



**PRESTO CHANGO** — Magician Danny Orleans teaches schoolchildren about their five senses at yesterday's in-school performance sponsored by the Evansville Children's Theatre.

## *Entertainer works magic on students*

By **Sandra Knipe**  
Entertainment Reporter

Danny Orleans may pull doves out of top hats and pretend to read children's minds, but he isn't really a magician.

"I'm creating the illusion of performing magic," said the Chicago entertainer and educator, whose magic act, which he takes to about 200 schools a year, is accompanied by a lesson plan.

Yesterday, for a group of third- and fourth-graders gathered in the school gymnasium at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, the lesson to be learned was the difference between what is real and what is illusion.

For the next two weeks, Orleans will take the same lesson to fourth-graders in public, private and parochial schools throughout Vanderburgh County via an in-school residency program sponsored by Evansville Children's Theatre.

"I'll do some magic tricks and tell you how they work. Then, I'll do the tricks again and try to fool you anyway. Maybe I will. Maybe I won't!" Orleans told the children from Evansville Lutheran School, Trinity Lutheran, Evansville Day School and the Montessori Acad-

emy, all gathered together for this special program.

True to his word, he revealed his magic secrets of physical and psychological "misdirection" and "palming."

"Physical misdirection," he said, "is making your audience look in the wrong direction at the right time."

In psychological misdirection, the observer's eyes are fooled by an illusion — either seeing something that doesn't exist or not seeing something that does exist. Commercial packaging, through which a product is made to seem larger than it really is, is an example of psychological misdirection, he explained, using candy bar and cereal packaging as examples.

"Palming" is the technique magicians use to hide small objects in the palms of their hands.

Even after revealing the method behind his magic, however, the mischievous magician was able to fool most of the people — both children and grown-ups — most of the time.

"Open your other hand," cried a girl after a shredded napkin had magically become whole.

"Nah-nah-nah-nah, nah-nah, retorted Orleans in the sing-songy

language of the third-graders, opening his fist to reveal an empty palm. Then he showed his young audience exactly how and where he switched and ditched the shredded pieces.

Four giggling girls, with objects in their pockets ranging from a butterfly pin to a ponytail holder, had their minds "read" by Orleans, who correctly determined which object belonged to whom — a lesson that had more to do with how liars give themselves away than anything extrasensory.

After the show, Orleans, who has a degree in elementary education from Northwestern University but succumbed to "the teaching glut of the 1970s" and became a full-time magician, said he tries to teach children how "illusions occur in every day life."

"I press all their buttons in the show, from their preoccupation with body parts and functions to things they need to learn about observing their world accurately. They realize that careful observation is the key to making good decisions," he said. "There are many principles that magicians use that can be applied to everyday life."