animals, marquee tricks. (Section 10.)
Lead value	Every party is a room full of future clients. Bring promo material.

OK — now you know the buyer. Let's get to the templates.

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Section 2: The Contact Form That Captures the Date, Venue, and Headcount So You Can Quote Today

The contact form on your website feeds every email exchange in this kit. For libraries, the killer field is location. For birthdays, you need a little more, because the *venue* and the *headcount* and the *date* all determine whether you can do the show and what it costs. Get the form right and most inquiries land already qualified, ready for a same-day package quote. Get it wrong and you're stuck in an extra email cycle on every single inquiry — and in a market where parents decide in days, that delay loses gigs.

Most magicians' forms are bad in one of two ways: too short ("Name + Email + Send," leaving you nothing to quote on), or too long (fifteen fields demanding the parent's life story before she's even sure she's interested). Both bleed inquiries.

The fields your birthday contact form needs

1. **Name** — first and last in one field.

2. **Email** — required.
3. **Party date** — required. (Tells you instantly if you're even open.)
4. **City / town** — required. (For travel distance, same as libraries.)
5. **Child's age** — required. (Drives your show; same-age vs. mixed-age.)
6. **Roughly how many kids** — required, but a dropdown of ranges (1–10, 10–20, 20–30, 30+) so it's one tap.
7. **A "tell me about your party" prompt** — required, with a leading question (below).

Seven fields, most of them taps. No required phone number, no captcha that scares off a legitimate parent, no checkbox forest. Every extra field is another chance for her to abandon before hitting Send.

The "tell me about your party" prompt — your secret weapon

A blank "Comments" box gives you nothing. A leading prompt gives you the venue, the vibe, and the timing — before she clicks Send. Replace the generic label with this:

Tell me a little about your party

(For example: where's the party happening — your home, a party center, a restaurant, a hall? Is there a separate room for the show, or will it be in the main space? What's the birthday child's name and age, and will the other kids be about the same age or a mix? Anything special you're hoping for?)

That parenthetical does all the work. It surfaces the single most important thing — **is there a dedicated space for the show** — before you ever quote, so you never get blindsided by a restaurant booth or a tiny living room.

The auto-response email

The instant the form is submitted, the parent should get an automated reply. This is *not* your personal package quote from Section 3 — that comes from you within hours. The auto-response just confirms receipt and sets expectations:

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Hi [first name],

Thanks for reaching out about a magic show for [child's name]'s birthday — I got your message!

I read every inquiry personally, and I'll be back to you within a few hours (or first thing tomorrow morning if you're writing in the evening) with show options and pricing. In the meantime, feel free to look around my site — the Birthday Parties page has photos and a few notes from past families.

Talk soon,
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— Cris

This buys you time, sets expectations, and reassures a busy parent her message didn't vanish.

Wire the form into your CRM

Dump every submission straight into whatever contact-management software you use. The parent's name, date, city, age, headcount, and prompt-answer populate her record automatically, your follow-up sequence (Section 6) can fire without re-typing anything, and nothing falls through the cracks when you're doing back-to-back shows on a Saturday.

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Section 3: The Three-Package Ladder That Makes the Cheap Show Almost Never Sell

Here's the most important strategic idea in this whole kit, so read it twice.

In the library market, you quote one number based on distance. **In the birthday market, you never quote a single naked number. You quote a ladder of three packages — and you let one "marquee" trick pull the parent up to the middle or top tier.**

Why packages, and why a marquee trick

If you quote one price, you're a commodity — the parent compares your number to the cheaper guy down the street and, since she's never seen either of you, you look identical. You lose.

But if you offer a 35-minute basic show, *and* a bigger middle package, *and* a top package — and the middle and top include something the parent can instantly picture — the conversation stops being about price and starts being about which experience she wants for her kid.

The single most powerful tool here is what my friend Rodney and I call a **marquee trick**: something you can describe in a few words that paints an instant picture in the booker's mind. The classic is "**I float the birthday child in the air.**" I have booked more shows off that one sentence than almost anything else. Back when I ran three packages, the marquee tricks lived in the **middle and top** packages — and I can count on one hand the number of times I sold the *base* package. Parents heard "I can float your child in the air" and that's the one they wanted. (One mom wanted me for just a kindergarten class a couple hours away; I quoted my full \$800, more than she'd planned to spend — but she heard "float a student in the air," went and found the extra money, and booked. That's the power of a marquee.)

Critical pricing rule: don't let the difference between packages look like a single thing. If your \$295 show is 45 minutes and your \$425 show is the same 45 minutes plus 15 extra minutes, the parent does the math — "he's charging \$130 for fifteen minutes" — and balks. Differentiate each package on **several elements at once**: length, the marquee trick, balloon animals, goodie bags, the birthday child's role. Keep your effective hourly rate fuzzy on purpose.

The three-package structure (placeholder fees — Cris to set real numbers)

	The Party Package	The Birthday Star Package	The Ultimate Package
Example fee	\$295	\$425	\$595
Show length	~35 minutes	~45 minutes	~45 min + balloon time
Marquee trick	—	Float the birthday child in the air	Float the birthday child + [live animal / second marquee]
Birthday child role	Helper	Star of the show	Star + personalized routine
Balloon animals	—	After the show	After the show
Goodie bags	—	10 included	10 included + magic book for the birthday child
Promo / planning PDF	✓	✓	✓

The base package exists mainly to make the middle one look like the obvious choice. Most parents will land on the middle or top — exactly as designed.

Template — The inquiry response

Subject: *Re: Magic show for [child's name]'s birthday — show options & pricing*

Hi [parent's first name],

Thanks for reaching out about a magic show for [child's name]'s [age]th birthday on [date]! I'd love to help make it a day [he/she] never forgets. Here's the quick version — and if anything raises a question, just reply and we'll sort it out.

I offer three packages so you can pick what fits your party best:

THE PARTY PACKAGE — \$295

A fast-paced, funny, fully interactive 35-minute magic show. Self-contained — I bring everything, set up in minutes, and the kids are laughing the whole way through. [Child's name] gets to be my special helper.

THE BIRTHDAY STAR PACKAGE — \$425 (most popular)

Everything above, plus a longer 45-minute show where [child's name] is the STAR — including the moment the kids talk about for weeks: I FLOAT THE BIRTHDAY CHILD IN THE AIR. Finishes with balloon animals for every child, and 10 goodie bags so you don't have to shop for party favors.

THE ULTIMATE PACKAGE – \$595

Everything in the Birthday Star package, plus [second marquee trick / live animals] and a personalized magic moment built around [child's name], a signed magic book for the birthday child, and balloon animals for the whole party.

A couple of quick questions so I can lock in the date:

1. Where's the party – your home, a party center, a restaurant, a hall? Is there a separate room for the show?
2. Roughly how many kids, and about what ages?
3. What time does the party start? (I'll send you a simple timeline that keeps the day running smoothly.)

To hold [date] on my calendar I take a 50% deposit, with the balance due on the day of the party. Just let me know which package you'd like and I'll send the booking details and a quick party-planning guide right over.

– Cris

P.S. If you'd rather talk it through for two minutes, my direct line is [number]. I usually call back within a couple of hours.

Why this works for birthdays

- **You quote fast** — parents decide in days, and the magician who replies same-day with a clear, confident set of options usually wins.
- **You're never a naked price.** The number is wrapped inside an experience the parent can picture.
- **The marquee trick does the selling.** "Float the birthday child in the air" sells the middle and top tier on its own.
- **"Most popular" anchors the middle.** Most parents don't want the cheapest *or* the most expensive — they want the safe, popular middle, which is exactly where your best margin lives.
- **The deposit is introduced gently** as just "how I hold the date," not a hurdle.
- **Two ways to respond** — email or phone — so the parent picks her path of least resistance.

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Section 4: The Checklist That Keeps You From Showing Up to a Surprise Venue

This isn't a list of questions to gate the booking — you quote fast and confidently. It's a reference card for everything you need to capture so you never show up to a surprise. Store it in your CRM so the confirmation, itinerary, and post-show emails can be automated.

Captured during the inquiry exchange:

1. Parent's name, email, phone
2. Birthday child's name and age

3. Party date and start time
4. **Venue type AND whether there's a dedicated room for the show** (the single most important field — a restaurant booth or a tiny living room can break your show)
5. Full venue address + travel distance from your base
6. Headcount (rough) and age spread — same-age or mixed-age
7. Indoor or outdoor (outdoor = wind, sun, the family dog, bees — plan accordingly)
8. Which package they chose

Captured at booking confirmation:

9. Deposit received (amount, date, method)
10. Balance due on day of show (amount, payment method — I take Square for credit/debit cards, plus PayPal, cash, and checks)
11. Access to a power outlet within 30 feet (if you use sound)
12. Any allergies or special needs for the goodie bags / balloon animals
13. The birthday child's interests (a personalized touch in the top package — favorite animal, superhero, etc.)

Referral and upsell seeds:

14. Are there other kids' parties coming up in their circle this season? (*Plants the referral — the #1 source of birthday bookings.*)
15. Would they be open to leaving a quick review and letting you use party photos? (*Plants the testimonial harvest — Section 9.*)
16. Any other events in their world — family reunion, company picnic, scout troop, school fundraiser? (*Plants the cross-market funnel — Section 10.*)

The last three are seeds. Plant them in the booking conversation; they bear fruit at the end of the flow.

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Section 5: Your Package Menu — the One-Pager That Sells the Middle Tier for You

Most birthday bookings close right off the inquiry email in Section 3. But it's worth having a polished one-page **package sheet** — a PDF you can attach or link — that lays out the three tiers visually. Parents are visual buyers, and a clean menu does two things a plain email can't: it makes the middle package look like the obvious pick, and it gives a wavering parent something to "show the spouse."

What goes on the package sheet

- Header: your business name, logo, a great photo of you mid-show with happy kids
- The three packages side by side (the table from Section 3), with the middle one badged "**Most Popular**"
- Each package's marquee element called out in bold with a picture-painting phrase ("I float the birthday child in the air!")
- A short "What every package includes" line (fully self-contained, fast setup, fully insured, everything I bring)
- The deposit-to-hold line and what payment you accept for the balance
- 2–3 short parent testimonials (first name, child's age, town)
- A simple call to action: "Reply or text to lock in your date — I take a deposit to hold it and send a party-planning guide right away."

How to send it

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Hi [first name],

Attached is my quick package sheet for [child's name]'s party – it lays out
the three options side by side so you can see what fits best (the middle one
is what most families pick).

Everything in there is the same as what I mentioned; this version is just
easier to look at and to show [spouse/partner] if you'd like a second opinion.

Just let me know which one you'd like and I'll hold [date] with a deposit.
Happy to hop on the phone if it's easier.

– Cris
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A fillable Word / Google Docs template for this package sheet will be included in the kit's appendix folder — customize it once with your business details and it's a 30-second swap for every inquiry.

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Section 6: The Fast Follow-Up That Wins Parents Who Decide in Days, Not Weeks

In the library market, my follow-up runs seven emails over a month, because libraries book months out. **The birthday market moves in days.** A parent who's planning a party three weeks out will make her decision this week. So this sequence is tighter — five touches over about ten days — and then it stops, because after that, the party's either booked with someone else or off your radar.

The same rule from the library kit applies, doubled: **don't beg, don't nag, don't only ask "are you ready to book?"** Keep your name in front of her with reassurance, value, and a clear, friendly path to yes.

The cadence

Touch #	Timing	Purpose
1	Same day	Package quote (Section 3 — already sent)
2	2 days	Soft check-in — "did this reach you?"
3	4 days	Value / reassurance — the marquee trick + the "I make it easy" angle
4	7 days	Gentle date urgency — weekends fill up
5	10 days	Direct, friendly close — "should I release your date?"

Touch 2 — Two days later

Subject: *Quick check-in on [child's name]'s party*

Hi [first name],

Just making sure my note about [child's name]'s party on [date] reached you — emails to me sometimes land in spam, and I'd hate for it to get lost.

No pressure at all. Just let me know either way and I'll know whether to keep [date] open for you.

— Cris

Touch 3 — Four days later

Subject: *The part of the show [child's name] will talk about for weeks*

Hi [first name],

No ask here — just wanted to share the moment that makes my parties different.

In my Birthday Star package, the birthday child becomes the actual star of the show. The high point: I float [child's name] up into the air, right in front of all [his/her] friends. The kids lose their minds, the parents grab their phones, and it's the photo that ends up all over the family group chat that night.

The other thing parents tell me they appreciate: I make the whole thing easy. I show up early, set up in a few minutes, bring everything, and even send you a simple party-planning timeline so the day runs smoothly. You get to actually enjoy your kid's party instead of running it.

If you'd like, I'll hold [date] for [child's name] with a deposit — just say the word.

— Cris

Touch 4 — Seven days later

Subject: *Weekend dates are filling for [month]*

Hi [first name],

Just a quick heads-up – [date] for [child's name]'s party is still open for you, but [month] weekends are starting to fill up. Birthday parties are almost all Saturdays and Sundays, so the good dates go fast once families start locking in.

I'm not trying to rush you – I just don't want [date] to slip away if you're still considering it. If it still works, reply or text and I'll hold it with a deposit. If you've gone another direction, no hard feelings at all – just let me know so I can open the date back up.

– Cris

Touch 5 — Ten days later

Subject: *Should I release [date] for [child's name]'s party?*

Hi [first name],

I want to be respectful of your time. I've been holding [date] loosely for [child's name]'s party, and I'd hate to keep it blocked if your plans have changed.

Three quick options – whichever fits:

1. Yes, let's book it. (Tell me which package and I'll send the deposit link and party guide today.)
2. Different date or still deciding. (Just tell me when.)
3. Going another way this year. (Totally fine – I'll open the date back up.)

Whatever you choose, thanks so much for thinking of me for [child's name]'s big day.

– Cris

After the fifth touch

If they go quiet after touch 5, **stop**. The party's booked elsewhere or off. Don't keep emailing — in this market, that's how you end up in spam. Drop them into your general newsletter list; some will come back next year, and some will refer you even if they didn't book.

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Section 7: Word-for-Word — What to Say When "Another Magician Is Cheaper"

These are the objections you'll actually hear from parents, and how I handle each. The principle behind every response is the same as the library kit: **don't drop your fee. Reframe value, move them to the right package, or release them gracefully.**

"Another magician is cheaper."

That's completely fair – and you should compare. A few honest things to look at:

- Will they make YOUR child the star of the show? (In my Birthday Star package, [child's name] floats in the air – it's the moment everyone films.)
- Do they bring everything and set up in a few minutes, or take over your space for half an hour?
- Do they include goodie bags so you're not shopping for party favors?
- Are they insured, and will they actually show up?

I'm not the cheapest option, and I'm not the most expensive. I'm the one where you book it, hand me the room, and get to actually enjoy your kid's party. If the cheaper quote covers all of that, it's a fair comparison. If it doesn't, the real cost is higher than the price tag.

"Can you do it for less? / Do you have anything cheaper?"

I do – my Party Package at \$295 is my most affordable option, a full 35-minute show that the kids absolutely love.

That said, most families go with the Birthday Star package, and here's the honest reason: it's the one where [child's name] becomes the star and floats in the air, plus the balloon animals and goodie bags mean you don't have to lift a finger on party favors. For most parents, that "make my kid the star and make my life easy" combination is worth the difference. But the Party Package is a genuinely great show if that's the better fit for your budget.

"Do you really need a deposit?"

Yes – and here's why it's actually good for you. The deposit holds [date] exclusively for [child's name]; once it's in, I turn down anyone else who asks for that date. It's a small amount, it comes right off the total, and the balance isn't due until the day of the party. It just makes sure the date is truly yours.

"How long is the show? / Can you make it longer?"

The Party Package runs about 35 minutes, the Birthday Star package about 45 – which, for the age group, is right in the sweet spot before attention starts to wander. If you want more, the Ultimate package adds balloon time and a personalized routine for [child's name]. I'd rather give the kids a tight, high-energy show they're glued to than a long one where they drift – and I can always build in extra with balloons and the birthday-star moments rather than just adding minutes.

"Can you come earlier / right when the party starts?"

Happy to arrive early to set up – but here's a tip from a lot of parties: it's best to start the show about 30 minutes AFTER your party's start time. You'll always have late arrivals, and you don't want the magic to begin before half the kids are there. I'll send you a simple timeline that lays it all out so the day flows perfectly. (I'll be set up and ready well before showtime either way.)

"We've never paid that much for a kids' party."

Totally fair – and you might book a less-experienced performer for less, which is a reasonable choice. Two thoughts: my fees are in line with what professional, full-time entertainers charge in this area, and the families who book me once tend to come back and refer their friends – which usually means they felt it was worth it. And if budget is the deciding factor this year, my Party Package at \$295 is a great show at my most accessible price. Either way, no pressure at all.

"Can I think about it / check with my husband (or wife)?"

Of course – it's a real decision and you should feel good about it. To make that conversation easy, I just sent you a one-page package sheet you can show [him/her]; it lays the three options out side by side. I'll hold [date] for you in the meantime – these weekend dates do move, so just let me know once you've talked it over and I'll get it locked in.

* * *

Section 8: Locking the Date — the Deposit and Confirmation Flow That Gives Parents Skin in the Game

The parent said yes. Don't relax yet — in this market, the deposit is what makes "yes" real, and the fastest way to lose a party is to go silent between the deposit and the show.

The "You're booked!" email (same day as the yes)

Hi [first name],

Wonderful – [child's name]'s [age]th birthday is officially on my calendar for [date] at [time]! Thank you for choosing me. I can't wait to make it a day [he/she] never forgets.

To lock the date in, here's the deposit info:

- Deposit (50% of your package): \$[amount] – [payment link / how to send]
- Balance: \$[amount] due on the day of the party (Square for cards, PayPal, cash, or check)

Once the deposit is in, [date] is held exclusively for [child's name] – I won't take any other booking for that day.

Attached / linked:

1. A simple Party Planning Guide (it'll make the day run smoothly – see the timeline note below)
2. Your show details and what I'll bring
3. [If you use one: a short performance agreement to sign]

The one thing I always tell families: plan to start the show about 30 minutes AFTER your party's start time, so the late arrivals don't miss it. My planning guide walks through the ideal timeline.

A couple of quick things to confirm:

- Venue: [address] – and is there a separate room for the show?
- Roughly how many kids, and what ages?
- One standard power outlet within 30 feet of where I'll perform
- Any allergies I should know about for the goodie bags?

I'll send a short note a few days before to confirm everything. Looking forward to it!

– Cris

Contract / agreement notes for birthdays

Libraries expect to sign something; many birthday parents don't. Decide whether you want a light agreement or just a confirmation email. If you use one, keep it short and friendly. Clauses worth including (run them by your own attorney — this is what I'd use, not legal advice):

1. **Deposit holds the date.** "Your date is reserved once the deposit is received. A 50% deposit (\$[amount]) holds your date exclusively and is applied toward your balance." (I never put a party on my calendar until the deposit is in — that's what makes the date real. I always charged 50%.)
2. **Cancellation / deposit policy.** "Cancellations made less than 14 days before the performance date forfeit the deposit, as the date was held exclusively for you. Cancellations made 14 or more days out have the deposit refunded in full." (This is my actual policy — adjust the window to your own comfort if you like.)
3. **Balance due.** "The remaining balance of \$[amount] is due on the day of the party, before or immediately after the performance." (I accept Square for credit/debit cards, PayPal, cash, and checks — list whatever you take.)
4. **Space and power.** "Client will provide a performance space appropriate for the show and access to one standard power outlet within 30 feet." (Protects you against the restaurant-booth surprise.)
5. **Photo/video release.** "Performer may use photos and video from the event in promotional materials." (This is how you build the social proof this market runs on.)
6. **Weather (outdoor parties).** "For outdoor performances, client will provide a backup indoor space in case of weather."

The 3-day-out confirmation email

Hi [first name],

Three days out – final confirmation for [child's name]'s party:

- Date: [date]
- Showtime: [time] (I'll arrive by [time] to set up – just need a few minutes)
- Venue: [address]
- Package: [package name]
- Kids: [number, ages]
- Balance due that day: \$[amount] (Square for cards, PayPal, cash, or check)

Quick reminders:

- I bring everything – sound, props, all of it. Just need one power outlet within 30 feet.
- Best to start the show about 30 minutes after your party start time (late arrivals!).
- If the kids are getting cake and ice cream, after the show is ideal – sugar + magic is a wild combination. 😊

Any last-minute changes, text or call me at [number] anytime. See you [day]!

– Cris

* * *

Section 9: The Post-Show Referral Engine — Because in This Market, Referrals Are the Whole Game

Here's the number that should change how you think about this market: when I came back to birthday parties recently, I booked six — and **four of them came from referrals**. One parent saw me at a library and called to find me; the next three came from parents who'd been *at* those parties. In the birthday market, referrals aren't a nice bonus — they're the engine. Every party you do well is a room full of future bookings. Most magicians walk out with the check and leave all of that on the table.

So the post-show flow has one job: turn every party into reviews, referrals, and the next booking.

Day-after thank-you + review request

Hi [first name],

Thank you so much for having me at [child's name]'s party yesterday – what a great group of kids! [The float / a specific moment that landed] was a personal highlight. I hope [child's name] had a blast being the star.

Two quick things:

1. If you have two minutes, a short review would mean the world to me – it's how families like yours find me. Even a sentence or two about what you and the

kids enjoyed makes a real difference. [Link to wherever you collect reviews – Google, Facebook, etc.]

2. If you snapped any photos of the show (especially the float!), I'd love to see them – and with your okay, I'd be grateful to use one or two on my site.

Thanks again – it was a pleasure. And if any of your friends have a birthday coming up, I'd be honored if you passed my name along.

– Cris

Five-day follow-up if no review yet

Hi [first name],

Just a quick follow-up – did you get a chance to leave a quick note about [child's name]'s party? If it's easier, here are three little prompts you could answer in a sentence each:

1. What was your favorite part of the show?
2. How did the kids react?
3. Would you recommend me to other parents?

Even a couple of sentences helps me more than you'd think. Thanks so much – and I hope [child's name] is still talking about floating in the air!

– Cris

Two-week referral nudge

Hi [first name],

Hope [child's name] had a great birthday week! A quick favor: most of my bookings come from parents like you passing my name to friends. If anyone in your circle has a birthday – or a school event, scout troop, or family party – coming up, I'd be grateful if you mentioned me. Feel free to forward my info: [link].

Thanks again for having me – it was a joy.

– Cris

Next-year reminder (set a CRM reminder for ~11 months out)

Hi [first name],

Hard to believe – [child's name] is about to turn [new age]! I have a few notes from last year's party, so I could put together something even more fun this time around.

Want me to hold a date before my weekends fill up? Past families get first pick. Just reply and I'll send this year's options.

– Cris

* * *

Section 10: Turn One Party Into Upsells and Leads for Schools, Daycares, and Corporate

This is the birthday equivalent of the library kit's multi-library day — the place where a working flow turns into real money. There are two levers here: **upsell within the party**, and **use the party to feed your other markets**.

Lever 1 — Upsell within the party

The package ladder (Section 3) already does most of this, but here are the specific add-ons that work, all framed as a *service to the parent*, not a money-grab:

- **The longer / bigger show.** Move them up a tier with the marquee trick, not with naked minutes.
- **Balloon animals after the show.** Easy add, high perceived value, and it extends your time at almost no cost.
- **Goodie bags.** This is the sleeper. There's huge cultural pressure on the parent to send every kid home with a party favor — so position it as removing a chore: *"You don't have to run around to three stores putting together party favors and hoping they arrive in time — I'll bring [10] goodie bags, and additional ones are just \$[3–5] each."* Most parties have 15–25 kids, so the parent buys up to cover everyone.
- **The giveaway upgrade — branded books (my favorite move).** I eventually stopped stuffing trinket-filled goodie bags and switched to handing out **branded magic books** instead. They're cheaper for me, the perceived value to parents is far higher, and every single one carries my name and website out the door into the kid's home. The easiest way to do this is an **"Instant Author" kit** — these are products sold by magicians where you buy the templates for a fully-formed book, drop in your own contact info and branding, and send the files to a printer. You can get copies printed for as little as **\$1 each**, hand them out as your party giveaway, and sell extra copies for **\$5–\$10** at any event — the perceived value to a birthday parent is very high. The one I used was produced by **magician CJ Johnson out of Texas**, back when I decided to transition from goodie bags to books. (I had about 1,000 printed at once and never worried about giveaway supply again — and in a pinch I could even print more off my home computer.)
- **A magic set or book for the birthday child.** A premium add-on, positioned as the special gift.
- **Marquee upgrades** — live animals, float the kid, a personalized routine around the child's favorite thing. These are what justify the top tier. *(A serious word if you're newer and thinking about live animals — bunnies, doves, and the like: the health, comfort, and safety of the animal come before any trick, every single time. That means proper housing, veterinary care, sensible heat/cold and travel conditions, reasonable working time, and humane handling — period. If you can't give an animal that level of care, don't use one. Pick a different marquee piece; there are plenty that don't depend on a living creature.)*

Lever 2 — Every party is a lead funnel

This is the part most magicians completely miss. At every party there are adults watching — sometimes 10 or 15 of them. **Those adults are your next bookings.** They have their own kids' parties, family reunions, company picnics, scout troops, church events, school fundraisers. So:

- **Bring promo material.** In this market it's not just allowed, it's encouraged and it *impresses* parents. Branded goodie bags, business cards, and brochures all signal "professional." I always brought both cards (they live in a wallet forever) and brochures.
- **Use the show itself, lightly.** Your signage carries your name and website. A few clean lines that land with the adults (the Tommy James "you sound like my wife" type) make the grown-ups remember you.
- **Aim the funnel at higher-fee markets.** I deliberately designed my birthday brochures to funnel parents toward my *school* shows — because a \$400 party that lands me a \$1,500 school assembly is the real win. A parent who's a teacher, a PTA officer, an HR manager, or a daycare director is a doorway into a market that pays multiples of the party fee.
- **The daycare free-show trick.** This is how I got started full-time in 2003, and it still works: call local daycares and offer a *free* show, no strings, in exchange for putting your promo material in each kid's cubby. The parents pick it up at the end of the day → birthday inquiries roll in → and many of those daycares became multi-year paying clients themselves. One free show, three revenue streams.

The math

A single birthday party at the middle tier (\$425 placeholder) is a good Saturday. But run the full flow — upsell to the right package, sell goodie bags, collect the review, earn the referral, and funnel one adult into a school or corporate booking — and that one party is worth far more than its fee. **The party is the cheapest customer-acquisition tool you have.** Work it like one.

* * *

End of Birthday Kit

That's the full flow — from inquiry to booking to next year's rebook and beyond.

If you've worked through this whole kit, you now have:

- A clear read on the parent-buyer and the birthday market's psychology
- A contact form built to capture date, venue, and headcount
- A three-package ladder that uses a marquee trick to sell up
- An information checklist so you're never blindsided by the venue
- A deposit-and-confirmation flow that makes "yes" real
- A tight five-touch follow-up sequence tuned for a days-not-months cycle

- Word-for-word objection responses, led by "another magician is cheaper"
- A post-show referral engine — the real growth lever in this market
- An add-on and cross-market funnel strategy that makes every party worth more than its fee

The underlying framework is the same one running through all of Fully Booked: **qualify before you price, wrap the fee in value, follow up, and build the post-show flywheel.** The birthday market just runs faster, leans on packages instead of a single number, and turns every show into a room full of your next clients.

Use the same engine. Swap in the market-specific language.

Have a great week,

— Cris