

TheHappyHousewife.com

homemade

**CHRISTMAS
GIFTS**



Homemade Christmas Gifts

Compiled by Toni Anderson, Defy Gravity Media, LLC

TheHappyHousewife.com

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This eBook is a compilation of homemade gift ideas from numerous bloggers. Each blogger has given permission for her tutorial to be published here. The blogger's web site can be found at the end of each gift tutorial and at the end of this eBook.

The gift ideas listed here were part of a blog series highlighting 100 homemade Christmas gifts. You can find all of those ideas as well as new ones listed at The Happy Housewife: [Homemade Christmas Gifts 2011](#) and [Homemade Christmas Gifts 2012](#).

I am offering this book for free, but the contents are copyrighted as part of this book and as published on each blogger's web site.

Happy gift giving!

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Pottery Barn Art



Supplies

- Frame
- Tissue paper
- Tape
- Scrapbook paper and stencils or a cutting machine like the Cricut

Instructions

1. Start by wrapping the background of the frame in tissue paper. This provides the background. Pink tissue paper matched the room and kept it consistent with the model. Layering light pink on top of darker pink gave the coloring a little depth while still keeping it light.

2. The fun part is using my Cricut cutting machine to cut out the L O V E letters. Cut out the letters. My letters are 8 inches each so I could overlap them in the frame. Using the Cricut is an easy way to get an amazing result. Stencils work just as well, but in my opinion any cutting machine is the way to go.

3. Tape the letters onto the frame however you would like. The model shows all letters separate, but I thought it would be just as cute to overlap the letter as art.

This DIY cost absolutely nothing since all of the supplies were on hand. If you were to purchase everything, including the Cricut, you would spend more out of pocket. But, you would also have the Cricut to use again to use on other projects.

If you chose to use stencils instead, you would spend around \$10 on the frame, scrapbook paper and tissue paper. Still WAY less than the \$149 Pottery Barn Kids sticker price! Now where can I spend that extra \$149 I didn't spend on art?? ;)

SavingsLifestyle.com is a money-saving blog focused on couponing to save at the grocery, online deals and shopping, affordable recipes and DIY projects, as well as general savings tips and inspiration. Visit daily to find ways you can save on what you need and spend (or save) more on what you want!

Book Letters



Supplies

- Letters (purchased from Michaels)
- Old Book
- Hot Glue Gun
- Hot Glue
- Scissors

Instructions

1. Like every good craft project, gather all of your materials and create yourself a nice little work station.
2. Begin by tearing out pages of an old book.
3. After your pages are torn out of the book, use your scissors to cut strips out of the paper.

Hint: Using your torn book pages, measure roughly by eye the width you will need to cover the width of your letter in the particular spot you are working.



4. Roll your paper strips. You can either roll them tight or loose, depending on your preference.

5. As you finish rolling your paper strip, grab your hot glue gun and put a small amount onto the remaining edge of your paper strip.



6. Continue rolling your strip in order to adhere the glue strip onto the paper. You will now have a cute little roll that is ready for the next step!

7. Hot Glue your paper roll onto your letter. After you have completed a few rolls, it will begin to look like this:



8. Continue until your letter(s) are covered entirely with paper rolls.

9. Enjoy your Book Letters and have fun deciding where to stick/hang/stand them :)



Hello! I am Katie Miller and my blog is [Little Things Bring Smiles](#). I chose this title because it is important to remember the little things God puts in life and to rejoice in them. My reason for blogging is to share my life, all parts of it including the good-the bad-and the ugly, along with my home, crafts, and DIY projects I create. Grab a cup of coffee, visit, and stay a while :)

Cake Stand



Supplies

- Candle holder
- Plate
- Glue

For this particular stand, the candle stick holder is from the dollar store (& spray painted white) and the plate is a salad plate from the Easter line at Target. Total cost = \$2.79

Instructions

To construct your stand, glue around the rim of the candle holder. You can add a little circle of glue on the underneath side of the plate for good measure.



Sara is a mom of two little guys who hung up her biology teacher lab coat in order to spend more time at home with them. When she's not playing dinosaurs, cars, or doing a million other "mom" things, you can find her blogging at [Mom Endeavors](#) or chatting on Twitter and Facebook. This cake stand project was featured at [The Happy Housewife](#).

Reed Diffuser



Supplies

- Empty small glass bottle
- Baby Oil
- Skewers, dowels, or reed diffuser rods
- Essential Oils

Instructions

Pour some baby oil in the little bottle. The amount you use will depend on the size of the jar you use. I probably used about 1/4 c. and it filled up my little jar about halfway.

Then drop in essential oil in the scent of your choice. For my size jar I used about 15 drops.



If you use skewers you might have to cut them to the right size. Then stick the skewers or reeds into the bottle and that's it!

If you want to keep reusing a reed diffuser all you need to do is replace the liquid about every 2 months or so.

Merissa blogs about simple, natural, and frugal living at [Little House Living](#). She believes that everyone can make the most with what they have.

All Natural Cleaner Gift Basket



Supplies

- White Vinegar
- Baking Soda
- Essential Oil
- Basket (I used this past year's Easter basket)
- Leftover Holiday Ribbon (green goes great with this theme)
- Gift Tag
- Recycled Easter Grass or shredded paper
- 2 Recycled Bottles

Instructions

1. In your bottles, place white vinegar in one and baking soda in the other. One of these bottles I picked up at a thrift store for .25 cents, and the other is just a canning jar I am reusing.
2. Place your grass or shredded paper in the bottom of your basket, and decorate the basket with ribbon (however you prefer).

3. Tie ribbon around your bottles to make bows.
4. Place your bottles including the essential oils bottle in the basket. Use the grass/paper to cushion the bottles so that they are protected from breaking.
5. Using a gift tag (use a hole punch and a piece of string so that you can tie it to your basket), write instructions for a natural, all-purpose home cleaner.

Home cleaner directions:

For an all-natural all-purpose cleaner, mix together in a clean, empty spray bottle:

- 3/4 water
- 1/4 white vinegar
- 1 Tablespoon baking soda
- 6 drops of essential oil

This gift costs just a few dollars to put together, and it's a great way to impact someone's life this year! They will learn to save money and clean their home with less toxins.

A cute addition to this gift would be adding some pretty new washcloths. The most expensive part of this gift will be the essential oil, so I recommend going with a smaller bottle than what I have pictured.

Atlanta local, adventurer, health advocate and thrifty as can be. I like music, sci-fi and cheese with my organic wine. Let me help you live healthy and frugal: www.TheThriftyMama.com.

Tea Cup Candles



I saw the idea for this on a bookcover in a bookstore on vacation and I thought it was so cute! You can make "candle making" cheaper by re-using leftover wax and by utilizing the coupons for Hobby Lobby and Michaels.

Supplies

- Tin can
- Wax (either from leftover candles or in bar form)
- Wick
- Teacups
- Tape
- Scissors
- Essential oil (If you aren't re-using scented candles you can add a few drops to the wax to scent it.)

Instructions

Put the chunks of wax in the tin can. As you can see I mixed some of the new wax with the scented old leftover wax.

Put the tin can in the middle of a saucepan of boiling water. This way it melts correctly and doesn't make a big huge mess in your cookware.



Cut a piece of wick to be slightly longer than the teacup. Tape one end to the bottom of the cup and wrap the other end around a pencil or pen. When the wax has melted pour it into the cup.



Let the wax cool for at least 2-3 hours and then cut the wicks. While the one on the right was cooling I added a little nutmeg in the top for scent and to look cute, like a little spiced drink.

Cost for project:

- Teacups: .05 - .10 each (I paid .05 for each of these from a thrift store)
- Wax: .25(I paid \$7 for the whole brick of the new wax using the 50% off coupon and you really don't use very much plus you are re-using leftover wax as well)
- Wick .10(I paid .99 for the whole roll of wick with the 50% off coupon)

Final cost: Around \$0.45 for 2 candles depending on how much you can get the teacups for and if you use coupons for the wax and wicks.

Merissa blogs about simple, natural, and frugal living at [Little House Living](#). She believes that everyone can make the most with what they have.

Magnetic Fabric Bulletin Board



Ok are you ready for me to tell you how easy it is to do? I went to JoAnn Fabric to look for inspiration fabric. I found these 2 coordinating fabrics and the best part is I was able to use a coupon on one of them and the other was a remnant fabric so it was discounted. I wanted it to look like artwork even if there was nothing displayed on it.

Then I headed out to my favorite Home Depot where they accept competitor coupons, and got my supplies. You will need a piece of zinc-coated steel (aluminum and stainless steel will not hold magnets). I took a few magnets with me and the fabric so I could make sure it was going to work.

You'll need heavy duty magnets and you should be able to buy these at the hardware store as well. Now I chose a large piece that I could cut to size at home. It was cheaper than buying 2 smaller ones. Your hardware store might cut it to size for you if you take in your measurements or even the frame you will be using.

If you do it yourself, you'll need a pair of scissors that will cut metal. They sell these for about \$10. I laid out the cardboard

backing to the original picture frames and used them as a template to measure the cuts.



Now you can begin your cuts. Remember it's always better to cut a piece too big and trim later, than cut it too small and waste a piece. You may want to use gloves for this part. Cut metal is sharp and I for one didn't want a cut! Once it's cut you'll want to place it inside your frame to make sure it fits.

Cut your fabric so you have about a 1-2 inch overhang all around the metal.

I used spray adhesive to adhere the fabric. I started with a small piece on the back to get it lined up exactly the way I wanted it. Then I flipped it over and sprayed about 5 inches of metal at a time and laid down the fabric.

This is where you have to be very careful because the adhesive is strong and you don't want any air bubbles or wrinkles. You might get someone to help you if you are working with a large piece.



The only thing left is to place it inside the frame, secure it, then hang! I'm so excited about how well it turned out.



Karen Rodriguez blogs at SavingTheFamilyMoney.com about tips and tricks to saving money, from coupons to [home decor and recipes](#). She believes you should save money on everyday essentials so you can splurge on the fun stuff.

Arts and Crafts Caddy



Supplies

- Lazy Susan
- Sand paper
- Paint
- Buckets/cans/bins to go on the lazy Susan
- Drill and screws (preferred) or hot glue gun

Instructions

1. Use a lazy susan. We used IKEA's version, which is under \$8 and a large size. It is a basic wood.
2. Sand the lazy susan. We always paint our lazy susan so we give it a little sanding first. We used 180 grit, just enough to scuff the surface.
3. Lay out the buckets or bins that will go on the lazy susan. Space them out evenly. Angry Husband marks a center point on the lazy

susan and then draws out a pie chart for bucket placement so that everything is even. He then pre-drills holes on each of the lines of the pie chart and the center point. This is for bucket placement after the lazy susan is painted. You can also use a glue gun to secure the buckets, but we have found the short screws hold everything in place tighter.

4. Mask off the area to be painted on the lazy susan.



5. Paint lazy susan. We use whatever paint is available in our garage. We used black paint for this particular caddy because Angry Husband was also painting our nightstands for our master bedroom. Angry Kid's caddy is gray. The gray paint was from his leftover bedroom paint.

This photograph below depicts Step 5. Notice the pre-drilled holes showing through the black paint.



6. Select your buckets. We used the “Socker” buckets from IKEA, which are for plants. We used six of the smaller size for the outside area of the caddy, and a large one for the middle.

7. Drill a hole in the bottom of the bucket. We use anything less than 1/2" screws. My husband said that he used 3/8" this time.



8. Place screw, which is less than 1/2" into hole on bucket. (Not shown)
9. Align buckets and screws inside with pre-drilled holes on lazy susan. (Not shown)
10. Use a drill or screwdriver, and screw buckets to lazy susan. (Not shown).
11. You are finished.



Julie is a full-time working mom, wife, crafter, photographer, runner, USC Trojan Fan, and a Slurpee Junkie. She lives in Southern California and blogs about her life at [Angry Julie Monday](#).

Etched Glass Vase



Since I already had a cricut machine for scrapbooking, I thought I'd break out of my shell and try something new with it. I was inspired to make personalized teachers gifts.

Supplies

- Glass Vase
- Cricut machine (or stencils)
- Cricut vinyl – any color
- Glass etching Cream

Instructions

I used the Jasmine cartridge and cut out, “Mrs XYZ helps us Grow”.





Then I peeled off the vinyl and used the negative as a stencil.



I placed it on the glass, then added the etching cream for 5-10 minutes.

I made 2 of these and I was able to use the bottom words twice, thus saving vinyl for other projects.

Karen Rodriguez blogs at SavingTheFamilyMoney.com about tips and tricks to saving money, from coupons to home decor and recipes. She believes you should save money on everyday essentials so you can splurge on the fun stuff.

Wood Block Photo Display



My MOPS group got together and made these adorable wooden blocks. They are a beautiful way to display a picture you love and switch it out whenever you desire.

Supplies

- Wood block with beveled edge
- Sand paper
- Paint
- Scrapbook paper
- Mod Podge
- Ribbon/yarn/decorative times
- Button paper clip or binder clip

We painted the blocks and sanded the edges.
All the ladies picked out a piece or two of scrapbook paper.
We modge podged the paper to the wood block.



Picked out some coordinating ribbons, fluffy yarn, and other decorative items to hot glue to the top.



Selected a button paper clip or modged podged our own binder clip to fancy it up. Sanded the back of it to rough it up a bit, and hot glued it to the block.



Kendra Duty lives in College Station, TX, where she and her husband minister first and foremost to their 3 energetic children, as well as countless college students and families through New Life, their 3-year-old church plant. Kendra enjoys reading, writing, crafts and decorating. She blogs at [The Duty Chronicles](#).

Art of the Month Club



I made a wooden plaque for each of the 4 grandparents. I got this at Hobby Lobby in a week where the wood stuff was 50% off.

I painted them and put a nice piece of scrapbook paper in it, then added chipbook letters and some 3D embellishments. It said our family's last name after L'il, but I blurred that out. It was accompanied by a certificate that said

Merry Christmas! Your gift this year is one that you will continue to receive all year long~ This certificate entitles [Grandparent's name] to a one year subscription in the [last name] Family Art-of-the-Month Club. Each month, for the entire year of 2010, you will receive an Original piece of artwork for you to display on your custom-made Art-of-the-month Club frame. Included with your gift is a bonus piece of art to display in December 2009. These Originals are made by such well-known artists as [child's name] and [other child's name].

This project is featured at [Be Organized. Save Money](#) where the author is a bookaholic, homeschooling mom of four.

Gifts for the Home - Sewing Projects

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Canvas Log Carrier



These carriers are a great, useful gift for people (OK, men) who are somewhat harder to find things for. And how much did my version end up costing? About \$6.00 and an hour of time.

As long as you have basic skills (and I'm serious- just basic, straight-stitch sewing is all you need here), you will be able to make these.

Supplies

- 1 yd of 52" wide canvas (this makes two- it's cheapest and easiest to make two, as you just cut the yard in half- if you only can think of one person who'd like this, you will need 3/4 yd. of canvas, but you will have some leftover and it will be more expensive- UNLESS you don't mind a seam in the bottom, then buy 1/2 yard, cut in half and sew together to create the 36"x 26" piece needed).
- 3 yds. (for each carrier, so 6 yds to make 2) of strap-style webbing- the type used for tote bags and such. I used poly (vs. cotton) to hold up to the rough handling it will get when full of wood.

- 2 craft dowels for each carrier- medium thickness
- Matching thread

Instructions

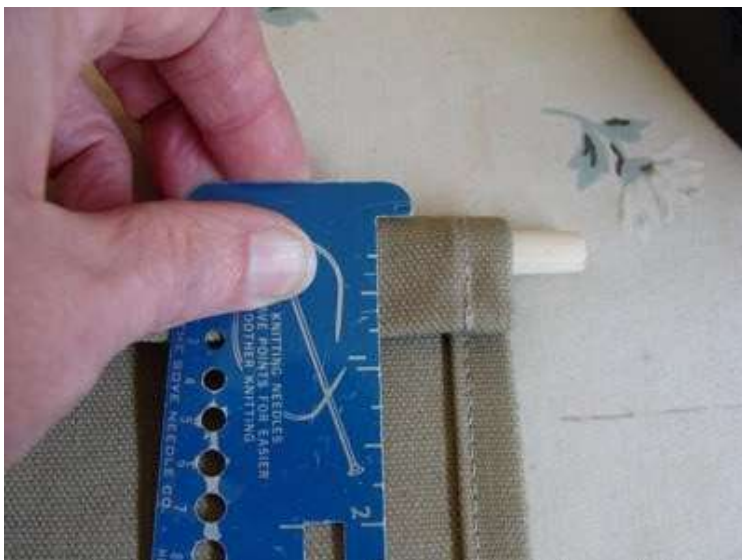
1. Cut the yard of canvas in half. You will have a 36" x 26" (approximately, depending on the initial width of fabric) piece for each carrier (cut to this size if making one with 3/4 of a yard, or cut in half and sew together if using 1/2 yard).

2. Make side hems by folding over the long 36" sides 1/4-inch, pressing with a hot iron, and then turning another 1/4-inch to enclose the raw edge. Press hem to hold while sewing.

Sew close to inside edge of hem, remembering to bar tack (go back and forth in the first few stitches) at the beginning and the end to lock in the stitching. I like to use the presser foot as my guide, as pictured.

3. Once both side hems are complete, make the pockets for the dowel on each short end by turning over a 1/4-inch and pressing in place. Measure the width needed by holding the dowel at the end and folding the fabric over the dowel.

You want enough room to easily slide the dowel in (and out for cleaning, if needed), but not so much that it will fall out on it's own. I found that a 3/4" hem was sufficient for the medium sized dowels I used.



Remove the dowel and pin the fold at the measurement before sewing in place close to the inner edge, creating the pocket for the dowel.

4. Measure the placement of the webbing for the strap of the carrier. Start in the middle of the canvas, as shown so that the webbing seam will be on the bottom of the carrier.

This is somewhat arbitrary, but I found that placing the webbing at 6" in from the sides created the best balance. I then distributed the 3 yards of webbing around the canvas, (pinning as I went) making sure that each handle was the same length and ended by folding 1/4" of the end over the beginning of the webbing to join the ends.



Leave about 6" from the top edge to the center of the handle. If you'd like a longer handle, increase the inches.

Test that both handles are the same by holding them together to be sure they will carry correctly. I did have to adjust sometimes to make them even.

It should look like this when all the webbing is pinned in place.



5. Sew the webbing by starting at the top of one side of webbing and then sew across the webbing *just underneath*, or right on top of the top edge seam (to leave pocket free for the dowel). I sewed back and forth a couple of times to reinforce these top edges, as they get a lot of pressure when carrying wood.

Turn the carrier and sew close to the edge of the webbing all the way to the other side, turn again and go across just like the other end (reinforcing a couple of times), and then turn and continue up the other side, again close to the edge.

Repeat for the other side of the webbing.

When you come to where the webbing joins, sew over the joint like normal, but come back when you're finished and sew across the joining seam to secure.

Now, to help the handles lay better where the webbing meets the tops of the holder, I sew a little bit of the webbing for the handle.

6. Sew this part of the handle by starting about an inch up from where you sewed the handle to the carrier, and fold the webbing in

half *towards the inside*. Pin at the 1-inch mark and the 3-inch mark and sew between these pins, tacking back and forth at the beginning and the end to hold the thread.



There will be a 2-inch part of the webbing sewn together, which helps the handles to lay against the carrier.

On the first carrier I made, I folded the entire handle over but found it made the handle too narrow, making it uncomfortable to carry when loaded with wood. The wider webbing is much easier to hold.

7. The last step is to cut the dowels to the length need to fit inside the rod-pocket without showing on either end. I used a miter saw, but a hand saw and miter box would work as well.

It doesn't have to be pretty, thank goodness- nobody's gonna see the ends!

8. Insert the dowels and you're done.



Jami is a wife, mother, and preschool teacher who blogs at [An Oregon Cottage](#) where she shares recipes, DIY adventures, and her organic garden--all on a budget. Join her as she strives to put people first, celebrate imperfections, embrace simplicity, and find joy in everyday life!

Camera Strap Cover



First, I started with a dog bed ripped up by the one and only Max Champion Gunter. Then, I measured the camera strap currently attached to my camera and added 1 inch to the length. The width I doubled and added 1 inch also.

Next, cut.

Now I would suggest adding some type of soft batting to the backside of the patterned fabric. You could probably even use spray adhesive.

Real sewers (*sew-ers, as in one who sews...not the stinky things in the ground*) use the word fabric interfacing, for such a step, but I'm not really sure what that is?????

I was lucky because my discarded dog bed fabric, already had a little cushion on the backside!

Now for a little more cutting. I wanted a ruffled layer to add a little dimension, so I also cut a strip of burlap fabric. I doubled the length of my camera strap to allow for a little pizzazz!

Now, let's get to stitchin'. I hemmed the short side of my camera strap fabric 1/4".



Then to the burlap I hemmed all 4 sides 1/4"



To create the ruffle, I used the longest stitch of the sewing machine, and ran it right down the middle. Pulling on ONLY the bottom string I ruffled the burlap...since it was kind of long. I worked from both ends, always pulling on the same bottom string.



The next step was simple. After attaching my ruffle on the center of the right half of my OPEN camera strap fabric, I stitched it right down the middle.



You are ALMOST there, so hang on! With right sides together, sew the open side with a 1/4" seam.

Now, this is the hardest part, you have to turn it INSIDE OUT. Because it's such a thin tube, it took a while. I used a skewer, and after an episode of Jeopardy, I was halfway there. So I watched another before I got where I wanted to be :o)

I slipped it on the original strap and also created a few rosettes which I attached with hot glue.



Laura Beth Gunter blogs about her journey of crafting, cooking, living, & believing at [A Step in the Journey](#). She loves sweet tea & college football "War Eagle!" & is southern as her double name suggests. She is thankful to be saved by God's grace & strives to live a life worthy of the calling she's received. When she is not blogging you can find her filling typography orders for her Etsy Shop.

Fabric Coasters



Supplies

- Fat Quarter Fabric (18"x18") or 1/2 yard of fabric
- Stiff Interfacing Medium to heavy weight (20" x 5")
- Matching Thread
- Cutter/Ruler/Pins/Iron
- #14 Sewing Needle

Instructions

1. Cut {8} 5" x 5" squares from your Fabric Material
2. Cut {4} 5" x 5" squares from Medium to Heavy weight interfacing



3. Pin 2 Fabric squares right side together, with 1 interface square underneath. Do this to all cut fabric making for 4 pinned coasters.



4. Draw your sewing line with a pencil on the pinned side of each square. Use your clear ruler to mark $\frac{1}{2}$ inch lines from edge to edge, all the way around. I find a pencil makes the best markings for me. You should have straight lines all the way around. These lines make the finished product straight.



5. Set tension at 6 or 7, Length Stitch at 2 and begin to sew. Place needle on your line and follow your markings as best as possible. **Remember you'll need to leave a 3 inch gap from your start stitch to your end stitch. This gap will give you the space you'll need to turn the coaster right-side out.

6. Cut the excess fabric and diagonal corners. Keep extra fabric at opening long, do not cut.



7. Iron wrong side of fabric on cotton setting so to 'loosen' the fabric for ease of manipulating the fabric while turning right side out.
8. Turn excess fabric from opening, inwards, and pin shut.



9. Return to the machine. Change Length Stitch to 3, keep Tension at 6-7. Depending on what thread color you chose, find a spot on your material that best matches your thread color; start your stitch there. This will make your starting point less noticeable.

Now give your coaster a finishing seam. First seam line, 1/4 of an inch from edge of material. Second seam line, 1/2 an inch from edge. If you follow your universal foot edge well, and your cut lines are good, you should be able to sew straight finishing lines. Having your initial sew line straight, makes the world of difference too with a finished product. *Happy Sewing. :)*

Hilani, from [Handmade by Hilani](#), is a lover of many things like fabric, family, and chocolate. She finds inspiration all around and likes to fill her limited free-time with something crafty. She's passionate about a lot of things and sewing is one of them.

Remote Control Pillow



Supplies

- 2 pieces of 17 1/2 inch by 17 1/2 inch fabric (pillow pieces)
- 1 piece of 8 1/2 inch by 17 1/2 inch fabric (pocket piece)
- Fiberfill (stuffing)
- Coordinating thread
- Sewing machine
- Ruler
- Hand sewing needle
- Iron

Instructions

1. Fold one long side of the pocket piece (8 1/2" x 17 1/2" fabric piece) down 1/2 inch, placing wrong sides together. Press.

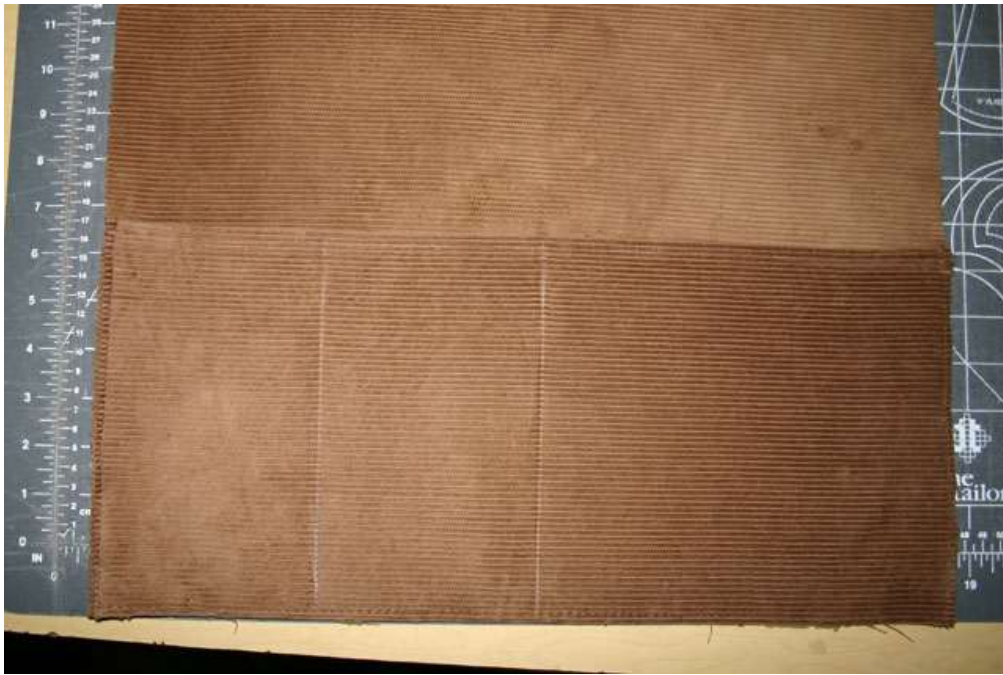


2. Stitch along the fold using a 1/4 inch seam allowance.

3. Pin the pocket piece to one 17 1/2" x 17 1/2" piece of fabric placing the wrong side of the pocket piece to the right side of the pillow piece being sure to line up the bottom edges evenly.

4. Baste the pocket piece to the pillow piece using a 1/8 inch seam. Only sew along the 2 short sides and the bottom of the pocket. Do NOT sew along the top of the pocket piece.

5. Draw chalk lines on the pocket piece so that you know where to sew. Make one line in the center of the pocket at 8 3/4 inches. This will divide the pocket in half. On one of the halves draw another chalk line at 4 3/8 inches from the edge. You need to decide now if you want to have 4 small pockets or the two small pockets and one large pocket pictured in this tutorial.



6. Sew on the chalk lines being sure to backstitch at each end.

7. Pin the other 17 1/2 inch piece of fabric, right sides together, on top of the piece that has the pockets.



8. Sew the pieces together using a 1/4 seam allowance leaving a 5 inch opening on one side (above the pocket) for turning. Clip all four corners of the fabric. (You just want to trim a little triangle off of each corner without cutting into your seam allowance.)

9. Stuff the pillow with the Fiberfill to the desired fullness (Do not overstuff). Hand stitch the opening closed.



Jackie is a wife and mom of 5. You can find her writing about family life and all things crafty at [Blessings Overflowing](#). If you are looking for activities to do with young children be sure to stop by her other blog, [PocketfulOfPosiesBlog.com](#).

Casserole Carrier



This tutorial will show you how to make a casserole carrier to hold a 7 inch by 11 inch casserole dish and a 10 inch wooden spoon.

Supplies

- 4 pieces of fabric 12 in. by 17 in. for the body of the carrier.
- 2 pieces of batting (Insul Bright) or fleece 12 in. by 17 in.
- 1 piece of fabric 2 ½ in. by 6 ½ in. for the spoon pocket.
- 2 pieces of fabric 2 ½ in. by 13 in. for the ties.
- 2 pieces of fabric 5 in. by 14 ½ in. for the handles.
- Rotary cutter and mat
- Ruler
- Coordinating thread
- Sewing Machine
- Iron

Instructions

1. Layer the body pieces and batting like this. Place batting down first. Then put one 12" x 17" piece of fabric on top of the batting right side up. Place another piece of 12" x 17" fabric face down so that the two fabric pieces have right sides together. Pin in place.



2. Stitch around the edge of the layered fabric using a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam allowance leaving a 4" – 5" opening along one 12" side for turning.
3. Turn the fabric so that the batting is in between the two layers of fabric and both pieces of fabric have right sides facing out. (You can pin the opening closed.) Press.



4. Topstitch along the 12" side with the opening.
5. Repeat steps 1-4 with the remaining 12" x 17" pieces of fabric and batting. When you are finished you will have two identical body pieces that consist of two pieces of fabric with batting in the middle.

6. Take 1 piece of 5" x 14 ½" fabric and fold it in half lengthwise with wrong sides together and press.

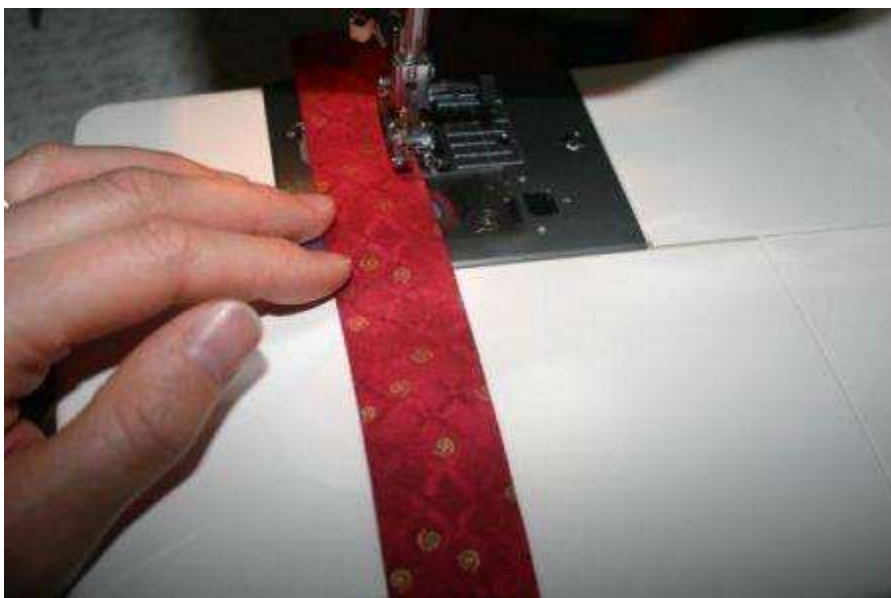
7. Unfold the fabric and then press the two raw edges toward the fold line and press.



8. Refold the fabric along the original fold and press again.

9. Stitch the open edge of the fabric closed by sewing close to the edge.

10. Repeat steps 6-9 with the other piece of 5" x 14 ½" fabric. Now you have two handles.



11. Line the handles up along the long sides of one of the finished body pieces. Pin each side of the handles 5 inches from the edge.

12. Stitch the handles 3 or 4 times for stability $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the edge.



13. Take the $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x $6\frac{1}{2}$ " piece of fabric and fold each $2\frac{1}{2}$ " edge $\frac{1}{4}$ " down (wrong sides together) and stitch close to the edge.



14. Fold the fabric in thirds lengthwise and press.

15. Pin the fabric to the body piece that has the straps $1\frac{1}{2}$ " from the short edge and 1" from the bottom edge.



16. Topstitch very close to the edge along the 2 long sides and the bottom. Leave the top edge open. Now you have made the spoon pocket.

17. Place the two carrier body pieces right sides together and pin along 3 sides leaving the side with the spoon pocket open. Stitch along the three pinned sides using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. Make sure the handles don't get caught in your seams.

18. Turn and press.

19. Take one piece of $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x 13" fabric and fold each $2\frac{1}{2}$ " edge $\frac{1}{4}$ " down (wrong sides together) and stitch close to the edge.

20. Fold the fabric in half lengthwise (wrong sides together) and press.

21. Unfold the fabric and then press the two raw edges toward the center fold line and press.

22. Refold the fabric along the original fold line and press.

23. Stitch the long open edge of fabric closed by sewing close to the edge.

24. Repeat steps 19-23 with the other $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x 13" piece of fabric. You now have two ties.

25. Pin the ties to the inside of the carrier in the center. One tie on each body piece.

26. Stitch each tie along the edge of the carrier 3 or 4 times for stability.



Jackie is a wife and mom of 5. You can find her writing about family life and all things crafty at [Blessings Overflowing](#). If you are looking for activities to do with young children be sure to stop by her other blog, [PocketfulOfPosiesBlog.com](#).

Hand Towel Plastic Bag Holder



Supplies

- Kitchen hand towel
- 1/4 inch elastic
- 10 inch piece of satin ribbon (not pictured).
- Thread
- Sewing machine

Instructions

Measure one short end of your kitchen towel and cut a piece of elastic the same length. Then, cut the elastic in half so you have two equal pieces. My towel was about 15 inches across, so that made my pieces of elastic 7 1/2 inches each.

Next, using a zig-zag stitch sew one end of the elastic to the wrong side of the towel about 1 inch from the short edge. You just want to sew a few stitches to tack the elastic to the towel. (Your elastic should start on a long side and go from one short side to the other.)

Now, set your machine to a 3 step zig-zag stitch and pull your piece of elastic to the other end of the towel. Sew the elastic to the towel the entire width of the towel.

Repeat this process for the other side.



Next, fold your towel in half lengthwise with right sides together. Fold your 10 inch piece of ribbon in half and pin it inside your towel at the top. I inserted about 1 inch of the ribbon (the two raw edges) inside the folded towel and made sure it was about 1/2 an inch from the edge.

Finally, sew the towel together using a straight stitch and a 1/2 inch seam allowance. Turn your towel right side out. I stitched over the ribbon a few times to make sure it wouldn't rip out with use.

Now you can hang up your grocery bag holder and start filling it with bags or give it as a gift.



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Movie Night in a Bag



Everything you need for a relaxing movie night “in” is in the bag ~ popcorn & hot chocolate. It’s tied shut with a tag that can also be used as a gift card holder {if you so choose to include a gift card to a local video rental store}.

The bag is small (and durable!) enough for your kids to throw in their backpacks on their way to school. This also can be adapted to be a gift for a whole family, as well. Just include the appropriate amount of “goodies” to accommodate each family member.

Supplies

- A piece of fabric about 9 x 22 inches
- Thread
- Sewing machine
- Raffia, jute or ribbon

Instructions

1. Start with the piece of fabric. {I like to rip my fabric and have little fringed edges.} Fold in half and sew up the sides with a 1/2 inch seam. The raw edges will show. That’s great!

2. Stuff it with a package of popcorn and as many packages of hot chocolate as you'd like to include: {You could also include candy canes to be used as "stir sticks" for the hot chocolate. I've never tried it, but apparently, it's yummy!}
3. Make gift tags or gift card holders.
4. Tie the top shut with raffia, jute, or ribbon, and tie on your tag/ gift card holder.

Hi there! I'm Rita Joy ~ wife, mom of 3 boys, [blogger](#), crafter, and DIYer. I absolutely love living in our old history-filled home, and have been "lovin' it up" one project at a time. Working within a tight budget has helped me discover the joy of dreaming outside the box and thinking of solutions to design problems – utilizing items I already have.

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Felt Cookies



These handmade goodies spark not only a child's imagination, but also seem to speak to a desire that many parents have to provide their children with open-ended play things.

Supplies

- Scissors
- Sewing Needle
- Something to Mark Pattern (I use a Sharpie, because I just like Sharpies)
- Round Pattern for Cookie (I traced around a drinking glass onto some thick cardstock. You can also make other shapes. My daughter is a big fan of the heart shaped cookies I've made for her.)
- Two pieces of felt (One color for the cookie and one color for the frosting)
- Embroidery Floss

Instructions

1. Trace your pattern onto the felt you are using for your cookie, and cut them out. I like to use a tan colored felt for this, but you can use any color you want. Try to fit as many cookies onto one piece of felt, keeping in mind that you will need two circles for each cookie.

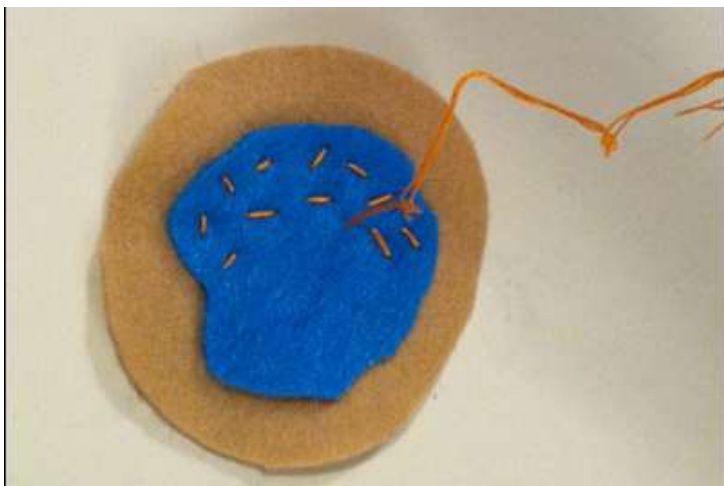
I like to cut out all of the circles (from a whole piece of felt) at once in order to speed up mass cookie production.

2. Cut out your icing out of the other color felt that you've picked out. If you like things to be very uniform, you can make a pattern for the frosting. I really enjoy all of the frosting pieces being free form, so I just randomly cut.

3. Attach the frosting piece to one of the cookie pieces. I do this by randomly making "sprinkles" of varying sizes on the whole frosting part.

For increased decoration, you can do something like make an "X" instead of just a single line for the sprinkle. While that doesn't seem like any normal sprinkle, it is actually a nice look.

Another option would be to add small beads while making each sprinkle. (Cookies with beads on them shouldn't be given to small children, however, as they could come off and become a choking hazard.)

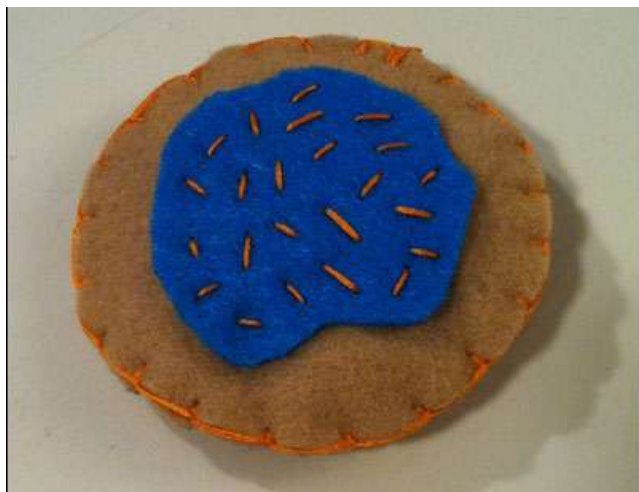


4. After your sprinkles are all in place, you'll want to stitch together the two halves of your cookie.

If you have a sewing machine, you can quickly move through this by using your machine. I, however, always hand stitch each part of these. I use a blanket stitch to attach the two halves. (Here is a fabulous, and easy to understand, picture tutorial on [how to do a blanket stitch](#) to put two pieces of felt together.)

Make sure to stop sewing when you have just a little bit of opening left, and put in a little bit of stuffing, unless you want a very flat cookie. After you've added the stuffing, you can finish sewing the rest of the way around the cookie.

Admire your cute felt cookie. Consider making a whole set of them in different colors as an inexpensive gift for birthdays or Christmas. They can be packaged in a small bakery box or maybe even accompanied by a small cookie sheet, plastic spatula, and apron.



Angie, a domestically-challenged artist and writer, is a homeschooling mom to three children. She writes about everything that happens in their lives between all the loads of laundry at [Many Little Blessings](#). This felt cookie project was featured at [The Happy Housewife](#).

Felt Pizza



Supplies

- Box
- Hand sew felt pizza, toppings, bread sticks, and cookies
- ½ Yard fabric
- Guest checks
- Printed Menu

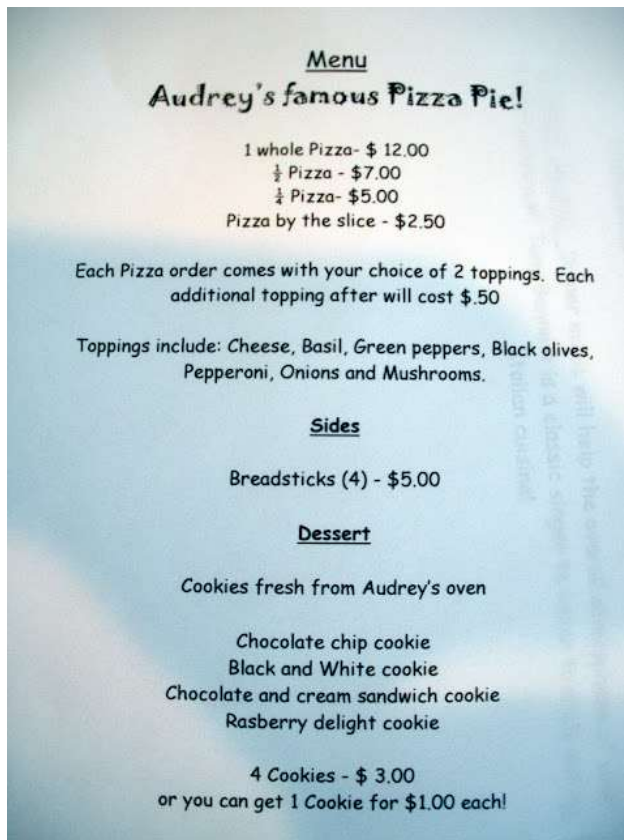
Instructions

1. I did not use a sewing machine for this. I looked online at felt pizza pictures. I did not follow a pattern. After I got the hang of sewing these, it became easier and self-explanatory.



The toppings that I made for the Audrey's pizza are Green peppers, basil, mushrooms, onions, black olives and pepperoni. The peppers by far took the longest!

2. I also found these "restaurant checks" at Wal Mart. I thought these would be fun to help Audrey play restaurant.
3. I might have gotten a little carried away. I had extra felt left over. I made breadsticks and cookies for Audrey's restaurant as well.
4. I also purchased 1/2 yard of fabric for Audrey to use as a table cloth in her restaurant.
5. I also made up menus.
6. Decorate the top of the box.
7. I placed all the toppings into little bags, and put them into the box that I decorated.



When Kristen is not spending time with her family, she enjoys being creative, working out, reading Jane Austen, watching Law and Order, traveling, learning about other cultures, and running her blog, [Make the best of everything!](#).

Appliqued Receiving Blanket



These blankets were so fast to make, and I love the way they turned out.

Supplies for Two Blankets

- 1 yard of fleece
- coordinating yarn (acrylic is best since it won't shrink when you wash it)
- a [skip-stitch rotary cutter](#)
- crochet hook
- needle

Preparing Your Fleece:

1. Start by trimming your fleece so that it's 60" x 30".
2. Now cut the fleece in half so that you have two 30" x 30" squares. That's the standard size for a receiving blanket.
3. Next, follow the [instructions for using the skip-stitch cutter](#). I'm not going to repeat them here, because they're stated so well on the website. :)

You'll be cutting around all 4 sides with the blade, leaving small holes just right for your crochet hook to fit through.

4. Continue to follow their instructions for crocheting around the edge of your fleece.

I chose to just use the foundation chain as my border. If I were making one for a little girl, I'd definitely go all ruffy and add a few more rows and scallops. But for a boy? I'm good with the plain binding.

For the appliques, I used the [elephant](#) and [giraffe](#) templates from Sew4Home.com. I reduced them to print at 65% so they would fit in the corners of the blankets.

For the Elephant Applique:

1. Pin the elephant in place.
2. Using regular thread, sew around the edges with a running stitch.
3. Take a small stitch to create the eye.



For the Giraffe Applique:

1. Pin the giraffe in place.
2. Cut a 12 or 15-inch length of the same yarn you crocheted with split it into 4 plies.
3. Thread one ply into your needle
4. Sew around the edges with a [blanket stitch](#) (scroll down to find the directions; very easy to understand!)

Notice that you'll have to keep re-twisting your yarn as you sew or it will thin out and pull apart

5. Pull the yarn through the top fabric where you want the eye; tie the ends in a knot to create a 3-D eye.

Note: You may decide you'd rather use pearl cotton (or embroidery floss...is that the same thing?) instead of the acrylic yarn. It probably would have been easier. :)

And you're done! A lovely blanket, just the right size for a newborn, with a cheerful decoration in the corner.

Diana is a stay-at-home mom of a little cutie who won't let her eat ice cream. She loves anything creative—cooking, sewing, crafting, and making sure the folded clothes are neatly stacked (even if they do stay in the laundry basket for a while!). Read more of her adventures at [Saving by Making](#), where the goal is to help you save time and money by making things at home.

Juggle Balls



Supplies (for each ball)

- 1/2 cup of beans
- 2 balloons
- a small plastic bag

Instructions

1. Cut the stem off of each balloon.
2. Fill the plastic bag with 1/2 cup of beans
3. Stretch one balloon over the bag.
4. Stretch the other balloon over covering up the small hole

Then hurry up and hide them before you end up thinking you live in a circus!

Sarah Hersey homeschools her six children in fun and creative ways. Using her artistic talents she has been able to share in numerous entertaining and resourceful activities that many families have enjoyed. For more information about Sarah and her family visit [Mercy Underfoot](#).

Bubble Bath



This bubble bath costs pennies to make and makes a wonderful gift or stocking stuffer. Add a personalized label to make the gift even more special!

Supplies

- 1/2 cup shampoo
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/4 teas. table salt

Instructions

1. In a bowl, mix the shampoo and water until well combined.
2. Add salt and stir until it thickens slightly.
3. Use a funnel to pour it into a bottle.

Laura Coppinger is someone who loves to laugh, loves to cook, and apparently, loves to have huge piles of laundry in her upstairs hallway. Writing her blog, HeavenlyHomemakers.com has become a delightful ministry, hobby and full time job, which she is blessed to participate in from home.

Tiled Wall Art



Supplies

- 4" ceramic tiles (or any size you might have on hand)
- Chipboard stickers (from craft section of the store)
- Picture hanging wire
- Hot glue or cement
- Modge Podge
- Sponge or small paint brush
- Folk Art Extra Thick Glaze

Instructions

1. Wipe down the ceramic tiles with a damp clean rag or paper towel. While the tiles are drying, select chipboard images you want to use and peel away the foam stickers on the back. I had better success using my fingernail over a craft knife. *Tip: Decide on the arrangement of the images on the tile before you start gluing anything down.*

2. Apply a generous coat of Modge Podge with the sponge or small paint brush. *(I used outdoor MP because it's thicker than regular MP and adheres to the chipboard better.)*
3. Apply the chipboard images and weight them down with another tile and a book or something heavy on top. Allow to dry for about 15 minutes.
4. Apply coat of Modge Podge over the entire tile. Allow to dry completely and follow up with a couple coats of Folk Art Extra Thick Glaze.
5. Once the MP and glaze is completely dry, flip over the tile and apply about a 3" segment of picture hanger wire with the hot glue and allow it to completely cool.
6. I like the raw edge look but you can hot glue some rick rack or narrow ribbon to the outer edge of the tile.

This project took me about half day including dry time between each coat but I probably could have done it much faster if I had omitted the final coats of thick glaze. The total cost was under \$10 since I only had to buy the chipboard art pieces and the glaze.

Recipes, deals & trucker living from a TV junkie web designing special needs mom who blogs at [Frugal Front Porch](#).

Toddler Color Book



Each page is a collage of different pictures I've taken, with a color theme for each page.

I print each page as a 4 x 6 photo, put them back to back and get them laminated.



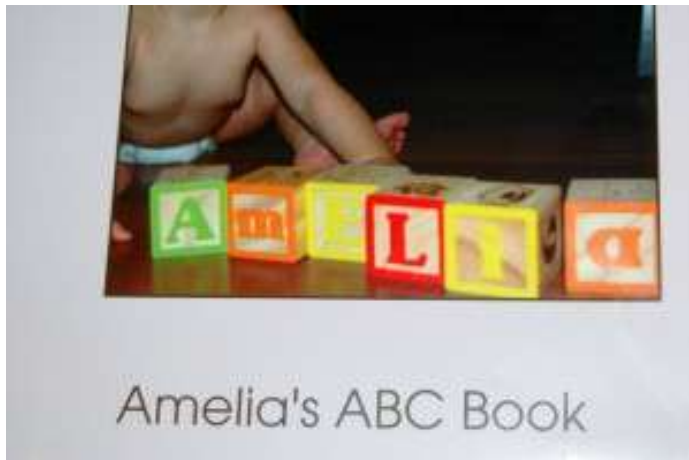
I guess there was a reason behind all these random pictures I'd taken. It was fun to look back through the years and find the right colors for the page I was working on.

I punched a hole in the corner of each page and put a binder ring through to hold them all together, making a book.



Sonya lives in southern Manitoba with my husband Devin and our two boys. I love the Lord, gardening, shopping, blogging and going for coffee with girlfriends. We have our own place in the sticks and I love the peace and quiet for myself and the space for my boys to run and play. Sonya blogs at [Wanna Lick the Spoon?](#)

Alphabet Book



The tutorial that follows was my handcrafted gift to my daughter – a personalized alphabet book, with each letter representing a piece of her first year (U is for “Uncle Bill,” etc.)

Supplies

- Alphabet Blocks
- Electronic copies of various photos addressing each letter of the alphabet
- Digital Camera
- Electronic photobook site (I used [Shutterfly](#))*
- 8×8 Blank Scrapbook (*optional*)

**occasionally, photo gift sites such as Shutterfly or Kodak Gallery will have promotion codes for photo books – join an email list or peek around online for the best deal!*

Instructions

Once you've chosen your photobook website, take photos of each letter in the alphabet using the alphabet blocks.

Next, completing this book is as easy as uploading and arranging your photos to go along with each letter.

Depending on how many pages you have available to you, you may need to double (or triple) up on some letters. In my case, I had a few photos I wanted to emphasize, so some letters span two pages while other pages house four letters.

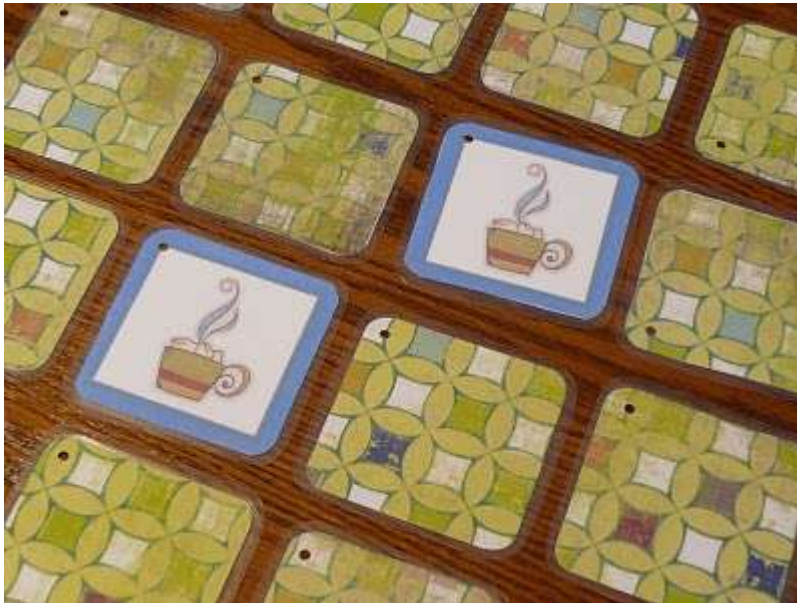
The hardcover completed book I received from Shutterfly was beautiful, however even the most careful one year old may have trouble with a bound book, so I used a blank 8×8 scrapbook and filed her pages in the plastic page protectors.

Even in her library surrounded by Goodnight Moon, Elmo, and Toes, Ear & Nose her personalized book is one of her favorite go-to stories.



[BabyFoodScoops](#) evolved via Nicole & Jess's passion to infuse nutrition, family values, community, sustainability and creativity into their daily lives. This mantra permeates their kitchens, their décor, and pretty much everywhere they choose to spend their time! Nicole enjoys creating beautiful things with yarn, paper and/or photographs.

Memory Game



Using my digital scrapbooking program I designed 24 little cards (2 of each picture) printed them and cut them out.

Then I used adhesive tabs to adhere them to a piece of scrapbooking paper that I liked.

Then used my corner rounded to round off the edges, which I think gives it a bit more of a finished look.

Then I took them to an office supply store, where I got them laminated.

Lay all the cards down on a table and flip over two at a time, trying to match the pictures. This one is a winter themed one – snowmen, snowflakes, cups of hot chocolate, etc.

Sonya lives in southern Manitoba with my husband Devin and our two boys. I love the Lord, gardening, shopping, blogging and going for coffee with girlfriends. We have our own place in the sticks and I love the peace and quiet for myself and the space for my boys to run and play. Sonya blogs at [Wanna Lick the Spoon?](#)

Tutu



Supplies

- About 2 yards of tulle in however many colors you would like to use. The more different colors you use, the fluffier your tutu will be.
- Craft scissors
- Elastic
- Satin Ribbon in a color that matches your tulle(optional)
- Embellishments (optional)

Instructions

1. Lay tulle out across a large flat surface, folded in half. Cut strips between 2 and 6 inches wide, using all of the tulle. Your cuts do not have to be perfectly straight or have exact measurements.

2. Wrap elastic around child's waist and cut where edges just meet. Overlap elastic 1-inch over the other side and either tie a knot, staple or hand stitch the elastic together.
3. Take a folded strip of tulle and place the center over the back of the elastic. Pull tulle around and through the loop in the back and tie snugly. Repeat with all tulle pieces.
4. Once all pieces are securely tied on you can spread them out more evenly.
5. If you like you can take satin ribbon and wrap it around the entire waist and make a bow in the back or add embellishments to the skirt itself like sequins, butterflies, flowers, etc.

Dusty is a happily married stay at home wife and mother who is trying to navigate the waters of faith, marriage, motherhood, homeschooling, and homemaking with as much grace as she can muster! She blogs about her journey at [To the Moon and Back](#).

Bubblegum Machine



Supplies

- White pot and plate with a glossy coat already on it.
- Glass bowl
- Drawer knob
- Fabric covered flat back button for the front of the machine

Instructions

You just use E600 (or some other really strong glue) and glue the glass bowl to the upside down pot.

Glue a knob (or whatever you choose to use as a handle) to the upside down plate. This will be the top of your "machine".

Then glue the fabric button to the face of it. I had to glue something inside the button first to allow it to be flush with the machine - magnets are what I had on hand so that is what I used. It doesn't matter what you use since you can't see it and it isn't functional.

[The Stuff of Success](#) is a blog dedicated to living well, inexpensively. I have crafts, recipes, repurpose projects, recycle/upcycle projects, lessons/science, health and wellness information as well as other ways to save money in our daily lives. One of my favorite projects involves upcycling a pair of my daughter's boots destined for the dumpster and it may be found here - Glamorized Boots!

Travel Snack Tray



We spend so much time in vehicles with our youngest children, (often with the dogs also). It never fails - when we eat in the car there is always an issue with kids not being able to handle their food and drink. Some if not all ends up on the floor (hopefully not on the seat) requiring clean up afterwards.



I didn't end up using the window cup holders but I bought them just in case - and they were only \$.49. The small plastic pots were \$1.00 each (and not breakable or heavy) and the small size painting trays were \$1.29 each.

I didn't care for the black coloring for the travel tray but felt that was safest since the tray may end up having uncovered food sitting on it

- and I didn't want food sitting on a painted surface. In the end I left the tray black and primed and painted the pots glossy black with Rustoleum Spray Paint.

Once the pots dried (24 hours), I glued the pots onto the painting trays with E600 glue. The pots are not to drink out of, they are to place a cup in - a cup holder.



The pot holds the cup/drink; the middle section holds the sandwich and the right hand side allows french fries/hash browns etc... to stand up and be eaten. No, we don't eat like this all the time but on the road we sometimes have little choice. I am not talking about the 15 minutes down the street - our trips are often 3-5 hours each way.

The tray is deep enough for the food yet shallow enough that they can carry a small notepad, put crayons in the cup holder etc... and use it as a travel desk.

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Books on CD



Last Christmas, we had all the members of our family (grandparents, aunts and uncles) read one of Buddy Boy's favorite books (that he already owned) and make one CD for him. Not only is it a super-special gift for him that he LOVES, but it's 45 minutes long to occupy him during long car rides!

I wish I could explain to you the exact process of making a book on CD, but I'm thinking that if your computer has the capability to do it, you already know how, and if you don't, I'm not the one to explain it! My wonderful husband sets me up with a headset mic and a program called Nero to record, then burns the CD for me. I make a label by hand (that's how un-techy I really am!) and call it done.

Make It Frugal

- Buying any book you can find and then making the recorded part yourself is usually more frugal than buying a book-on-tape set.
- Be on the lookout for good deals on multiple copies: last year I found these Dora books at my *grocery* store for \$1 each.

- I bought a ton! I read them all once on computer and made CDs separately for both the goddaughters, my son, and a cousin, saving lots of time over making each child's completely unique. Six hardcover books on CD for under \$7? That's a great deal!
- For your own children, using books you already own and making the read-aloud version is next to free. Can't get better than that!



Katie Kimball is a mother of three from Michigan who spends a ton of time in the kitchen making real food with whole ingredients and then blogs about her successes and failures at [Kitchen Stewardship](http://KitchenStewardship.com). She is the author of Healthy Snacks to Go and 3 other "real food" e-cookbooks.

Play Dough



Supplies

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons oil (vegetable, canola)
- 1/2 cup salt
- 1 teaspoon Cream of Tartar
- Food coloring, Kool Aid, Jell-O or other colorful mix (prefer two packages of Kool-Aid for best color)
- 1 quart-sized Ziploc bag for storage

Instructions

This is FAST and HOT so kids will not be able to help with this part. Mix ALL ingredients in a large pot stirring constantly over medium-high heat. You will need to keep the mixture moving so it doesn't burn or cook unevenly. Stir until the dough pulls away from the sides.

Turn off the heat and keep the pot ON the burner. Keep stirring the dough until it forms a ball. Remove dough from heat and let it cool to a comfortable touch. Don't worry if there are small clumps of flour, they will knead out.



Heather Clarke keeps busy with two kids, five chickens, six raised garden beds and countless coupons in Washington State. She blogs about saving money, living frugally, meal planning and traveling on a budget at www.QueenBeeCoupons.com.

Detective Kit



Supplies

- Photo box
- Top secret envelopes, where I put obscure clues to help him when he plays imagination.
- Specimen Swabs- to help gather evidence.
- Magnifying glasses found at Michael's.
- Fingerprinting kit, using index cards and a stamp pad
- Detective flashlight
- Plastic bags that I wrote " evidence" on with puffy paint
- Whisk Brooms
- Fingerprint lifting tape
- Journal and a pen

Instructions

1. First, I decorated the photo box with Water color paints, sharpies and puffy paint!

2. Put items into the detective kit. I also added some instructions so he would know how to use all these items!



These Items will help you be a great detective. All you need to add is a little imagination!

- 1) Detective badge- You can show your badge to witnesses as you question them about the mystery
- 2) Journal and Pen- These will help you write notes down as you question witnesses and suspects
- 3) Specimen Swabs- These will help you gather evidence from your crime scene
- 4) Finger print lifting tape- Are there finger prints left at the crime scene? Lift them with this tape and use as evidence
- 5) Evidence bags- Store your evidence safely in these bags
- 6) Flashlight- This will help in investigations that take place at night
- 7) Finger Printing Kit- Take fingerprints of your suspects and match them to the finger prints found at the crime scene
- 8) Top Secret envelopes – Keep all your confidential clues and in a safe place
- 9) Magnifying glass(s)- To help you investigate clues
- 10) Brush to help you undercover evidence

When Kristen is not spending time with her family, she enjoys being creative, working out, reading Jane Austen, watching Law and Order, traveling, learning about other cultures, and running her blog, [Make the best of everything!](#).

Gifts for Kids - Sewing Projects

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Bandana Dress



Supplies

- Two Bandanas (mine measured 20" x 20", and were \$1.99 each at Hobby Lobby)
- One roll Elastic thread (available at WalMarts that still sell fabric, or at fabric stores - \$0.97 at WalMart)
- Regular thread to coordinate with the background of your bandana
- Ribbon for around the neck

Measuring the child:

- My daughter is 27 months old and weighs about 25 lbs. She is 34 inches tall. This dress would likely be too long and would require a hem on anyone shorter than 34".
- Measure from under your child's armpits down their chest. Note where you would like the shirring (the elastic thread) to stop. My child measured 4".
- Plan to have enough ribbon to tie behind their neck, or you could make two traditional shoulder straps or a cross in the back-- be creative!

Instructions

Start with two bandanas.

Because bandanas are finished on all edges, you won't need to hem anything. See? Already easy.

Next, remove any tags or price stickers from your bandanas.

Place bandanas RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER on your worktable.

Using regular thread to match the background of your bandanas, sew down ONE side of the bandanas. If your bandanas have a direction, make sure you are sewing a side seam and not the neck or hem of the dress. Remember to only sew down ONE side.

Using elastic thread, hand wind your bobbin until full. Depending on the size of your child, it may take several bobbins. Wind a few in the beginning to save yourself time during the sewing process.



Wind loosely. Do not pull the elastic tight. Allow it to easily wrap around the bobbin.

Using the edge of your presserfoot as a guide, begin sewing. You will be sewing down the long edge of the bandana (essentially sewing down one bandana, over the seam you made previously, and on to the second bandana).

The top of your machine is threaded with regular thread - whatever closely matches your bandana background. Only the bobbin is

threaded with elastic thread.

I sewed 13 rows total, which was four inches.

Make sure to leave plenty of string at the end of each row. Many tutorials say you need to tie your top and bobbin thread together at the end of the row - I have personally never done this and not had a problem. However, if you cut your strings too short you would have it retract back into the stitch and that would be no good!



It has also been my experience that different brands of elastic thread tend to shirr differently. So, if you have a small amount on an old roll, I would NOT try to use that piece and then pair it with another brand. Your dress may not look uniform.

There is an [excellent tutorial on shirring with elastic thread here.](#)

So, now that your shirring is done, you will need to remove your elastic thread bobbin and replace it with the bobbin thread that matches your top thread.

Pin the remaining side seam of your dress with right sides together and sew the second side seam.



Now you have a beautiful strapless dress!

I chose to add a ribbon to tie in the back - halter style, but you can do whatever you want. Traditional straps, criss cross in the back, anything really - do whatever works with the stash you have and the girl for which you are sewing.



Other variations:

- Use [the tutorial here](#) to make a matching pair of bloomers with a third bandana
- Add a ruffle to the bottom if you need more length
- Fit the straps loosely and pair with a long sleeved onesie or shirt for cooler weather



As a wife, mother, and pediatric RN, Amy finds a creative outlet in sewing, baking and crafting. She loves working with vintage materials, planning parties, and creating things for her two children. Her handiwork can be found online at www.etsy.com/shop/gabrielsgoodtidings.

Pillow Mattress



Supplies

- Twin size duvet cover
- 4 pillows
- Thread
- Sewing machine

Instructions

1. Measure. I eyeballed everything - I didn't even pull my tape measure out on this project. Here's how I measured:



Yep..."four pillows long" looks about right.

2. Cut the duvet cover to the desired width. Again, I eyeballed it based on the size of the pillows. I ended up cutting the duvet cover exactly in half.

3. Cut the top half of the duvet cover lengthwise so that the bottom edge sticks out a few inches further - like so:



The longer edge will fold under to make a pocket (so that you can't see the pillows when they're in the cover).

4. Hem all raw edges. This was the longest step and it probably took 15 minutes.

5. Make the pocket. Fold the long edge (from step 3) inside under the short edge. I turned the entire cover inside out, folded the long edge, and then sewed up the sides width-wise (made about a 3" stitch at the top and the bottom of the cover).



Once I turned it right-side-in, the pocket was tucked neatly under the short side so that you couldn't see it. The widths of the long side and the short side match now (so I guess they aren't exactly "long" and "short" anymore).

6. Divide the cover into quarters by sewing three lines across the width. This will make the "pillow cases."

7. Insert pillows.

Kendra is content with imperfection. Her heart belongs to her husband Eric, her daughter Sadie, and her love of "making things pretty." She has no idea where her tape measure is, and she's totally ok with that. You can see what Kendra is up to at [Southern Disposition](#).

Felt Colored Pencil Roll



Supplies

- Piece of felt 12 ½ inches x 13 inches.
- 6 inch piece of 3/8 inch elastic
- Thread
- Sewing machine
- Pins
- Ruler
- Chalk

Instructions

1. Turn the felt so that the 13 inch side is the vertical side and the 12 1/2 inch side is running horizontally.
2. Fold the bottom of the felt up 4 inches and pin.
3. Fold the top down 1 1/4 inches and pin.
4. Fold the piece of elastic in half and pin it to the right side in between the two layers of felt you have from folding the bottom up. Pin it just below the raw edge.



5. Sew around the entire piece of felt using a 1/4 inch seam allowance. Sew over the elastic 3 or 4 times for stability.

6. Next, make 11 chalk lines on the bottom folded part of the felt at one inch increments. Do not measure from the edge of the felt. Start measuring inside your two seam lines or else your pockets will be off. These will become the 12 pencil pockets.

7. Then, stitch on each chalk line making sure to backstitch at the beginning and end of each seam.



That is it. You can now put 12 colored pencils in the pencil roll and slip the top flap over their tips.



Roll your pencil roll from the left to the right and slip the elastic loop over the roll. This is a quick project because felt doesn't ravel and only requires one layer.



Jackie is a wife and mom of 5. You can find her writing about family life and all things crafty at [Blessings Overflowing](#). If you are looking for activities to do with young children be sure to stop by her other blog, [PocketfulOfPosiesBlog.com](#).

Hooded Towel



Supplies

- 1 hand towel
- 1 large bath towel
- 1 strip of fabric (approx. 4" by 25")
- Ric-rac trim (2 pieces - 25" long)
- Thread
- Scissors
- Iron

Instructions

1. Cut hand towel to approximately 24" long. If it is a little shorter or longer, that will be fine. I just cut off the one end that looked a little different than the other.
2. Cut your strip of fabric 4" x 25" (allowing an extra inch longer than your hand towel). If you used a different length for your hand towel, just add one inch for the fabric. Pin your ric-rac (2 pieces also 25" long) along the raw edges of both sides of the right-side of the fabric strip.

3. Stitch in place. I used different sized ric-rac for several different towels. The one seen here is jumbo. Base your seam allowance on the size trim you have. You want the waves of the ric-rac poking through the other-side, so adjust accordingly.

Your best bet is to stitch straight down whatever size trim you are using.



With a hot iron, press the ric-rac to the other side. Do this on both sides.



Press again with a hot iron to set in place. If you use smaller trim then your fabric strip will be wider because you will not have turned as much under.



Fold the hand towel in half (length-wise) and pin fabric strip approximately 1/2"-1" from the fold.



UNFOLD the towel and top-stitch down both sides to secure in place.

Now fold the hand towel the other direction - width-wise with right-sides together. Stitch down the right and left sides. Do not stitch the open end where you see the raw edges of the fabric.



Use approximately a 1/2" - 5/8" seam allowance. Turn hand towel right-side out.



Take the corner of the hand towel that I am pointing to in the picture above and tuck it into the opposite corner. Tuck the right corner inside the left corner.

Once you have tucked the one corner into the other, this is what your hand towel will look like.



Then open up your hand towel and now you have formed the hood.



You will notice after tucking the corners that you have one side that is a little longer than the other. Fold this over and stitch into place in order to conceal the raw edges of the fabric.



Pin the center of the hood to the center of the bath towel (right-sides together).....stitch into place using a 1" - 1.5" seam allowance (yes, a large seam allowance). If you need to use a larger seam allowance because you can still see some of the extra hand towel, feel free to do so.....no harm done.



Lindsay Wilkes is the owner/designer of The Cottage Mama ~ a boutique clothing and sewing pattern company and resides in Chicago, IL with her husband and three children. She is also the woman behind the sewing, cooking and crafting blog, [The Cottage Home](#). Check out her blog for free patterns, tutorials, recipes and more!

Jeans Purse



My daughter seems to wear the knees out of her jeans quicker than my boys ever did. I can cut them off for shorts, but many of her jeans have very cute designs on the legs that I didn't want to go to waste.

This purse is definitely a low sew design, you only need to know how to sew a straight stitch.

Supplies

- Old jeans
- Coordinating fabric
- Coordinating ribbon

Instructions

1. Cut off the bottom of a pair of jeans just below the knee. These are kid's jeans size 6, so adjust your cutting accordingly.



2. Turn the jeans inside out and sew the bottom together. I used the bottom hem as a guide for my line. When it is finished you will have stitched the bottom of your purse together.



3. Flip your jeans right side out and measure around the top of the jeans. Add an additional centimeter to your measurement and then cut a strip of coordinating fabric the length of your measurement and about 6 centimeters wide.

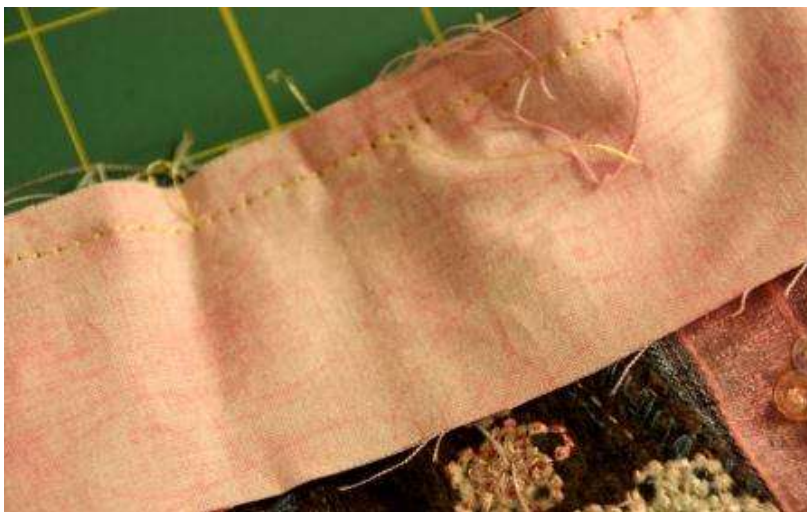
4. Sew the ends of your strip of fabric wrong sides together.

5. Flip the jeans inside out and match up the right side of the fabric to the wrong side of the top edge of the jeans.

You also want to insert your handles. I used ribbon for the handles, but you can make them out of fabric too. The right side of the handles should be facing the right side of the coordinating fabric.



6. Sew around the entire top edge of the jeans.



7. Once the coordinating fabric is attached flip the purse right side out. Fold the coordinating fabric over the top of the purse and press with an iron.

8. Fold the bottom edge of the coordinating fabric under approximately 1/2 centimeter and press again. Then stitch around the edge to secure the coordinating fabric.



Toni is a military wife and a stay at home (schooling) mom to seven kids. Her blog, [The Happy Housewife](#), is a resource for those who want to better manage their homes. From recipes to budgeting, you'll find real life, practical ways to live well, save more, and have fun!

Easy Sew Chaps



I started with a pair of holey jeans that didn't come from Sears (we use KidVantage for our boys' jeans whenever possible). They were a small size 6.

Since I was determined to only use what I had on hand, I chose fabric that I thought looked appropriate for little boys' chaps. The fabric was 44" x 20". What you are looking for is fabric that when cut in half will be just a bit longer than each of the legs of your pair of jeans and keep in mind that the fabric needs to be just as tough as your boys are!



First thing I did was to cut the jeans at an angle just below the pockets.



I cut my fabric in half so I had two pieces that were 22" x 20". With right sides of the fabric together folded lengthwise, I laid each cut off jean leg on top of the fabric with the center seam of the jean leg laying along what would become the center seam of the chaps leg. I then cut to fit. (as you can tell no perfection needed here)



My daughter then sewed up the length of the inseam of the chaps leg while I cut out the other leg.

Next, turn the jeans top inside-out and the chaps leg right side out and put right sides together by putting the chaps leg inside the top of the jeans and matching up the outside edges and inside edges, working your way around and pinning as you go. You will probably need to ease the fabric a bit, but try to do most of the easing on the back side of the chaps where puckers won't be as noticeable.

Sew around the leg and turn right side out to admire your work.

Do the same for the other leg and then turn back inside-out and sew up a small hem at the bottom of each of the chaps legs.



Amy Roberts is the homeschooling mother of 6 (soon to be 7) living children and one precious little girl sitting at the feet of Jesus. She writes at RaisingArrows.net, where she encourages Christian mothers to keep focused on the Lord in all they do, and HomeschoolBlogging.com, where she helps homeschool bloggers and homeschool businesses extend their reach for the Christ's Kingdom.

Mini Bean Bags



Supplies

- Fabric
- Beans. I used small white beans and it took about 7 1/2 cups.
- Something to cut with
- Something to sew with

Instructions

You'll want to start by cutting squares out of the fabric(s) of your choice. I wanted 10 bean bags made from 5 different colored pieces of fabric so I cut 4 5inx5in squares out of each piece of fabric for a total of 20 squares.

I used a rotary cutter just because it made cutting nice and easy but good ol' fashion scissors work just as well.

I decided to make my bean bags a different color on each side so I matched up my color combinations and began pinning squares together (the right side of the fabrics should be touching)



Now to begin sewing. You could easily do this project by hand but it is of course much faster if you have a sewing machine. You are going to want to sew along 3 sides of your square, leaving one side open so you can fill them.

Flip your square right side out and fill it with beans. I used 3/4 a cup, you can adjust that based on how full you want your beanbags.



You ready to finish 'er up? Fold down the open side and pin it shut. Then sew across the top and voila...you have yourself a beanbag!



I love this project because it took minimal time and very few materials. I am hoping that Isaiah loves them as much as I do!



I'm Chrystal, a stay-at-home mom of 3 boys ages 5, 4, and 2...in other words, BUSY! I love to spend my time creating, cooking, crafting and loving on my kids and husband. For a better look at our life you can follow my blog [Chrystal's Corner](#).

Tea Party Accessories



Table Cloth

I didn't measure the table ahead of time. I looked at a picture and guessed on the size. You should measure your table and add a couple inches all the way around so that it hangs off a little. I used a solid pink for the table cloth. Hem around the edges. Starch & Iron.

Place Mats

Supplies: 1/2 yard of fabric

Cut your place mats to desired size enough that will fit a plate and teacup on. Hem around edge. Iron.

Napkins

Supplies: 1/2 yard of fabric

Cut up your napkins into squares in desired size. Hem around edge. Iron.



Gloves

For the Gloves, my idea was based off a tutorial that came from a blog called "Ewe hooo" and can be found [here](#). I combined this idea with this one [here](#) from "Little Birdie Secrets" blog.

Supplies: 2 pairs of white socks, scrap fabric, pinking sheers



Hats

Supplies: 1 yard of fabric, starch, and an iron

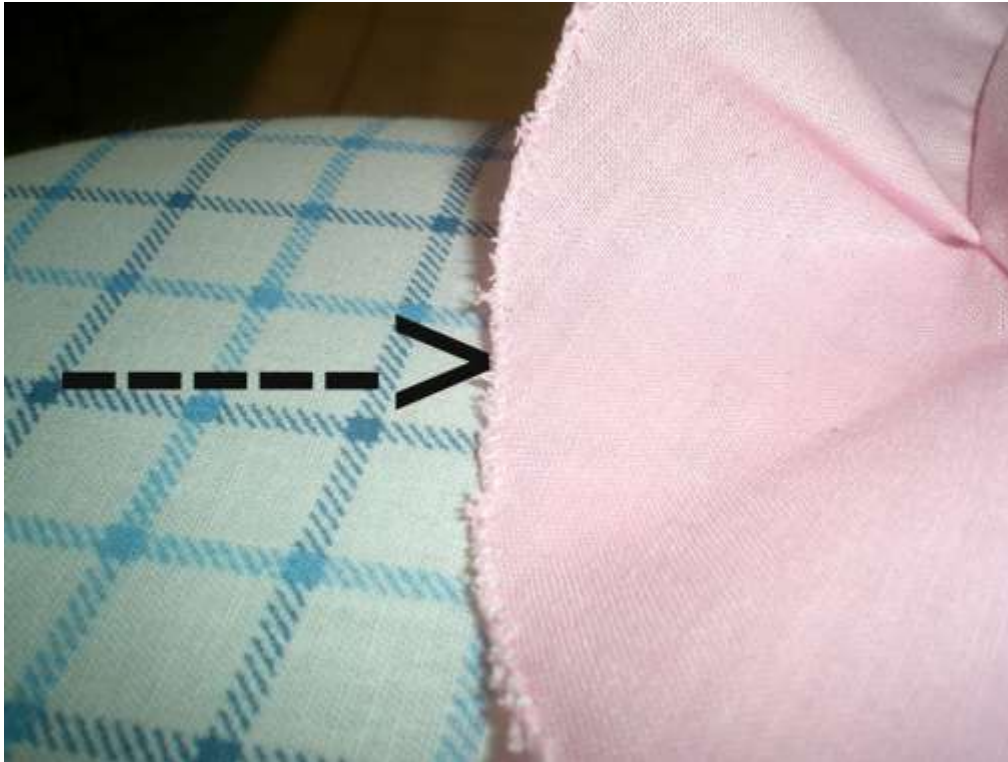
To make a pattern from a hat, I traced the brim of the hat out on a piece of newspaper and cut out the middle so it looked like the picture below (on the right).

Then, I stuffed my material inside the top of the hat to make sure the top would fit her head. I took my disappearing ink and traced around the edge (not the brim, the edge of the "top" part of the hat). Then cut it out and it should be a round circle like below (on the left).



Starch the brim and iron. Reapply starch until starched to your liking. Using my template for the top part of the hat cut it out and spray with starch too. Iron. After both parts have been starched and dried line up edges.

The top part of the hat will be bigger than the brim. Fold and pin every few inches so that it fits. Hem around edge. To finish off the edge you can either use a close zigzag stitch or a serger.



Lauren is a Christian, stay at home mom of two children. She runs a small home business making custom children's clothing and gifts for mom and baby. In her spare time she loves to quilt and tackle DIY projects. Lauren blogs at [Kozy Kiddo](#).

Quilted Bible Cover



Supplies

- 2 Fat quarters of fabric
- Quilt batting
- 24 inches of ribbon

Instructions

[Watch the video](#), print out a [copy of the sizing directions](#), and you are ready to start sewing!

Jasmine is a Christian, an Air Force wife, and homeschooling mother to six blessings. In her not so spare time, she loves to quilt, make soap, and learn more about herbs. You can find her at [Ponder the Path](#) where she shares tutorials, recipes, and her love of home.

Apparel/Accessories & Personal Care

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Floral Flip Flops



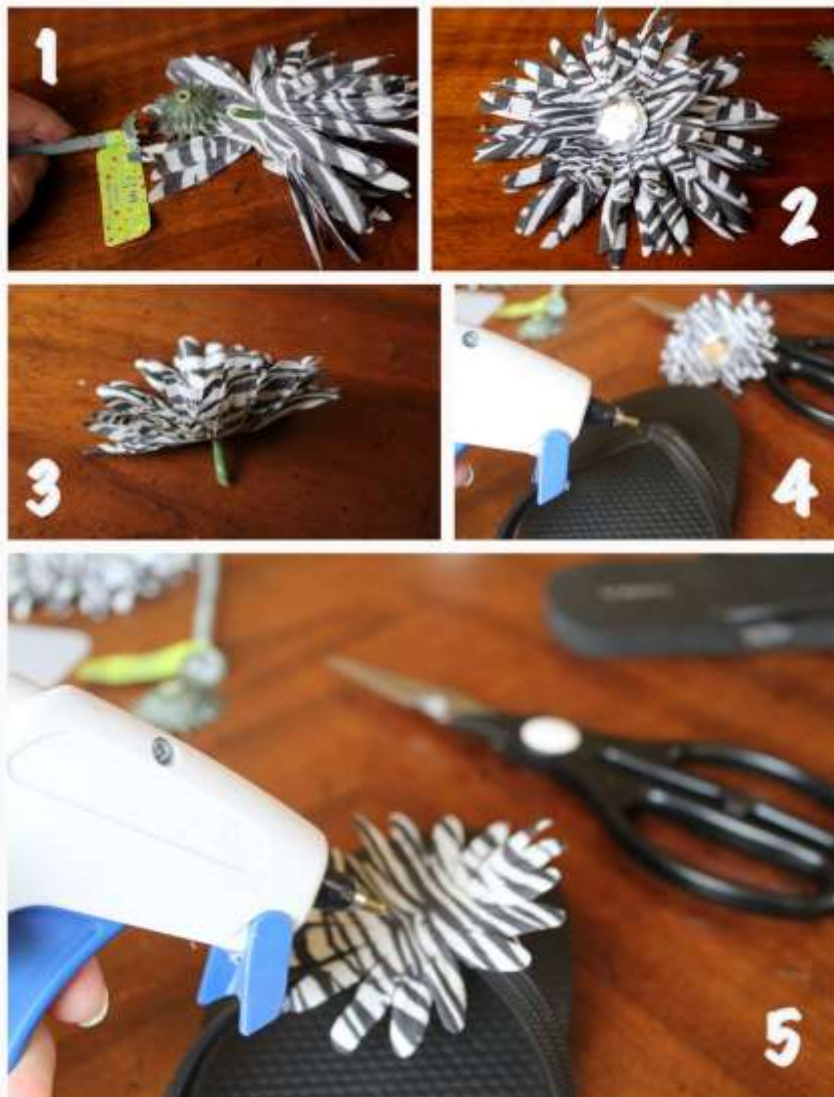
Supplies

- Flip flops
- Floral embellishments (these flowers were found at Hobby Lobby & come in other colors like pink, purple, blue, and green too)
- Scissors
- Glue (I used hot glue. Sometimes this doesn't stick as well to plastic. If you run into that issue, you can try an epoxy or Gorilla glue—or just put a few hand stitches through).

Instructions

1. Remove the flower from the stem and take all the plastic pieces off.
2. Once the flower is removed, take off any additional fabric you don't want. In this case, I removed the largest pieces off the back.
3. Once you've taken off any parts you'd like removed, then cut off the rest of the "stem" so it is flush with the fabric.
4. Place glue in the center of the flip flop.

5. Begin gluing on the embellishment, one layer at a time.



In less than 5 minutes, you should have a really cute DIY floral flip flop! Repeat the process with the other one. Then, *voila*, fun summer shoes!

Sara is a mom of two little guys (with a 3rd on the way in July) who hung up her biology teacher lab coat in order to spend more time at home with them. When she's not playing dinosaurs, cars, or doing a million other "mom" things, you can find her blogging at [Mom Endeavors](#) or chatting on twitter and facebook. This floral flip flop project was featured at [The Happy Housewife](#).

Water Bottle Bracelets



These water bottle [bracelets](#) would make a great gift for a teenager! Below are two tutorials, one for the fabric bracelet and one for the duct tape bracelet. (Who doesn't love duct tape??)

Supplies (Fabric Bracelet)

- Water bottle
- Fabric
- Hot glue gun

Instructions

1. Find a water bottle that has a smooth middle. The larger, 20oz bottles work best. Remove the label and try to rub off as much of the sticky-glue as you can. Don't worry if you can't get all of it off; just make sure the water bottle is as smooth and evenly textured as possible.
2. Cut off the top and bottom of the water bottle. It works best to seal the bottle shut, then stab the bottle at the top and bottom. Then insert scissors into the stab-holes and cut, trying to be as even as

possible. Once you've removed the top and bottom of the water bottle, trim the edges until you reach your desired bracelet length.



3. Take the cloth you have picked out and roll it around the water bottle to see how much you will need to cover it. Leave about a half an inch of extra cloth along the top and bottom of the water bottle as well as around a quarter of an inch extra where the two ends meet on the bottle.

4. Now take one end of the cloth and make a line of hot glue on it. Press this to the water bottle, and push down to even out the glue.

5. Apply a line of hot glue onto the other end of cloth. Pull the fabric as taut as possible, and then quickly bring the loose end around the bottle to overlap the other end. Press down firmly.



6. Around the extra half inch of cloth along the top and bottom of the bottle, apply a line of glue. Tuck the fabric into the water bottle and press firmly to make it as flat as possible.





Supplies (Duct Tape Bracelet)

- Water bottle
- Colorful duct tape

Instructions

1. Complete the first two steps for the fabric bracelet.
2. Take a roll of duct tape and tear off a piece, making it slightly longer than the length of the bracelet shape you have cut out of the water bottle.
3. Press the duct tape vertically on the bottle, tucking the extra tape inside it.
4. Repeat until all of the plastic is covered.

Toni is a military wife and a stay at home (schooling) mom to seven kids. Her blog, [The Happy Housewife](#), is a resource for those who want to better manage their homes. From recipes to budgeting, you'll find real life, practical ways to live well, save more, and have fun!

Vintage Earring Holder



My mother-in-law gave me this mirror, which had been hanging in her garage for a while. It belonged to her mom's mom, which would have been my husband's Great Grandma Annie (the same person who gave me her sewing machine).

So, I removed the mirror and the brackets in the back.

I spray painted it the same color as my necklace holder, since I planned to hang them on the same wall. It's Colonial Red by Rustoleum.

I had a growing collection of vintage lace- from a variety of grandmothers and estate sales, and found four of my favorite pieces.

I glued them into the back of the mirror frame with hot glue. When the glue dried, I turned the mirror frame over and hung it on the wall in my bedroom. And smiled really big.



As a wife, mother, and pediatric RN, Amy finds a creative outlet in sewing, baking and crafting. She loves working with vintage materials, planning parties, and creating things for her two children. Her handiwork can be found online at www.etsy.com/shop/gabrielsgoodtidings.

Candy Cane Bath Salts



Supplies

- 2 cups sea salt or Epsom Salt
- 10-12 drops red food coloring (more if using sea salt)
- 1 teaspoon peppermint extract or peppermint essential oil (or more if desired)
- glass jar with air tight lid
- ribbon or other decorative accents

Instructions

1. Pour salt into a glass bowl. Add oil and combine well making sure to remove lumps.
2. Add the red food coloring 5 drops at a time and stir. I leave some chunks unbroken to make the salt look like broken candy canes.
3. Allow mixture to sit overnight to completely dry. Pour into the glass container.

4. Add ribbon and label/instruction tag. Use as is or glue to a piece of scrapbooking paper (I used a red checked pattern). Adhere label to the jar using double sided tape.



[Click here](#) to print the [Candy Cane Bath Salts Labels](#) (four to a page).

[Click here](#) to print a [single Candy Cane Bath Salts label](#).

Kimberlee is the creative (and sometimes cluttered!) mind behind the popular website [The Peaceful Mom](#). When she's not homeschooling her four children or photographing dinner, she enjoys thrift store shopping, watching movies with her hubby and the occasional nap. Join her at The Peaceful Mom for more frugal and fun holiday ideas."

Bath Fizzies



Supplies

- 1/2 cup citric acid (can be purchased online)
- 1 cup baking soda
- 3/4 cup corn starch
- 1/4 cup sugar
- Spray bottle
- Essential oil
- Food coloring (optional)
- Mold for shaping the fizzies

Instructions

1. Mix together the ingredients and then sift out large chunks.
2. In a spray bottle, mix water, the scent you want your fizzies, and food coloring if you are planning to color your fizzies.

3. Lightly mist your dry mixture with the water mixture, mixing with your hand as you mist. Make sure it isn't fizzing. If it is, you are adding too much water.

The best way to describe how to know if it is ready is that the mixture will feel dry but you will be able to mold it, and it will stick together.

4. Firmly pack the mixture into your mold and let them dry over night or longer.

I have also found that after you let them set over night you can heat them up in the oven to warm. Pre-heat your oven to 170 degrees, turn it off and then put your fizzies inside while the oven cools. The key to doing this is to make sure that the fizzies are dry before putting them in the oven. If you put them in before they are dry, your fizzies will rise and become a big mess...speaking from experience! 😊

Jennie Sanford is a money saving expert based out of Denver, Colorado. She blogs at BargainBlessings.com and enjoys sharing the best frugal living ideas, deals, freebies and coupons with readers around the country.

Food & Holiday Gifts

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Homemade Vanilla Extract



Ingredients:

- Half gallon of Vodka (1.75 liters) – don't go for the cheapest stuff, it makes a difference.
- 35-40 Vanilla Beans

Directions:

Cut vanilla beans in half, without completely separating them. Keep the ends attached, and just keep in mind you really just want to expose the seeds that are inside.





Pour out some of your vodka so that you have room for the vanilla beans in the bottle. Add the beans to your vodka bottle, close and shake. Store in a dark place for six months, while shaking the bottle about once a week. After six months, it is ready to use!

Alternative Amounts:

One Gallon of Vodka calls for 75-80 Vanilla Beans

750 ml of Vodka calls for 10-14 Vanilla Beans

200 ml of Vodka calls for 4-5 Vanilla Beans

Atlanta local, adventurer, health advocate and thrifty as can be. I like music, sci-fi and cheese with my organic wine. Let me help you live healthy and frugal: www.TheThriftyMama.com

Homemade Bread



Ingredients

- 5/8 cup soy or rice milk (*any milk will do*)
- 3/4 cup water (*You can also use just water instead of milk + water*)
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 3 tbsp. honey
- 4 cups whole wheat flour (*or combination of flours--My family prefers that I use 2 cups fresh ground whole wheat flour and 2 cups regular flour*)
- 1 1/2 tsp. sea salt
- 2 1/2 tsp. instant yeast

Directions

1. Put all of the wet ingredients into the bread machine
2. Sift the flour with the salt using a fine sifter
3. Add flour and salt to the bread machine
4. Make a small crater in the top of the flour
5. Put the yeast in this little "dip" in the flour
6. Turn bread machine on for a loaf of bread for 2 hrs. 50 min. or on the dough cycle for 1 hr. 30 min.

This recipe is slightly modified from the book Recipes By God: Heavenly Taste, Healthy Benefits.

I have used this recipe many times myself and always get a perfect loaf. I have posted other blogs about how to make Stromboli and pizza using this same recipe as well as making bread for gifts especially during the holidays. My neighbors were sure happy last year with their gifts of homemade bread.

Tonya Travelstead has just finished a 13-year season of homeschooling two sons and loves mentoring younger women. She is a Christian wife (25+ years) and mother, piano teacher, Ebay PowerSeller and blogger who serves in her church with Titus 2 Moms. She blogs at [Mrs. T's Thoughts from a Titus 2 Mom](#).

Roasted Cinnamon Nuts



I have used this recipe with almonds and pecans and both turned out well. These are a tasty treat and nice to give at Christmas time. I found plastic bags to put them in at the craft store.



The cinnamon in these is subtle. You can try adding more or less to your taste.

Ingredients

- 1 egg white
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 cups whole almonds or pecan halves
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon

Instructions

1. In a large bowl whisk the egg white and vanilla until frothy, about 2 minutes.
2. Stir in the nuts.
3. Mix the remaining ingredients and add to the nuts. Stir to coat.
4. Spread the nuts in a sprayed jelly roll pan. Bake at 250 degrees for 1 hour 15 minutes. Stir after the first half hour and again half an hour later. Nuts should be dry. Stir and bake a little longer if they are still sticky.
5. Cool in the pan then transfer to a container.

Linda blogs about recipes and gluten free living at [The Gluten-Free Homemaker](#) . She believes that gluten free can and should be delicious and never apologizes for serving gluten-free food.

Flavored Hot Cocoa Mix



What makes this homemade hot chocolate different? It contains not only cocoa, but chopped up chocolate chips. Not only do the chips add creaminess, they allow you to change up the flavors. Think butterscotch hot chocolate or mint hot chocolate. YUM!!

This homemade mix would also make a wonderful holiday gift. Make up a few different flavors and place them in jars, and they would make a perfect gift for anyone.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups powdered milk
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 cup Dutch processed cocoa (or use Hershey's special dark cocoa, but it works best with at least 1/2 Dutch processed cocoa because it gives it a richer taste.)
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

Instructions

Mix all ingredients together in a food processor and mix until chips are finely chopped. Depending on the size of your food processor you may have to do a few batches. (I think this also could be done in a couple of batches in a blender.)

To serve you can do this two ways:

4 to 5 tablespoons hot chocolate mix with 1 cup hot water

Or for a creamier hot chocolate: Mix 3 to 4 tablespoons hot chocolate mix with 1 cup of milk. (This is my favorite way to drink it)

Variations

Butterscotch Hot Cocoa: Substitute butterscotch chips for the chocolate chips.

Mint Hot Cocoa: Substitute Andes mints for the chocolate chips

Cinnamon Hot Cocoa: Substitute cinnamon chips for the chocolate chips.

Chocolate Hot Cocoa: Substitute special dark chips for the chocolate chips.

Lynn writes at [Lynn's Kitchen Adventures](#), sharing cooking tips, recipes, and ideas of how to fit a love of cooking into a busy life. She also has a special allergy section where she shares recipes and thoughts on living with food allergies.

Fabric Scrap Ornament



Supplies

- Fabric Scraps
- Butter Knife
- Ornament hook
- Styrofoam Ball
- Ribbon

Instructions

1. With the butter knife, push the end of your fabric scraps into the Styrofoam ball so that they stay in place.



2. Continue to do this until the ball is covered. Experiment and enjoy this. You can't really mess it up. But if you do, just do it over.



3. Bend the ornament hook and push the two ends into the ball. Place your ribbon through the little opening you have, and push the hook until it is pressed into the ball as far as it will go.



Voila! You have a great keepsake or gift! And these cost me nothing, because I received all the materials from someone on Freecycle! However, the materials are very inexpensive should you have to buy them.

Atlanta local, adventurer, health advocate and thrifty as can be. I like music, sci-fi and cheese with my organic wine. Let me help you live healthy and frugal: www.TheThriftyMama.com

Candy Christmas Wreath



Since I was little we have hung a candy wreath on our door. When someone came to visit, they could cut a piece of candy from the wreath to take with them when they arrived or left. Kids and adults alike love this tradition.

These also make great gifts for those hard to buy for people on your gift list or for those occasions when you have to buy for a whole family but aren't quite sure what to get for each member and you've given gifts in a jar for the last 5 years. It also saves you money because you aren't having to buy individual gifts.

Supplies

- Wrapped candy
- String
- Wire clothes hanger
- Wire cutter
- Pliers
- Large bow

Instructions

1. First, buy your candy. You need to use wrapped candy like Tootsie Rolls, Jolly Ranchers, peppermints, bubble gum, butterscotch candies, etc. How much candy you need depends on the size of wreath you make. Usually for a 12 to 15 inch wreath, I buy enough candy to fill a large mixing bowl to the top.

I make mine with lots of mixed candy but you can make it with all peppermints, all green and red Jolly Ranchers, or whatever you like. Whatever you decide, first place it all into a large mixing bowl.

2. Cut string into about 3 inch pieces. The lengths don't have to be exact. Just make them long enough so that they are easy to handle while you tie them around the ends of the candy and then to the ring for the wreath. You need one string for each piece of candy. I don't sit and count how many I need. I just cut a pile and then make more when I need them.

3. Take a heavy wire clothes hanger and form it into the size wreath you would like. Cut off the hook part at the top then slightly bend the 2 ends to form small hooks that you can hook together to make a circle. I haven't checked lately but you might be able to buy a metal circle in the wreath section at your craft store.

4. After you have made your ring, tie each string to one end of a piece of candy. This is why candy like Toostie Rolls work so well. The little flags of paper on each end make it easy to tie the string to them. Then tie the other end to the wreath ring. Keep pushing the candy together as you go so you have a nice full ring of candy.

5. When you can't squeeze one more piece of candy onto the wreath, make or buy a large red bow to place at the top, which will cover the section where you hooked it together.

6. Tie one end of a ribbon or string to a child's pair of scissors and then tie the other end to the bottom of the wreath. This pair of scissors is for people to use to cut their own candy.

7. If you want you can add this poem.

Friends and neighbors all draw near
For a bit of Christmas cheer
Take the scissors, give a snip
Then enjoy a candy nip!!

Hang it on your door. Adults and children alike love cutting a piece when they are coming or going or both!

Jill Cooper and Tawra Kellam are frugal living experts and the authors of the Dining On A Dime Cookbook. Dining On A Dime will help you save money on groceries and get out of debt by cooking quick and simple homemade meals. For free tips & recipes visit [Living On A Dime](#).

Homemade Ornaments



In our house we have an ornament tradition, part of which includes homemade ones. Even though they may not be the most ornate or prettiest, many are favorites for the memories they hold.

For our oldest son's first Christmas a few years ago, we made a handprint ornament to remember those precious little baby hands—one for us and one for both sets of grandparents.

Supplies

- Clear glass ornament balls
- Acrylic paint
- Paint pen
- Decorative stuff to put on inside (paint, fake snowflakes, tinsel, glitter, etc.)

Instructions

This year, I opted to paint the inside by just squirting some paint inside adding just a bit of water & swirling around.



Once that's had a bit to dry, then paint your little one's hand and apply to the ornament. If it doesn't look right, you can just wipe it off while it's still wet! (Getting a baby's handprint on there is definitely the hardest part of making this!)



You can also make cute whole family ornaments in a similar fashion—instead of handprints, we used everyone's thumb prints to make our snowmen family:



Paint each person's thumb with the white paint and (starting at the bottom of the ornament) apply to form snowmen. Let the thumbprints dry (about an hour) and then you can paint them to your liking. Just dip toothpicks into the colors of your choice and paint!



Then use your paint pen to write the year, names, a Christmas message or anything else you'd like!

Sara is a mom of two little guys (with a 3rd the way in July) who hung up her biology teacher lab coat in order to spend more time at home with them. When she's not playing dinosaurs, cars, or doing a million other "mom" things, you can find her blogging at [Mom Endeavors](#) or chatting on twitter and Facebook.

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