

# Crafty Gifts

Happy Mother's Day Marleen:

I just wanted to thank you for taking such good care of Daddy. And for always trying to be here for us. Know that our thoughts of you are filled with love and a joy that you have come into our lives. Remember that you don't have to be MY mom to be like a mom to me. Happy Mother's Day. We love you. Tina, Steve, Jessica and Emily.

Here it is almost Mother's Day of 2004 and when I received the hand made Mother's Day card with the message above inside it I just wanted to cry with happiness. The card was worth far more than any store-bought card could be. Tina had taken the time to make the card with her own hands. The words inside were written from inside her own heart. Even the picture on the front was of the Old Mill in North Little Rock where Earl and I had been married, with Tina there of course. Not even a dozen roses and a store-bought card could compare with this gift.

Crafts make wonderful gifts. Now I don't pretend that ANY crafty gift is precious. A star made from popsicle sticks glued together might bring yards of happiness when given from a four-year old, but look rather tacky if you are forty. The gifts you choose to make for others should spring from a craft you do exceedingly well. A good craft gift might be defined as anything you do with your hands that makes your heart sing while you are making it. When the one receiving the gift hears that singing and joins in then you will have given a gift which is priceless.

Not all of us knows what a rabbit is, but all of us will have talents which give us an affinity to at least one of the crafty ideas inside this package. I invite you to check out the book marks and dig in. Don't be afraid to try any of these ideas. Each one was chosen for the author's skill in explaining the steps to take. You will probably be pleasantly surprised and how easily you acquire the skills needed for any craft idea that you like. There is a link in each craft article so that you can easily reach the author for similar material.

Thank you.

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On the other hand, **this is a FREE BOOK**, and may be passed on to your friends, neighbors, families, and customers as long as no charge is made.

# How To Make Your Own Handmade Greeting Cards

**Gifts that make your love look brighter!**

Written by Rachel Webb

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**Greeting cards remain very popular today for the same reasons as in the 19th century as a wonderful way to bring friends and family closer together and strengthen relationships.**

**Cards are certainly more affordable and meaningful if you make them using your own creativity. Cards can be made using a wide variety of crafting methods, here a few ideas to get you started.**

Holiday greeting cards were thought to have originated with the Egyptians who exchanged messages to celebrate their new year.

By the 15th century, Europeans used wood engravings. Greeting cards as we know them today became popular in the 19th century largely due to the availability of printers and cheap delivery.

Greeting cards remain very popular today for the same reasons as in the 19th century, as a wonderful way to bring friends and family closer together and strengthen relationships.

Your Cards will certainly be more affordable and meaningful if you make them using your own creativity.

**Make your Cards using a wide variety of crafting methods and make everyone feel unique and special.**

## EMBROIDERING CARDS

Using a piece of Aida fabric hand cross stitch or machine embroider your favorite

holiday pattern. Press the finished piece on the wrong side with a warm iron. Using a three section white note card cut a square, circle or oval frame out of the middle section on the card. For a perfect cut, trace your framing hole with a crafting template. This will frame the cross-stitch.

Using a low temp glue gun, hot glue carefully around the edges of the cutout, and center the embroidery in the window.

Next, Open the card and cover the left flap with a layer of glue. Fold the left hand flap to meet the embroidery piece to finish off the rough edge.

## **PATCHWORK CARDS**

These cards use left over fabric scraps and rubber stamping to create a one-of-a-kind look for cards.

Using the same 3 folded kind of note-card as we mentioned above, cut a shape out of the middle of the card.

Your imagination is your only limit on what you could make, but cutting a triangle makes an adorable Christmas tree.

Next choose a small fabric scrap that will adequately cover the triangle and using small pieces of double stick tape cover **the wrong side of the card** so that the right side of the fabric fills the triangle.

Set your sewing machine on a zig zag stitch and working on the top, stitch all the way around the triangle on the card. **Don't forget to backstitch!**

Follow the instructions above for gluing the flap closed to nicely finish the raw fabric side. the rest of the card can easily be decorated using rubber stamping supplies to add stars on the side of the tree -- or holiday greetings are also available on rubber mounted stamps for creating the inside of the card as well.

## **DIMENSIONAL CARDS**

This kind of card uses embellished die cuts that are mounted on springs to add movement and whimsy to your card. You will need a regular folded note card, 5 inch long florist binding wire as well as acid free tape and glue for mounting.

You will also need several die-cuts of acid free paper.

Any scrapbook store and most craft stores will carry a wide variety of cut outs for you to choose from.

Layout your holiday design the way you want it to look. Go ahead and glue on any

background pieces. Set aside a couple of main subjects in your layout to mount on springs.

To make a spring, wind a piece of wire tightly around a pencil and carefully slide it off the top leaving the wire coiled.

Attach one spring to the center of the subject on the wrong side and the other end to the card using acid free tape.

## **POP-UP CARD**

You will need:

2 - 8 1/2 x 11" pieces of cardstock

Scissors

Acid Free Glue

Embellishments

Step 1

Fold the papers in half and place the paper so the folded edge is on your left.

Step 2

Mark a large triangle on the bottom left hand corner. Starting from the folded edge to the triangle line, draw and cut a curved line.

Step 3

Fold along the triangle line between the cut and the point of the triangle. Fold the other direction along the same crease.

Step 4

Open the card and pull out the cut middle pop out piece towards you. Firmly crease the fold lines so that the pop-up piece points towards you.

Step 5

Glue the inside and outside of the card together and decorate it.

This triangle pop up can be turned upside down and used as a vase filled with die-cut flowers or real dried flowers or turned into an angel. Maybe it will become a nose with the saying "Everybody Nose - I Love You!"

Be creative and try other pop-up shapes for a unique handmade greeting card.

**Think creatively  
and enjoy giving handmade cards all year.**

the end

Author Rachel Webb designs write-on/wipe-off Organizational Fridge Calendars that are entirely magnetic. They make wonderful job charts. [Check out her site:](#)

Note-Ables began producing Magnetic Calendars in early 1999 out of necessity - it was the only way Rachel could keep up with the busy schedule of three active children and numerous church and civic activities!

Manufactured using a heavy flexible magnetic material - Rachel guarantees that the Calendar won't slide off when the kids slam the fridge door! (**magnetic strips that slide off are a personal pet peeve at their home**)

[Note-Ables Calendars](#) are also popular for wedding gifts or office use on filing cabinets, R.V's or metal shop doors. One man we met at a craft fair bought a calendar to put on his automatic garage door -try and beat that for originality!

# Here are some more Interesting Offers!



Have you ever dreamed of building your very own Cabins, Garages, Small Homes, Green Houses, Workshops, Playhouses, or maybe just a simple shed in the backyard? Now you can with these

amazingly low cost, Instant Plans. Some people buy one plan, and make hundreds of projects for their friends and neighbors -- If you are reasonably handy with just a few basic tools YOU can make this kind of easy money too. Don't miss out. Check out this offer, today!

Now, don't despair if you are renting and don't have a place of your own to build your choice product, you CAN own a city lot for just forty bucks or LESS! In fact, you can find Dirt Cheap houses and farms right in your own state and neighborhood BEFORE the public even becomes aware they are there. I'm not exaggerating one bit. You can buy property real enough to get out there and walk on it, stomp on it, throw a party, and even show it off to your smarty-pants friends. It is TRUE! Cheap Land IS Still Available, All The Way Across The United States!

You DO NOT Need Good Credit to Buy A Home -- Controlling Real Estate Without Credit Checks is the painless way to secure your dream home or first investment property, and it is 100% Guaranteed!

Here is another simple, yet powerful and proven formula that will grab you by the hand and walk you step by step to your real estate fortunes! 3 simple ways to outperform your competition and get motivated sellers to contact you. Exactly when a homeowner begins losing their home and the first step you take-- it's not what you think. How to understand the distressed seller and the psychological tactics that will practically have them eating out of your hand.

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tips, tweaks, and honest tricks to increase the selling price of your home!

Do you want to turn your home decorating dreams into reality? Then read on because it doesn't get any easier than this... Our guidebooks reveal the secrets of creating beautiful and inspiring rooms, even if your time is limited and your

budget is busted -- [You get IN DEPTH DETAILS with 1037 Color Photos and Illustrations](#) -- That's Right. Now, you can discover the proven, "How-to-Get-it-Right-Every-Time" Secrets of a Home Decorating Expert and Award-Winning Artist! [Dozens of free tips are yours](#) just for visiting this site.

You'll Have [The Fish Pond You've Always Dreamed of!](#) Jam-packed with proven techniques that will teach you how to have the ultimate backyard fish pond and make sure your fish are healthy and happy - learn the secrets of the pros to have a fish pond water garden that will amaze your friends! Now you can successfully have fish in your backyard all year round...even if you've already tried everything!

Last year we sold \$25,000. worth of small plants right out of our backyard! Since it only costs us about 24¢ to grow each plant, the margin of profit is incredible. You can make fantastic money growing and selling small plants too. Even if you hate money like some people we know, you can use our secrets to become an expert gardener! We have a passion for beautiful and unique plants, And we want to pass on the easy plant propagation techniques, landscaping ideas and advice, tree and shrub care, as well as pruning tips, and lawn care tips that we have discovered. [Click HERE for dozens of free articles.](#)

Every month you can take your choice from [1000s of cars and bank foreclosure property](#) through various seizure/surplus laws. EVERY MAKE AND every model is available. There are GUARANTEED LISTINGS IN EVERY US STATE! Because of the constant influx of vehicles and the enormous expense to store them, these cars must be sold fast and cheap! Buy direct from the sources and save BIG MONEY! New or used -- repossessed or fleet vehicles -- you can get in the driver's seat for as little as \$100! Make NO mistake -- These are cars with clean titles, and low mileage. That means you can easily buy the very car you only dream about now, online, and SAVE up to 90% off the regular book value!

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# How To Quickly Design Your Own Doll Dress

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It doesn't matter what type or size doll you have, you can easily design your own doll dresses following a few simple steps.

This article explains how to make a basic dress, that you can then use as either a sundress, or that you can crochet dainty ruffles on for a more elegant fashion.

First you will want to grab your doll, a crochet hook, some yarn, a pen and a notebook. As you crochet, you will want to make sure that you write down all of your stitches so that you can save your design in writing.

First crochet a simple chain until it's long enough to reach comfortably around the neck of your doll. I usually crochet my chains to be long enough to just reach around the width of the neck, then I add 3 extra chains to give enough room for it to fit neatly without being too tight.

Next, crochet 2 single stitches in each chain, and there you will have your basic neck.

Now, place your neck on your doll, with the ends being centered in the back, and mark the stitches right underneath the arms by inserting small bits of yarn into the stitches. These can be removed once your arm loops are crocheted.

Double crochet to where the arms should be (the area you marked with your bits of yarn), and then next make a chain using the number of stitches marked previously with your bits of yarn. Now add 4 or 5 more chains to give a bit of extra room for the arms.

To gauge if you have enough chain stitches, you can pin the chain in place in the last stitch not marked for the arms, and see if the "loop" slides onto the arm easily.



Once you've gauged your chain, then double crochet in the next unmarked stitch to close the "loop" onto the neckpiece.

Now double crochet to the next arm area, and create a chain with the same number of stitches as your previous chain, close that loop as well, and then double crochet to the end of the neckpiece.

Now chain 3, turn and double crochet one row, while adding the same number of double crochet stitches onto the "loop" as you had for number of chains.

Chain 3, turn again and double crochet to right underneath the arm. If your doll has "breasts" then you will want to place your bodice on your doll, and mark the stitches that lay right over the dolls "breasts".

Note: If your doll does not have breasts, then just double crochet across.

Now double crochet to the "breasts" section of the bodice, and based on how large your doll is you will need to add a few double crochet stitches in the breasts area.

Typical fashion dolls only need to have 3 double crochet stitches added, in one stitch over the breasts.

Whereas larger dolls may need to have 6 stitches added into 2 stitches.

To determine how many stitches to add, crochet 3 double crochet stitches in the first stitch you marked, try the bodice on the doll and see if it fits comfortably. If it appears to be too tight, just add 3 more double crochet stitches into the next stitch, and so on until it fits well.

Double crochet to the next breast area, repeat the increased stitches, then double crochet to the end of the row.

Chain three, turn and double crochet back to the breast areas, DECREASE the same number of stitches to form the "cups" and double crochet to the end of the row.

If you have a rather large doll, then you will want to do a row of double crochet stitches before you close the "cups" to make sure that the cups fit snugly.

Chain three, turn and crochet one more row of double crochet stitches.

Now try your bodice on your doll, pinning it closed in the back, to make sure that it fits snugly.

If it fits, you've done a great job and can continue to the skirt. If it seems to be too tight in some areas, you will need to unravel and start again increasing stitches in those areas.

Once you get used to using this method, you'll find that you won't have to unravel as often as you may when you first start designing. If you do need to unravel, don't get upset. You're just now learning something new, and as with everything that you learn, practice makes perfect.

Once you have a snug fitting bodice, you will need to determine what type of skirt you would like to make.

First, do rows of double crochet until you get to where you would like the waist of your skirt to be.

Once your bodice is the desired length, then you will want to double crochet in each stitch across. This makes the waist form outward to fit over your dolls hips.

Now you can begin designing your skirt. If you want a skirt that flairs, then do a row of three double crochet stitches in each stitch across. If you want a tighter skirt, then do a row of one double crochet stitch in each stitch across.

Chain three, turn and double crochet in each stitch across. Now you can close your skirt into a circle by joining the edges together with a single stitch. Try your bodice on your doll again to make sure that it will pull onto the doll snugly then complete your skirt by crocheting it to the desired length.

Once your skirt is completed, you will have completed your basic dress. You now have a wonderful dress, designed completely by you, and as you can see it wasn't hard at all!

You can add sleeves by joining your yarn into the arm loops, and crocheting ruffles around the edges.

You can also add ruffles into your skirt.

Once you get better at designing the basic dress, then you can use other stitches to make fancy details and patterns in your designs.

Add ruffles or single stitches around the neck for collars, or sew beads onto the

necks for a decorative edging.

Before long you'll be designing your own doll dresses like a professional in no time!

Don't forget to always write your instructions down, and for ways to profit using the patterns you design then please visit the following URL to obtain your copy of "Profitable Crafts ~ Consignment Sales And Getting Your Projects Published".

<http://www.daintywork.com/crafts/vol2main.htm>

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Maria Vowell is a published designer that has crocheted since she was 11 years old. She has successfully mentored literally hundreds of crafters, both online and off. Ms. Vowell has over 13 years experience at designing her own crochet patterns. She also provides a series of manuals to help other artisans and crafters profit from their arts & crafts related sales. You can learn more at: <http://www.daintywork.com/crafts/volumes.htm>

# Smart Ways to Give Money Away Creatively

Gifts that show how much you love them!

Written by Rachel Webb

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Everyone likes to receive money as a gift, but simply doling out money in a card can get boring.

Here are some unique ways to give money that will surprise and delight the recipient.

## SHOWER THEM WITH MONEY

Cut several 10 inch ribbons and tie several dollar bills in the middle to make a bowtie.

Next, Tie the ribbon strands to the open spokes of the umbrella.

While holding the umbrella partway open, push all of the ribbons and money into the umbrella and close it up so they can't be seen.

Imagine the surprise when the umbrella opens.

## DUMP TRUCK

Buy a toy dump truck and fill it with unrolled coins then wrap the dump truck as usual.

Tie some unused coin wrappers into your bow so that the child can enjoy rolling the coins later after the party.

This idea also works great as a whimsical gift for a construction worker or -- at a retirement party for a truck driver use a (toy) semi truck full of money.

### **IT'S IN THE BANK**

Buy a toy piggy bank or combination lock bank and fill it with cash as a smart way to teach kids to start saving money. Open a savings account in your child or grandchild's name as another way to give money that will be used wisely.

### **COUPONS**

The home computer has made coupon books easy and professional looking. Trying to think creatively about what your loved one needs is the hardest part of making meaningful coupons.

Would your husband love his own indoor tailgate party with a coupon for a night of uninterrupted football coverage complete with his favorite snacks and drinks?

Or maybe your young teenage daughter needs a coupon book offering taxi rides anywhere her and her friends want to be chauffeured for the night?

You get the idea. Be creative.

### **MONEY TREE**

Cut a small tree branch with lots of smaller branches coming off the main one.

Mix plaster of paris with water for a stiff consistency and add it to a flower pot or other container. If you are using a terracotta pot make sure you cover the bottom drainage hole with plastic wrap or tape before filing it with the plaster.

Next, insert the tree branch and let it harden overnight. Using hot glue add Spanish moss to cover the top of the plaster. You can also hot glue silk plant leaves to the branches for a realistic effect.

Last, tie money bills to the tree branches for a unusual gift.

## **A DOZEN LONG STEMMED DOLLARS**

Fold bills in half and roll tightly into miniature roses.

Secure the roses with a craft wire or florist tape adding a silk stem and leaves as you wrap.

Put the dollar roses in a fancy tissue lined box or beautiful vase with real baby's breath and floral filler for a very romantic way to give money!

## **PIÑATA PIGGY BANK**

Not only do piñata's make a fun party game try stuffing it with coins and money as a fun gift idea! Mexican Indians originally made piñata's as a way to depict their idols and worship their gods. But today you will find piñata's being used around the world and they come in many different shapes. For another unique way to give money, buy a piñata shaped as a pig. You could also easily make your own giant piggy bank piñata.

### **To make a Piñata you will need:**

1 - 9" - 25" sturdy, empty helium balloon  
Optional smaller balloons  
12" wide strips of newspaper

Decoupage glue  
Sharp scissors  
Lots of Coins

**Step 1 -** Start by inflating the balloon and tying a knot in the end. You can tape several balloons together to create the shape you want your piñata to be but a oval is the easiest shape to work with.

**Step 2-** Carefully dip the strips on newspaper into the decoupage and gently lay it across the balloon working vertically until it is covered. Continue covering the balloon in the opposite direction horizontally. You can continue adding newspaper strips until the balloon feels solid and firm.

When it is dry, use a pin to pop the balloon.

**Step 3-** Next paint the piñata whatever color you wish and embellish it as desired.

**Step 4-** Find a place where the a hole will not be easily noticed and cut three

sides of a square to create a door that can be opened. Fill your piñata with lots of coins!

**Think creatively  
and enjoy Giving Away Money all year.**

the end

p.s. You don't need be bashful about sending this inspirational article to anyone, like as a helpful hint. I'm sure they will appreciate your thoughtfulness, even if you forget to sign your name.

Author Rachel Webb designs write-on/wipe-off Organizational Fridge Calendars that are entirely magnetic. They make wonderful job charts. [Check out her site:](#)

Note-Ables began producing Magnetic Calendars in early 1999 out of necessity - it was the only way Rachel could keep up with the busy schedule of three active children and numerous church and civic activities!

Manufactured using a heavy flexible magnetic material - Rachel guarantees that the Calendar won't slide off when the kids slam the fridge door!  
**(magnetic strips that slide off are a personal pet peeve at their home)**

[Note-Ables Calendars](#) are also popular for wedding gifts or office use on filing cabinets, R.V's or metal shop doors. One man we met at a craft fair bought a calendar to put on his automatic garage door -try and beat that for originality!

# 15 Creative Ways To Use Motifs

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<http://www.lyciall.com/patterns.htm>

1. Attach motifs together to form curtains, scarves, pillows, bedspreads, tablecloths and table placemats.
2. Make a satin pillow the same size as motif, fill with potpourri, sew motif onto pillow for a nice decorative scented pillow that can be used to scent closets, drawers and cabinets.
3. Use a motif to make a nice "area rug" for a dollhouse.
4. Crochet motifs using regular sewing thread then sew together to form bookmarks.
5. Purchase a journal or small notebook, cover in attractive cloth and sew a motif on the cover to make a wonderful gift.
6. Frame a motif for an attractive wall hanging.
7. Laminate a motif and glue cork to the back to make attractive coasters.
8. Attach a magnet on the back for attractive décor for your fridge.
9. Sew onto a hemmed piece of muslin or satin, attach Velcro on the edges and fold in half for a handy holder for sewing needles.
10. Embed a motif made of sewing thread into a bar of soap for attractive bathroom décor that will amaze your guests. Instructions for embedding in soap can be obtained through the free "Scents And Beauty Business Course" at <http://www.lyciall.com/beautycourse.htm>
11. Sew a muslin bag the same size as motif, leaving one end open. Attach a motif to front and back of bag, attach Velcro for a closure and crochet a nice handle to make a sweet purse that any little girl will love.
12. Sew a motif onto the back pockets of jeans for a decorative touch that will always be in style. Add extra flair by sewing several motifs around the bottom of the jeans legs as well.
13. Glue 2 used CD's together using rubber cement, with the shiny sides facing out. Glue a motif on each side, thread ribbon through the CD hole and hang in your car or by your window for an attractive sun catcher.
14. Dip a motif lightly in scented wax, lay it on waxed paper to dry, hang anywhere you'd like a freshening scent.
15. Cover an empty can with wallpaper, or attractive cloth, glue a motif onto the can for a decorative pencil holder.

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hundreds of crafters, both online and off, and who has over 13 years experience at designing her own crochet patterns. To obtain 20 free vintage crochet patterns at Ms. Vowell's site, please visit the following URL: <http://www.lyciall.com/patterns.htm>

# Make your own Specialty Papers

Written by Rachel Webb

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The invention of paper, as we know it today, can be tracked to Leiyang China. Early around 100 A.D. paper is said to have been made using fermented and beaten mulberry bark fibers that were suspended in water and removed with a screen made from bamboo fibers tied with horse hair.

Whether this is the true time frame or not, we do know that mulberry paper has made a comeback being a very popular crafting and scrapbooking medium in this century. The fibers in the paper give crafting projects a wonderful texture and dimension. Mulberry paper makes a great background or boarder to highlight other paper especially when it is moistened and torn. Tearing instead of using scissors can provide an interesting ragged edge when embellishing your pages.

Crafting and scrapbook stores sell handmade papers and you will find them to be rather costly. Handmade papers, including mulberry paper, are just that... handmade! Which of course means you can manufacture them yourself as well!

Plan on your paper making process to take about two hours. Not bad for a crafting project that can give you fifteen unique handmade sheets that you can use for greeting cards, picture frame matting and of course my favorite - scrapbooking!

Everything you need to make paper is easy to find and rather inexpensive. Best of all, its a great conservation effort since you are using 100%recycled paper scraps.

## **MAKING THE PULP**

You will need about 40 - 55 sheets of white used photocopy paper and about 14 sheets of colored photocopy paper or you can also use uncoated used wrapping paper for the pulp base. A small amount of colored magazine paper should be used sparingly. A good ratio to begin with is four times as much white paper as colored paper. Rip the copy paper into small pieces, roughly

an inch square. Try not to use newsprint. Soak the pieces overnight in a bucket of water separating the colored pieces from the white paper..

Add about 1 cup of pre-soaked white paper into a kitchen blender and fill almost to the top with very warm water. Blend on medium high or until the mixture has a oatmeal type consistency. If your blender is having difficulty you may need to add more water or reduce the amount of pre-soaked paper to 3/4 cup. Keep blending the pulp until you have used up all the soaked paper.

Put the paper pulp into a large saucepan and mix it around with your hands. Slowly add your soaked colored paper for a few seconds. You will need to be careful not to overblend. The colored paper should look like confetti. The mixture will be very liquefied. If you plan to use your paper as stationery, dissolve a packet of gelatin in hot water, and stir the gelatin into the pulp mixture. The gelatin, which is known as "size", will make the paper less porous.

Now lightly blend your soaked colored paper for about ten seconds. Don't overblend - you want the colored paper to appear in your paper as confetti-like accents. Alternatively, you may add other materials or food coloring directly to the pulp, or you can add textures on top of the pulp after forming a sheet. For example, you might want to add some wildflower seeds on top of the paper. Cards made with seeds can later be planted by the recipients to create flower gardens.

### MAKING A FRAME MOLD

Using two old picture frames you can make a mold that will contain the pulp and mold the paper to the desired size. Any size frame will work but a 5"x7" or 8"x10" is the easiest to work with. Start by removing the glass and backing from both frames. Purchase a fiberglass or plastic screen from your local hardware store and stretch it tightly over one of the frames. The screen can be attached to the back of the frame with a staple gun. The second frame will be used as the "deckle" which makes the sheet of paper the desired size.

### MOLDING THE PULP

Hold the mold screen size up and dip the mold into the pulp right after stirring it. Next, place the 2nd frame or "deckle" upside down on top of the 1st frame mold. The pulp should be covering the screen. A thin layer of pulp seems to turn out better than a thick paper.

Next, let the excess water drip off for about two minutes. Now is the time to add fun embellishments to your handmade paper. You can add food coloring, potpourri, dried flowers, dried herbs and spices, seeds, thread or even lint from the dryer. If you plan on matting pictures or scrapbooking though keep

your artistic materials acid free. Finished paper can also be pressed with a fairly heavy lace and left on until the paper dries. You can have fun using monograms for special occasions as well.

Gently pat off any excess water from the back side of screen and around all the edges. Keep soaking up the water until you see the paper separating from the screen. At that time you can try removing the mold starting at one corner.

Your paper is almost finished now it only needs to dry for about 24 hours on both sides. When your paper is dry you can press it in-between a heavy book to press them flat or apply a warm iron to the sheets of paper sandwiching the paper between two hand towels.

the end

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# Decorative Painting with Terracotta Pots

Copyright J Black.

The word "terracotta" comes from Latin and means "baked earth". The natural texture of terracotta provides the perfect canvas for the budding artist to bring extra color and style into the garden or home.

Not an artist? Never mind. Terracotta pots can look just as stunning painted in a plain rich vibrant color with a strong contrasting flower color to offset them. For example - a bright blue pot planted with orange marigolds stands out in any setting.



For a mottled effect try painting your pot in a plain color then use a small sea sponge to dab on a contrasting color after the base color has dried. For example a maroon coloured pot with cream or pink effects.

For other interesting effects try using cheesecloth, rag, crumpled paper, or bunched up plastic wrap dipped in paint to provide interesting textures and designs.

Before painting your pots they must be properly prepared.

The first thing to do is to seal the inside of the pot with sealer. This will prevent the paint on your finished pot from lifting due to water seepage through the walls of the pot.

Next apply a coat of white acrylic sealer to the outside of the pot to act as a base. Paint the inside rim to where the soil level will come for a more finished appearance.

Now it is time to get creative.

Pencil on your design or alternatively use a stencil to trace the outline of your design. Paint on your colors using acrylic paints (test pots are ideal and come in a variety of colors).

Note: Stencils are available in a variety of motifs and designs from art and crafts supply stores. When painting with a stencil cut out use a short bristled brush and with a dabbing motion apply your paint. If using several colors have a separate brush for each color you use. Or alternatively if you are only using one color use a small foam roller to apply the color quickly and easily.

When dry, seal with one or two coats of matt finish polyurethane unless you want a highly glazed look in which case use a gloss polyurethane for the final coat.

To take your artwork to the next level I recommend reading Priscilla Hauser's book "Decorative Painting Projects" (Published by sterling, ISBN 1402706073") for some truly stunning projects. Follow her step-by-step instructions and you will be painting in no time at all like a true artist.

When it comes to painting pots your imagination is your only limitation. The possibilities are endless. Painted pots make great gifts and are a fun way, especially for children as they make inexpensive gifts that are useful for plants or as a container for something else.

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# TWENTY TOYS

## You DON'T Have To Buy

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**Are you fed up with forking out cash for the latest piece of over-hyped plastic?**

You can answer that plaintive question, "**What can we do now Mum?**" by making toys from items you will already have around the house.

1. **Shops.** Save all your empty grocery cartons for a week or so and you'll soon have a shop any aspiring grocer would be proud of. Gluing down the flaps makes cereal boxes, jelly packets etc. look unopened. Clothes, shoes, and toys can all be used as "stock". Paper bags and real or play money add to the fun.
2. **Paper balls.** When the kids keep arguing suggest that they throw something at each other! Paper balls are easily scrunched up from torn out magazine pages to make "ammunition". When it's time to tidy up, stand the waste paper basket in the middle of the room and see who can throw the most in. A rolled up magazine makes a good "bat" too.
3. **Doctors/Nurses.** A simple roll of white toilet tissue makes this game much more fun as Dads, Grans, teddies or dolls get mummified before your eyes. Plastic medicine spoons and cardboard box hospital beds for toys are extra props that make the game last longer.
4. **Tubes.** Cardboard tubes from kitchen roll or foil make instant telescopes for sailors or pirates, or tunnels to roll marbles through. Babies love to watch things disappear then reappear out of the bottom. Don't leave them alone with the cardboard tube though as they will probably suck it.

5. **Cardboard boxes** must be about the best free toys you can get hold of. Push in the ends of large ones to make tunnels and caves to crawl through. For an added touch of drama, draw on windows and doors with felt tip pens to make a house. You can also add a flag and portholes for a boat or paper plates or a steering wheel for a car.

6. **Miniature gardens.** The foil trays that pies and prepared foods arrive in make lovely containers for miniature gardens. The children can enjoy hunting

around the park or garden for twigs to make into miniature trees, moss for a lawn, stones to arrange as a rockery or a waterfall. Keep twigs or stones in place where you want them with a little blue tack or plasticine. Add toy people or animals and maybe even a little water if the container is watertight. This can be a very creative and enjoyable exercise if you have children of very different age groups to entertain. A variation is to use play sand (**not builder's sand, because it stains everything yellow**) to make a beach scene, maybe adding shells, stones and a blue paper sea.

**7. Paper puppets.** A picture of anything - a colourful bird, a clown's face, an animal or perhaps some cartoon character, carefully cut out by an adult and stuck to the top of a strip of card about five inches long and one and a half inches wide becomes a very easily made puppet. These give such pleasure and are so easy to make that you will probably end up with dozens of them. Magazine pictures can be stuck on to folded card to make theatre set background and wings.



**8. Potato prints.** After cutting a potato in half, draw on a simple shape. A triangle, circle or star perhaps. Cut away the rest of the potato, leaving a shape to dip into paint and print on to paper.

**9. Skittles.** Skittles can be improvised from large plastic cola or lemonade bottles. A little sand or water in the bottom makes them more stable. Skittles is a good game for learning to count.

**10. Dens.** Building a den must be one of the most memorable parts of childhood as we all seem to recall the bliss of blankets draped over the airing rack in the garden or over the backs of chairs indoors. Even today's sophisticated kids seem to find the thought much more exciting than just erecting the shop bought plastic play house. I think the secret is to give structural advice about making the thing stay upright, but let the children do as much as possible themselves. Really large boxes of the type that washing machines and fridges come in can be had for the asking from the big electrical goods retailers and are useful for rooms within dens. Indoors, one of the simplest dens can be made by throwing a large sheet or duvet over a table. Cushions, torches, biscuits and comics or books will all be needed at the housewarming.

**11. String.** Children find a million uses for string, from tying up toy "baddies" to making a washing line for doll's clothes. It can be tied to chair

legs to make a jump, dipped into paint and twirled on to paper, plaited, knitted with, made into a parachute or mobile, used as a measuring aid or for learning how to tie shoelaces and bows. It need never linger in the kitchen drawer again.

12. **Sewing cards.** Stick a picture on to a postcard or draw a simple duck, car or teddy shape. With a bodkin needle push holes around the outline of your design about one inch apart. Using brightly coloured wool in the bodkin or a long bootlace, thread in and out of the holes.

13. **Stilts.** You need to do a little drilling for this one. Take two strong tins, coffee or clean paint tins are ideal, and drill a hole about one inch from the top on opposite sides of the tin. Insert a length of string and knot securely. Check that the handle is at a comfortable length for the child before knotting the other side. These are always very popular, but never leave young children alone with them especially near stairs or steps.

14. **Cafes.** Children's tea sets are a handy prop for this game, but a picnic set or microwave cookware is just as good. Giving the waiter/waitress a little notebook and pencil to take orders and making a tall white hat from a cylinder of paper for the chef will add realism. Sit dolls and teddies around as well as willing Aunts and Grannies for extra customers.

15. **Playdough.** Mix together two cups of flour, one cup of salt, one cup of water, one tablespoon of oil and a few drops of food colouring for an easy to make dough that will keep for about three weeks if you wrap it in polythene and keep it in the fridge. All you have to do is knead the mixture well. Divide the mixture up first if you have more than one colour available.

16. **Obstacle course.** An obstacle course can turn a rainy day into an adventure. Use whatever you have available. A bench to walk the plank, cushion stepping stones across shark infested seas, through a cardboard box tunnel, up a chair mountain or through a duvet cave. The wilder your imagination the more your children will love it.

17. **Easy boats.** Recycle your empty margarine cartons. Use them as boats for the bath or paddling pool. These are so easy that even very young children can help to make them. Cut out triangular sail shapes from white or coloured paper. Make a small hole at the top and bottom of the sail so that you can push through a straw to make a mast. Let the child fix this to the bottom of a clean margarine tub with a lump of blue tack or plasticine. They sail extremely well and will even take a couple of toy people on an exciting

cruise.

18. **Capes.** Nurses, kings, queens, Batman, Superman - they all need capes or cloaks. Luckily they are easy to make by attaching ribbon ties to an oblong of fabric in the colour of your child's favourite caped character. Keep an eye on them though as anything tied around the neck could be dangerous.

19. **Leaf art.** Collect leaves and draw around them. This is fun for little ones and an educational tree identification game for older children. Colour in the details with crayons or paints. The leaves could then be stuck on to paper collage style or dipped into paint and then pressed firmly on to paper for a lovely leaf print.

20. **Make a puzzle.** Stick a favourite picture on to card and allow to dry with a heavy book on top. Cut into pieces, how many pieces you make depending on the age of the child. You will have an almost instant and personal puzzle.

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Colleen Moulding is a freelance writer based in the South of England. She is also owner/editor of All That Women Want.com <http://www.allthatwomenwant.com>

[allthatwomenwant.com](http://www.allthatwomenwant.com) a lively mix of features, fun, resources and best of the web picks. "Our aim is to bring together the very best of the web for women and children to save you having to search for it."

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# Valentine Patchwork Keepsake

written by Rachel Webb

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The patchwork look is a fun way to create affordable country crafts and can be accomplished with ordinary crafting odds and ends. You can make a beautiful valentine keepsake box using a heart shaped, inexpensive, paper crafting box, left over fabric, lace and antique buttons! Here is a list of what you will need.

- **Any size Heart Shaped Paper Crafting Box**  
**Scissors or Rotary Cutter and Mat**  
**Decoupage Glue (White or Off-White)**  
**1/2 yard of Thin Ribbon**  
**1/2 yard of 1" Wide Ribbed Gathered Lace**  
**Antique Buttons or Pewter Charms**  
**Strand of Beaded Crafting Pearls**  
**Hot Glue Gun and Sticks**  
**Small Foam Brush**  
**Needle and Thread**

## Instructions:

First gather all of your left over scraps on material and group them together according to color. You will want to use several patterns of fabric that compliment one another with the same color tones and hues. I chose 5 fabrics with a Blue, Mauve, Rose and Antique White floral combination but you can use any combination as long as you choose fabrics with a very small pattern. Stay away from stretchy or sheer fabrics as well. Cotton or broadcloth is a good choice. Cut your fabric into 1 1/2 inch, 2 inch or 1/2 inch squares. Use a roll cutter and mat to speed up this process. I used fabric that was both 1 1/2 inch wide squares as well as some 1/2 inch squares for my patchwork box.

Starting on the bottom of your box use a small sponge brush and decoupage glue to attach your fabric squares to a paper craft box. Decoupage will take the place of your glue and is available in craft stores in 2 sizes of bottles and in white or off-white. Off-White decoupage will go on slightly yellow and give you an antique finish to your box.

Add your squares randomly overlapping squares in a haphazard pattern that covers all of the paper craft box. You will not need to apply the decoupage carefully, it is very forgiving and your box can be covered quickly by dabbing decoupage on top of each fabric

**square and applying it to your box. Finish the inside of your box all in the same color and trim the edge carefully. If you have creases in your fabric smooth them out to lie flat. This is especially important around the rim of your box. The lid will not fit securely if the fabric is not smooth.**

**After your decoupage box has dried completely. Use hot glue to add 1 inch wide ribboned lace around the edge of the lid. You can embellish the top of the box however you wish but I choose to make lace medallions using scraps of flat lace and sewing a gathering stitch around the outer edge. Pull one end of the thread to gather the stitches and create a medallion. I made two different sized medallions and hot glued 2 inch strands of crafting pearls under the lace medallion prior to hot gluing it in the center of the heart box. the largest medallion on the top of the heart lid first. Hot glue the smaller medallion on top of the large one for a double stacked effect. Sew or Hot glue thin loops of ribbon on top of the small lace medallion. Add antique buttons or pewter charms to the top of the ribbon as the final finishing touch to a fancy Victorian keep sake box.**

**Your box would be a fun way to organize your jewelry and can be lined with satin or velvet fabric instead of decoupage squares. You could also make miniature boxes using the same method, for fabulous Christmas tree ornaments!**

Author Rachel Webb designs write-on/wipe-off Organizational Fridge Calendars that are entirely magnetic. They make wonderful job charts. [Check out her site:](#)

Note-Ables began producing Magnetic Calendars in early 1999 out of necessity - it was the only way Rachel could keep up with the busy schedule of three active children and numerous church and civic activities!

# **Gifts that Make Time Stand Still**

**Timeless Gifts for you and yours**

Written by Rachel Webb

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## **Make A Time Capsule Full of Family Memories**

**Time capsules are a fun way to celebrate a New Year or can be made anytime as a fun way to preserve your family memories!**

**Time capsules were found first in Egypt and Babylon, inside temples. Those ancient time capsules were filled with small statues and scrolls as was their custom. Some modern day religious temples still practice this tradition of placing items of special significance in the corner stone of the building.**

**You can make time stand still with your own time-capsule as a fun activity for your family or as a party favor for guests.**

### **MAKING A TIME CAPSULE**

**There are many different items that can be used as the housing for your time-capsule. As long as the capsule is made out of a non-biodegradable material like plastic, metal or heavy duty rubbers. You can purchase small square banks that have a combination lock at office supply stores or use kitchen food storage containers with a lid.**

**If the time capsule is for children you can make it out of large plastic Easter eggs and use silicone caulking to seal the two sides together after it is filled. Kids would also enjoy making a capsule out of the plastic boxes watches come packaged in.**

# **TIME CAPSULE ITEMS**

**When deciding what to put in your time capsule think of interesting topics that were of significance in the past year. You could include headlines clipped from a newspaper or magazine. Remember to think of both local and world events as well. Include items of social and scientific interest as well as objects of everyday life like photographs of your car, postage stamp or grocery store receipt so you can compare the price of gas or milk.**

**Backup your computer and add the CD to your time-capsule. If you store your recipes on the computer you may want to print out your favorites and include those as well.**

**If you are a scrapbooker, it would be fun to copy a few of your favorite family pages and add them to your time capsule. You can purchase plastic file folders that have a top clasp that folds over so your pages and other memorabilia can lie flat.**

**Children would enjoy cutting pictures out of a magazine showing the hottest toy of that year or the latest fashion trend. Just as we look back at the popularity of Cabbage Patch Kids, Tickle Me Elmo, Beanie Babies, Pokeman or Scooters, these are items that are sure to be left behind in a few years and will be fun to remember when the capsule is opened.**

**Include ticket stubs from a special trip sporting event or theatrical play. Add the oldest coin you can find and a current coin from this year. This is a good time to add the latest State quarter that is available. Make a recording of your favorite singing group or pictures of your friends.**

**All ages would enjoy writing a letter to the future and tell the people what life is like for you now. Be sure and include your favorite family traditions, your worries and your joys too!**

# **OPENING YOUR CAPSULE**

**The family will enjoy making a treasure map of where the time-capsule is buried so you can remember where to find it again. Hide the map in the back of a picture frame holding a family photograph.**

**Let the family decide when you want to open the time-capsule and look forward to sharing the memories of how much your family has grown and how much the world has changed.**

Author Rachel Webb designs write-on/wipe-off Organizational Fridge Calendars that are entirely magnetic. They make wonderful job charts. [Check out her site:](#)

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# Creating Art work Using your Scanner

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Scanner Art is a simple way to capture still life images that can be turned into creative pieces of art to decorate your home.

Many ordinary objects that would be difficult to photograph are good candidates for photo art - in particular objects where it is otherwise difficult to get a good, clear close-up shot of your subject.

These include such items as...

Feathers

Fruit and vegetables

Shells

Flowers

Pine Cones

To name a few.

Various backgrounds can be created for your artwork including the use of tissue paper, rice paper, velvet or any texture or background that would add interest.

Before placing objects onto the scanner surface it is important to protect it from scratches and accidental damage. I like to use a sheet of acetate (OHP is a good option). Likewise any debris should be removed from the object and also the glass which could ruin the finished image. It is easier at this stage than to have to do a touchup with your editing software program later on.

Be careful not to touch the scanner glass as it can be easily ruined by acids such as perspiration on fingertips, drink or food coming into contact with it likewise do not scan anything that is wet or damp.

I like to let my scanner warm up for at least half an hour to ensure that I get the best quality scanned image.

Compose your composition away from the scanner and when you are happy with your arrangement lay your objects carefully onto the scanner surface. Now you are ready to scan your masterpiece.

If you are using a background (instead of the scanner cover as your background) it is better to remove the cover to avoid accidental damage.

Light backgrounds can be created using

- The Scanner Cover
- Tissue or Rice paper

To create a seamless Black background

- Make a black box at least 6 inches deep to sit on top of your scanner. By having this depth you will ensure that it is always out of focus. Black velvet makes a good liner but be careful to remove any white specks that could show up in the final image with a small piece of sticky cellotape.

Start scanning at a lower resolution because of the memory required and increase until you have the result you require.

Save your images onto computer ready for printing.

To print your images, use a good quality plain paper, glossy paper or textured board.

If you use a textured board paper this can be sealed and painted (the same way as decoupage) to give the appearance of a textured canvas. This is especially good for still life arrangements. To give an aged appearance to your art use a crackle medium.

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# Salt Dough Crafting

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Folk art and in particular the art of making craft objects using salt dough has once again become a very popular hobby in recent years.

It is easy to get started as this craft requires only the minimum of equipment and materials -- most of which will already be in your kitchen.

These include:

1. A bowl to mix your dough
2. A rolling pin for producing smooth sheets of dough
3. A grater for making decorative imprints on your dough
4. A garlic press for making strands for hair and foliage
5. Small pointed knife for cutting and indenting details
6. An assortment of pastry cutters and moulds for decorative shapes. If you don't have these already they can be found at virtually any kitchenware outlet.

To make your salt dough I have found the following recipe to be a good all round recipe for most projects.

**2 Cups of Plain Flour (not self-rising)**

**1 cup Fine grained plain salt**

**1/2 cup water at room temperature**

**Mix the salt and flour in a large bowl and then add the water. Knead the mixture for about 5-10 minutes until it becomes smooth and elastic.**

**Cover with cling wrap to stop the dough drying out and let the dough sit for 30 minutes before using.**

Two other recipes that I often use, depending on the project I am working on, include a

Fine dough for filigree work

**2 Cups flour**  
**1 cup salt**  
**100g cornstarch**  
**1/2 cup water**

**Again, mix the salt and flour in a large bowl and then add the water. Knead the mixture for about 5-10 minutes until it becomes smooth and elastic.**

**Cover with cling wrap to stop the dough drying out and let the dough sit for 30 minutes before using.**

And then I use a Firm Dough for making tiles and plates:

**2 cups flour**  
**1 cup salt**  
**2 tablespoons wallpaper paste**  
**1/2 cup water**

**Again, mix the salt and flour in a large bowl and then add the water. Knead the mixture for about 5-10 minutes until it becomes smooth and elastic.**

**Cover with cling wrap to stop the dough drying out and let the dough sit for 30 minutes before using.**

Different coloured doughs can be made using...

- Food colouring (red, green, blue, or yellow). Two or more food colours can be combined to make different colours and shades or for a marbled dough effect.

- Add spices that act as natural dyes e.g. cinnamon, curry powder, saffron or paprika.

- Add cocoa powder or instant coffee for different hues of brown.

- Be sure you are wearing protective gloves for this one, add a little paint to the mixture then knead the dough until the paint is uniformly distributed through the mix.

Your dough is now ready to use and the next step is to shape your project.

Fresh dough is best for modelling. However, if you find you have any leftover dough it can be wrapped in cling wrap or an airtight container and stored in a cool place for a few days.

To improve the elasticity of the dough add dry wallpaper paste to the basic mixture.

The addition of 1-2 teaspoons of vegetable oil improves suppleness of the dough and make it easier to work with.

For flat or rolled projects it is best to roll out the dough straight onto a baking sheet -- then it can be put straight into the oven.

Models or larger pieces can be assembled on a piece of hardboard that has been oiled with vegetable oil to prevent the dough from sticking to the board



When you are finished and happy with your results you have a choice of Air Drying -- or baking your project in the oven.

Ensuring your projects are correctly dried ensures they will last a long time so it is important that this is not hurried.

Air drying is suitable for flat, small pieces or for coloured pieces where baking will alter the colour of the finished project.

Oven drying is the most popular method and requires careful attention to accurate temperature control to avoid burning.

Bake for approx 2 hours using a low temperature setting 50-70C for the first half hour then increase temperature slowly to 90-100C and cook until the

piece is uniform in colour.

While baking, if any air bubbles appear pierce the bubbles with a pin and gently depress the dough.

If the dough starts to darken before cooking is complete cover the dough with a piece of aluminum foil.

You can tell the dough is cooked when it is hard and sounds hollow when tapped. Turn the oven off and leave the finished piece in oven until it is cool.

When thoroughly dry sand any imperfections. Any burns can be sandpapered off with fine- medium grade sandpaper. An Emery board or small file can be used for delicate or intricate sanding on objects.

At this stage you can paint your projects then seal with a final coat of varnish.

Your finished projects can be left unpainted but they must be sealed on all sides with varnish, gloss or matt for protection otherwise they will not last long when exposed to air.

Brightly coloured pieces will look more vibrant painted with a glossy finish and neutral muted colours are suited to a matt finish.

Using a polyurethane varnish on food coloured models instead of water-based varnish helps to intensify the colour.

That's it! Happy modelling

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# Send A Strawhat Scarecrow

Gifts that pay off in love for a lifetime

Written by Rachel Webb

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Harvest time brings thoughts of cornfields, apple cider, pumpkin patches and scarecrows. Many communities around the world celebrate the harvest holiday which is also known as Thanksgiving. In Korea it is called Chu-Suk and in India it is known as Kerla Onam. In all of these counties, the harvest holiday is dedicated as a time to give thanks to their ancestors or to God for the harvest. This tradition is enjoyed by Hindus, Muslims and Christians alike. Because the scarecrow is thought to ward off predators that would take the harvest it is an important symbol. Using two straw hats, it is easy to make an adorable scarecrow to dress up you home for the harvest season.



You will need the following supplies for this craft:

- 1 Large Straw Hat
- 1 Small Straw Hat
- Hot Glue Gun
- Decorative Crafting Ribbon (3 yards)
- Dried Wheat Sprig and Silk Flowers
- 1" or 2" Sponge Brush
- Med. Stipple Brush
- Natural Colored Raffia
- Permanent Black Marker or Paint Pen
- Acrylic Paints
- Orange
- Flesh Color or Off-White
- Red and other Harvest Colors
- Clear Coat Spray Sealer

Start by cutting the small straw hat in two right down the middle leaving half the brim and crown of the hat on one side and half on the other side. You will only need one side for this craft.

Next, paint the crown of the large straw hat flesh color or off-white using your sponge brush. This will be the scarecrow's face. Do not paint the brim of the large hat, leave it the natural straw color to match the small straw hat.

After the paint has dried. Paint on the rest of the scarecrow's facial features. This part can be as easy or as advanced as you want it to be. For a simple scarecrow, painting the nose red or orange in the shape of a triangle. (pointy end up) Eyes can be oval or triangle shaped as well. Always allow one color of paint to dry before applying the next.

To paint the cheeks, use a dry stipple brush and work off most of the red paint blotting it on a paper towel. Using a pouncing motion gently pounce the cheeks in a circular motion. Feather lightly around the edges.

Using a black paint pen or sharpie permanent marker, outline the nose. Then, lightly draw a black line down the center of the face on either side of the nose. Add fun stitch marks to the dividing face seam line and around the nose if desired. Next draw on the mouth to connect the cheeks. You may want to dot a white glint in the eyes with the end of a paint brush and highlight the nose also for an added dimensional touch.

To protect the paint for many years of inside and outside decorating, lightly spray the face with a clear coat spray sealer found at hardware and crafting stores. Do not spray a heavy coat. Many black paint pens will run if sprayed too heavily. Several light coats of spray are sufficient.

Hot glue the cut small straw hat to the top the painted scarecrow face. Cut small bunches of raffia and hot glue in sections to either side of the scarecrow face. Full straggly raffia will cover any of the seam lines and give a finished look.

Embellish the scarecrow's new hat by hot gluing silk flowers and a wheat sprig to one side of the small hat. Silk sunflowers or rusty colored chrysanthemums look especially cute!

Last, make a large bow with crafting ribbon and glue it under the scarecrow's chin.

You can hang your scarecrow on the wall or on your front door to greet your guests.

You could also wire the scarecrow head to the top of a cross post and dress a real scarecrow body for a yard decoration.

**Think creatively when you send a Strawhatted Scarecrow hopping this year.**

the end

Author Rachel Webb designs write-on/wipe-off Organizational Fridge Calendars that are entirely magnetic. They make wonderful job charts. [Check out her site:](#)

# How To Make Balloon Plants

By: Merle O'Brien

<http://www.aspen4kids.com>

Making Balloon Plants is a wonderful activity! You can also use them to give as gifts, or to make at parties. Kids love making them and you will enjoy watching your new plant grow:)

Here are the directions...

1. Hold a balloon firmly by the neck. The neck is the long part. Use a funnel, and pour 1/2 cup of dirt into the balloon.

Don't turn the balloon over. (Try to find clear balloons to use.)

2. Keep holding the balloon by the neck. Add about 1/4 cup of water through the funnel. Be sure the soil in the balloon is wet. It shouldn't be soggy, though.

3. Use the funnel to drop the radish seeds into the balloon.

Don't turn the balloon over.

4. If the balloon is dirty, wipe it carefully with a washcloth.

5. Now you're ready to blow up your balloon! Keep holding it gently by the neck. Now carefully blow air into the balloon.

Note: You need to keep the balloon from tipping.

6. Tie a knot in the neck to keep the air in the balloon. Tie a ribbon around the knot.

7. Tie the balloon to a hook or other place near a window. The neck should be the top.

8. Your balloon plant is ready to begin growing!

If you would like more fun activities to do, you will love my Monday thru

Friday ezine "Recipes 4 learning" To sign up just send a blank email to : [join-recipes4learning@gt.sodamail.com](mailto:join-recipes4learning@gt.sodamail.com)

Be sure to check out <http://www.aspenchocoltes.com> for some yummy Free Chocolate Recipes :)

# Plastic Bag Ice Cream

Yes, it sounds dangerous and the potential for messes seems highly likely, but you'll be surprised at the good, "clean" fun you'll enjoy when you make ice cream this way.

This recipe is enough for one person to make a dish!

## Ingredients

**1/2 cup milk**  
**1/2 teaspoon vanilla**  
**1 tablespoon sugar**  
**4 cups crushed ice**  
**4 tablespoons salt**  
**2 quart size Zip-loc bags**  
**1 gallon size Zip-loc freezer bag**  
**a hand towel or gloves to keep fingers from freezing as well!**

**Mix the milk, vanilla and sugar together in one of the quart size bags. Seal tightly, allowing as little air to remain in the bag as possible. Too much air left inside may force the bag open during shaking.**

**Place this bag inside the other quart size bag, again leaving as little air inside as possible and sealing well. By double-bagging, the risk of salt and ice leaking into the ice cream is minimized.**

Put the two bags inside the gallon size bag and fill the bag with ice, then sprinkle salt on top. Again let all the air escape and seal the bag. Wrap the bag in the towel or put your gloves on, and shake and massage the bag, making sure the ice surrounds the cream mixture. Five to eight minutes is adequate time for the mixture to freeze into ice cream.

## Tips

Freezer bags work best because they are thicker and less likely to develop small holes, allowing the bags to leak. You can get away with using regular Zip-loc bags for the smaller quart sizes, because you are double-bagging. Especially if you plan to do this indoors, we strongly recommend using gallon size freezer bags.

**Here are some interesting tidbits:**

## **What does the salt do?**

Just like we use salt on icy roads in the winter, salt mixed with ice in this case also causes the ice to melt. When salt comes into contact with ice, the freezing point of the ice is lowered. Water will normally freeze at 32 degrees F. A 10% salt solution freezes at 20 degrees F, and a 20% solution freezes at 2 degrees F. By lowering the temperature at which ice is frozen, we are able to create an environment in which the milk mixture can freeze at a temperature below 32 degrees F into ice cream.

## **Who invented ice cream?**

Legend has it that the Roman emperor, Nero, discovered ice cream. Runners brought snow from the mountains to make the first ice cream. In 1846, Nancy Johnson invented the hand-cranked ice cream churn and ice cream surged in popularity. Then, in 1904, ice cream cones were invented at the St. Louis World Exposition. An ice cream vendor ran out of dishes and improvised by rolling up some waffles to make cones.

If you would like more fun things to do please sign up for Recipes 4 Learning, my daily ezine filled with fun, creative ideas for you to do with kids, students, and the whole family:) [join-recipes4learning@gt.sodamail.com](mailto:join-recipes4learning@gt.sodamail.com)

# What did you Give for Christmas?

**Gifts that last for generations!**

Written by Rachel Webb

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If adults struggle with remembering the important "Giving" part of Christmas, how can we teach our children that it really is more important to give than to receive?

I love Christmas morning, after all the gifts are opened and the friends, neighbors and extended family visit with one another sharing in the holiday spirit. I especially enjoy asking children and adults,

**"What did you give for Christmas?"**

Of course the normal question is "What did you GET for Christmas". I think a lot can be learned from the responses I receive each year even if you do not celebrate Christmas in the traditional sense as I do.

When children are asked what they gave for Christmas, they never really hear the question; they are bursting with the need to tell anyone and everyone who will listen all the details of the great loot they got from Santa!

When I pose this question to adults the answer is a little more surprising.

Most people just assume they heard the question wrong and answer just like a child - by listing all of the neat stuff they accumulated this year.

Really alert, good listeners, will hear the "Give" instead of "Get" and typically become baffled by the question as they struggle to remember what they bought or made for the special people in their lives.

If adults struggle with remembering the important "Giving" part of

Christmas, how can we teach or children that it really is more important to give than to receive?

**Children will enjoy gift giving more if they learn to give of themselves in three ways.**

- **Time - doing chores to earn the money or offering service coupons as the gift itself.**
- **Talents - home-made craft item, original picture, writing a poem or making a card.**
- **Money - to purchase the gift**

Planning ahead for gift buying can make the gift more special. (As those of us with Night-Before-Christmas shopping husbands would agree!)

Help kids make a list of items that they think that person would enjoy. Young kids can even draw a picture of gift ideas and then explain it to you.

This can be a good exercise that can open up a parent/child discussion to help young children recognize others likes and dislikes instead of listing everything they wish they had.

## **IT IS THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO TEACH CHILDREN SELFLESSNESS**

Even young children need to be taught how to earn money & how to spend it. Give children opportunities to earn their own gift money.

Many moms, including me, have been guilty of just giving my children money to buy gifts for their brothers and sisters or even worse picking out presents for them and even wrapping it for them and signing their name too!

I don't suggest making them earn every last penny needed to purchase their gifts but I do think it is the parent's responsibility to teach kids to give of themselves.

Set an example for your children by putting more importance on your own gift giving and this Christmas morning when you see your friends and neighbors, help them remember the most important part of Christmas by asking, **"What did you GIVE for Christmas?"**

**Think creatively  
and enjoy Giving all your Gifts this year.**

the end

Author Rachel Webb designs write-on/wipe-off Organizational Fridge Calendars that are entirely magnetic. They make wonderful job charts. [Check out her site:](#)

Note-Ables began producing Magnetic Calendars in early 1999 out of necessity - it was the only way Rachel could keep up with the busy schedule of three active children and numerous church and civic activities!

Manufactured using a heavy flexible magnetic material - Rachel guarantees that the Calendar won't slide off when the kids slam the fridge door!  
**(magnetic strips that slide off are a personal pet peeve at their home)**

[Note-Ables Calendars](#) are also popular for wedding gifts or office use on filing cabinets, R.V's or metal shop doors. One man we met at a craft fair bought a calendar to put on his automatic garage door -try and beat that for originality!

# Engraving Money by Lin Stone

Kristina Smith would rather engrave pictures on an old pie plate than go dancing. Well, she DOES alternate those fun projects, once in a while.



## [Loving Hands Productions](#)

**308-B Sutton Street  
Fayetteville, AR 72701**

Kristina has an assortment of designs she does lovingly well. Bird house, cats, apples, light house, pie, tea pot, chickens, angel, pitcher, home, tulips, magnolia, sunflower, Santa, Poinsetta, cow, grapes, bread, bow, American eagle and flag, old-timey school house, a cabin with a moose approaching. A cabin in the high hills with a fat bear leaving it, etc..

High grade steel stove burner covers is what she likes to engrave on most. "If one of them gets too hot you have a hot lid, and that's all. The engraving is

still good and the cover is still good too."

What else does she engrave on? Aluminum cake or pie pans are high on her list of requests. Steel cake pans, brownie pans, and round pie pans get in on the act too. These can be personalized with sayings like, Season's Greetings, Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Bless this Home, Country at Heart, Home Sweet Home, and of course, Give Us This Day.

Then there's From the Kitchen of, with the person's name, and the word kitchen. Grandma, Mema, or just plain old Mom can replace a proper name in this design.

Special Designs can be done for a slight extra charge. "You come up with the artwork and I'll sure try to do it," says Kristin.

The steel pans are available in three popular colors hunter green, navy blue, and burgundy red. For my money, the navy blue turns out best.

To generate orders Kristin takes trips around the surrounding areas to demonstrate her craft at craft shows. She has her sales literature ready to hand out if anyone is interested. But she can also make the product right there on the spot.

**"Someday," she muses dreamily. "Someday, Jay (my husband) will finish my web site so I can sell my craft products from there.**

**She wants it set up so that surfers can choose their design and put it EXACTLY where they want it on the lid, or pan, stretch it, turn it, or whatever. "I KNOW what George is capable of and I won't accept anything less than the very best web site he can make."**

Even though they have been engraved upon, these pots are still good for cooking, baking and whatever. In fact, they are perfect for church socials, for baking and carrying foods for potlucks, company picnics, or to send a dinner to a grieving family. They are sure to come back to you, or the one you had it made for because the name is right there on it.

Kristin has priced her handiwork at \$20 each, with a \$4.00 shipping and

handling fee. Personal checks are preferred. To maintain the quality buyers should expect their order to take up to 6 weeks for delivery.

Orders are received by mail, by phone, [and by email](#). People everywhere find these make perfect gifts for housewarming parties, bridal showers, Mother's Day gifts, birthday celebrations and of course. Christmas Specials.

Lin Stone is an author, writer and photographer living in Mena Arkansas among the gentle mountains known as Ouachita. His articles and essays are syndicated by talewins to be published automatically on other web sites. He writes about adventures for Gates of Go, and he writes about the peaceable things of this world for Share Your State. In his spare time Lin writes copy for American Insurance Depot. You can have immediate, and free, reading of many more pieces when you send your little surfer scooting to Lin's home page at <http://www.talewins.com/StoneSoup.htm> where he keeps stirring up more good things for the soul.

# Too Pretty To Open

written by Rachel Webb

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Year around we have many opportunities to give gifts to others. If we plan ahead gift giving can be a fun and enjoyable way to show our love to those around us without being a burden on our time or finances. Often our gifts are painstakingly picked out with genuine love but then we get in a rush and present our gift in a hastily thrown together packaging that does not accurately express the time we put into our gift.

**Gifts that open up worlds of love!**

**With a little effort and a lot of creativity you can wrap presents that are too pretty to open! Here are some ideas you can try at home.**

## **SAVING ODDS AND ENDS**

1. Start by saving all of the bows you receive on gifts,
2. These bows can be used in other creative ways or combined with other ribbons and lace to create a whole new look.
3. Keep all scraps of ribbon, lace, tulle, nylon tricot, silk or dried flowers, gold and silver cording, wedding and jingle bells or confetti.
4. Watch for small plastic toys or shapes like stars, plastic cake toppers, Halloween spider rings and toys you often find on top of bakery cupcakes.
5. Keep unsharpened pencils on hand that are unusual shapes, unique straws or miniature individual wrapped candy.
6. There are many everyday items you may come across that you would not normally think of using for present toppers. If you start collecting

these things and keeping them in a special wrapping box, then when it comes time to wrap, your creativity has more options to work with.

## **BABY SHOWER GIFT**

Paint your box with 1-2 coats of a glossy spray paint. Using a coordinating color randomly sponge small duck shapes onto your box. Use glitter paint and an old toothbrush to carefully splatter paint onto the box for added interest.

Fun tassels can be made from recycled colored plastic wrap, dry cleaning garment bags or netting by braiding long strips and cutting them 2-4 inches wide. Twist the plastic until it rolls into a rope. Make a knot in the end and fan out the plastic to make a tassel.

Create your bow out of flat lace remnants by stiffening it with nice scented hairspray, heavy starch or diluted glue. Depending on the size of your box you will need 3-4 yards to of lace to create a full and fancy bow. Imaging how cute several pastel tassels would be with a baby rattle or booties tied into the gift topper!

## **WINTER HOLIDAY TOPPERS**

For an elegant package start with gold foil wrapping paper. Set off the gold with a fabulous topper made of small evergreen twigs and holly berries. You may even want to embellish a 2" grapevine wreath or tie in miniature pinecones.

Place your arrangement in a large box and lightly spray with artificial snow or glitter.

Next tie your topper onto your package with elegant burgundy ribbon.

For a Thanksgiving gift topper, make a big bow with orange crepe paper and tie a gold leafed wishbone into the package.

Another fun embellishment would be to dangle pumpkins made out of orange spray painted walnuts. Hot glue a green leaf on top of the nut and wrap a thin craft wire around a pencil to make the pumpkin tendrils.

## **MOTHER'S DAY PACKAGES**

Make gift wrap that will really remind you of home by wrapping this gift with a square of patchwork fabric. You can purchase fabric panels that already look like pieced fabric or piece your own with odds and ends of coordinating calicos.

Top this gift with a corsage made of real or silk flowers.

Use sheer ribbon that will not take the focus away from your flowers and tie this package together with love!

## **BIRTHDAY GIFTS**

For a package perfect for girls or boys stick to themes that are universal. Animal themes can be fun to follow by wrapping gifts in faux fur and tying zebra or lion striped pencils, or animal masks into the topper with curling ribbon.

Little girls would love a package topper that is really a useful balloon hairbow.

Make the barrette bow by using 8-12 8" or 9" balloons and a metal hairbow clip (Any size will work).

Temporarily remove the metal clasp on the hairbow clip and turn the top of the clip curved side down.

Using 2-3 colors of balloons is best and alternating colors in order.

Making sure you put the same color on both ends.

Flip-flop the balloons so that they are laying in a row with one upside down, one faced up, and tie the balloons in a knot one by one on the metal clip. (Balloons might slightly inflate while tying, this makes for a full-cute bow)

Push the balloons close together on the clasp. Put the metal clasp back together after all the balloons are tied on.

Further embellish with shoelaces or beads. Theme your barrettes with plastic accessories tied to the middle of the bow like black plastic spiders for Halloween or hearts for Valentines day!

**Forget the humbug, think creatively and enjoy wrapping your gifts this year.**

the end

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[Check out Rachel's site:](#)

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