

Craft and Hobby Ideas

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Crafting on the beach

Of course we all know that we can make sand castles. But with a little adult help children can succeed in making something really creative.

How about a mermaid? Use different coloured shells and pebbles on her tail and add seaweed for hair.

A pirate ship. Again use shells for the port holes, razor shells for cannons and paper napkins for the sails.



Take some cheap acrylic or poster paints with you to the beach and get the kids to paint pebbles. These make a lovely present for grandparents or a treasured reminder of a fun day at the beach. This activity is particularly useful to do when you and the children require a little quiet time and a rest from the day's exertions.

Take some craft glue and some pieces of strong card. The kids can then make collages of shells, seaweed, grasses. Or you could cut a wreath shape from the card for the kids to stick the shells on to.

Take some coloured markers and paper cups and plates that you can use for your beach picnic. These can be drawn on at the beach. Personalised and decorated with sea and beach themes.

Make plaster casts of footprints. The moist, hard-packed sand near the water's edge works best. The footprint should be at least an inch deep. Use plaster of paris and an old bucket to mix as per the instructions on the packet. After about half an hour take out the cast and leave sole side up to harden in the sun.

Use construction paper, craft glue to write their names or designs on the card. Cover with fine dry sand, shake off the excess sand and leave to dry. You now have a sandy picture.

Of course you can always bring shells and pebbles home to do some of these crafts later.

REMEMBER to take baby wipes or a face cloth to clean off sticky sandy pictures.

Rock Collecting: A Hobby that's "Hard" to Resist

Rock collecting is a fascinating hobby for kids and adults alike. While rocks are common, cheap, and found everywhere, the variety is huge. Collected rocks can be displayed in many ways, from rock gardens to neatly kept showcases, making rock collecting a versatile hobby.

When rock collecting, you will soon find out that rocks can be categorized as one of three types. A sedimentary rock formed when sediments, such as sand or silt, were pressed together under their own weight or the weight of water, and eventually became solid. An igneous rock is one that was formed by volcanic activity. The third type of rock for rock collecting is the metamorphic rock, which is like a sedimentary rock which has been changed through intense heat and pressure.

Another type of rock collecting is collecting minerals, gems, and crystals. Pure minerals are not technically the same thing as rocks, but they fit well in rock collections. Minerals include things like pyrite, also known as fool's gold, and quartzite, which looks almost like a diamond.

For some people, rock collecting consists of saving a pretty rock from different places they visit and keeping it as a souvenir. If these rocks are large, they can be used to outline the driveway or start a rock garden. If they are small, they can line a windowsill. Label them with a fine point marker if desired. Include the date and location the rock was found.

The souvenir type of rock collecting does not require much scientific investigation, but identifying rocks and minerals does. The different types of rock can sometimes be differentiated easily. For instance, sedimentary rocks often look like particles glued together. Sandstone is a common example of this. They also sometimes have visible flat layers. Metamorphic rocks, on the other hand, sometimes have layers, but those layers have been bent so that they are no longer laying flat across the rock.

When rock collecting, the igneous rocks make some of the most exciting finds. Obsidian is an igneous rock that looks like a broken piece of black glass. It is shiny and hard, and was used to make arrowheads in the past by the native Americans. Pumice is another interesting igneous rock which is porous, making it so light that it will float. This stone is used for cleaning and rubbing calluses off people's feet.

Keep in mind when rock collecting that different regions of the world have different types of rocks. In the American Midwest, for instance, there are many sedimentary stones, but metamorphic and igneous rocks are less common. In the Appalachians, on the other hand, you can find metamorphic rocks such as gneiss and schist. Wherever you live, though, you are sure to find rock collecting a hobby that's hard to resist!

Hot Weather Fun: Summer Crafts for Kids

When boredom looms and the weather's hot, get everyone involved in summer crafts for kids. Kids are always excited to be free from the school routine when they are let out for summer break, but it isn't long until they start wondering what to do. Summer crafts for kids will keep them occupied and maybe even teach them a thing or two.

In summer, crafts for kids can involve found objects, like seed pods, grasses, and similar objects. Let kids create nature collection collages by gluing these items to a stiff piece of cardboard. Help them spray paint some of the findings with silver or gold paint. Alternatively, they might like to glue glitter to some of the findings. Perhaps they would also enjoy collecting wild flower seed heads and creating dried flower arrangements. Arrange the bouquet in a homemade vase.

A vase for summer bouquets, fresh or dried, is another craft that naturally fits into the summer crafts for kids category. A simple vase can be made from a tin can. Soup cans work particularly well because they are smooth on the outside and rather narrow. Be sure to file off any sharp spurs on the inside opening. Start the work of art by cutting a piece of construction paper or other colored paper to fit around the sides of the can. This will be glued to the outside of the can, but first it needs to be decorated.

The vase cover can be decorated in many ways. The child can draw a summer scene on the paper and then decorate it with glued on glitter or small stickers of summer things. Another idea is for the child to write their name in large letters, and glue beans, seeds, or glitter to the letters. Let all glue dry before attaching the paper to the outside of the can. Add water and fresh flowers or leave dry for dry flowers.

You can also use the can for a trinket container or a place to put pens, pencils, and markers. To make them real summer crafts for kids, glue grass seed heads and found seed pods to the paper in a decorative way.

Jar vases make good summer crafts for kids, too. Canning jars make particularly cute vases, but any cast off mayonnaise, pickle, or other jar, even plastic ones, can work, too. To make a jar into a vase it first needs to be sparkling clean. Kids love getting wet in the summer, so let them roll up their sleeves (or put on a bathing suit!) and have fun splashing at the sink while "washing dishes." When the jar is clean and dry, tie an attractive ribbon around the opening. If desired, decorate the outside of the jar with glued on beads and buttons.

Summer crafts for kids will provide some cute decorations around the home and keep the kids from being bored. This summer, crafts for kids should be at the top of every parent's To Do list!

Craft Idea for a Group: Make a Mural

Most craft ideas are geared to individuals, whether kids or adults. Sometimes you'd like to have a craft idea that works for a group of kids working together. Making a mural together is an idea that works for a group. By working together, you are creating something to decorate a shared area. Individual crafts can be displayed, but one unique item is often more effective than a group of items that are almost identical. In addition, sometimes kids' crafts, like it or not, just become clutter when they are taken home, and it isn't long before Mom throws it out. This craft idea of making a group mural can be displayed for several weeks and will not become clutter in anyone's home.

The basic materials for a kids' group mural is freezer paper. Freezer paper is about 18 inches wide, and it is very tough. One side is plastic coated. That is the side that is designed to be placed against the food. You will have better luck drawing on and gluing things onto the other side. Class or group murals can feature a number of different design elements. You can mix up some finger paint and let the children make hand prints (or even foot prints!) on the paper. You can let them scour old cast-off magazines and color catalogs for pictures they like and let them cut the pictures out and glue them on. They can add scribbles, designs, signatures, slogans, or pictures using markers, crayons, or gel pens. They can attach stickers to the mural as well. This craft idea is very flexible!

For making the mural, choose a topic that relates to the group in some way. If the group are girl scouts, for instance, and have been learning to camp, the mural can feature pictures of items related to camping. If you've been learning about dinosaurs, you can use them as a theme. If you want a really messy project that makes a cute mural for fall, mix up finger paint in fall colors. The children can each make a tree by first laying their forearm in brown paint. Then they lay their arm on the paper to make the trunk of the tree. They should spread out their fingers so their arm print has five short branches at the top. To make the leaves, the children make fingerprints all around the top of the tree using paints in other fall colors. If you add a few drops of dishwashing detergent to finger paint when mixing it up, it will be easier to clean off the children's arms. Do make sure they have old clothes or smocks for this craft idea.

Little preschoolers will like making a mural with an animal theme. You should probably find and cut out animal magazine pictures to start with, and then let the children choose the ones they like for gluing down. Glue sticks are neat to use with small children. They will paste some of the pictures upside down. Expect it and do not scold them. It is the process that is important in this craft idea. The children can also use animal cookie cutters dipped in finger paint to stamp animals on the mural, too. You may need to tape the paper to the table so it doesn't slide around while the children work.

An elaborate form of this craft idea that adults often make is a quilt around a theme. Each person in the group creates a quilt square to represent some aspect of what the group stands for. These quilt squares can be colored with fabric pens or crafted of patchwork or appliqué. Again, the craft idea is to build group solidarity and not to highlight one artist's skills over another. When the quilt top is completed, it can be a

group project to tie it or quilt it. It can be hung in a special central location or given to an appreciated leader or member.

Cute Wooden Handicraft: Make a String of Hearts



Everyone loves heart-shaped decorations. This cute wooden handicraft can be hung over a doorway or as part of a wall display. Paint the hearts red, pink, and white, and you will have a decoration for Valentine's Day. Paint them red and green for Christmas, or red, white, and blue to display love for America. You can leave it plain for a natural look. The string of hearts wooden handicraft fits well with country style furnishings.

To make the string of hearts, you will need 5 wooden heart cut-outs approximately three inches wide, a drill with an eighth inch bit and a quarter inch bit, a small amount of raffia, two yards of 1 -1/2 inch wide soft ribbon, two large wooden beads, and acrylic paints in the colors you want. The ribbon and the beads should match the color scheme you desire. Plaid ribbons are particularly effective. The string of hearts has five hearts side by side tied together with small raffia bows. The first and last hearts have the wide ribbon strung through a hole on each side and a bead strung on the ribbon. The ribbon is knotted at the very ends, making a loop of ribbon on each end which can fit over a nail for hanging.

The first step in making the wooden handicraft is to drill a small hole on each side of the hearts. The two outside holes are made with the quarter inch bit, and the other holes are made with the 1/8 inch bit. Now paint the hearts with the acrylic paint in the colors you desire. Acrylic paints are the small bottles of craft paint that are sold in 2-ounce bottles in a wide variety of colors. They can sometimes be purchased very inexpensively. Tempera paint will work if you can't get acrylic paints. Another idea is to spray paint them, especially if you want to use a metallic color.

When the paint is dry, tie the hearts together with the raffia. To do this, cut four 10-inch lengths of raffia. Thread the raffia down into one hole and up through the hole on the next heart so that they lay side by side. The raffia should be tied in a neat bow on the top of the arrangement. Do the same between the rest of the hearts so that all the small raffia bows are on top. Trim the raffia ends if necessary.

Through each of the outside holes, thread one of the ribbons. Pull the ribbon through until the ends are even. Thread the large bead over both ends and slip it up close to the heart. Trim the ends of the ribbon decoratively and knot them. Repeat the process on the other side to complete the wooden handicraft. Now hang the string of hearts wherever desired for a cheerful decoration. A wooden handicraft like this makes a nice gift for someone special.

Creative Handicraft: Potholder from Scrap Fabrics



If you need a gift for a special person, or just need some time to unwind, make a creative handicraft. Crafting is therapeutic when you are feeling stressed, and it also can yield a useful or decorative item.

Everyone has some measure of creativity, and with modern kits and patterns, a creative handicraft does not have to end in frustration.

If you have a sewing machine, you can learn to make a creative handicraft that will be a useful and welcome gift. Potholders are a great beginning sewing project that can be made from scrap material or unwanted clothing and a bit of double-fold bias tape. Here are the simple instructions for this creative handicraft.

First cut two 8-inch (21 cm.) squares of fabric to be the front and back of the potholder. Choose coordinating fabrics that match your kitchen for these pieces. To make it easier, you can make an 8-inch square pattern from a piece of cardboard to use as a pattern. Cut more 8-inch squares of any old fabric to stack for the filling. You want the stack of fabric squares to be thick enough to protect you from a hot pot, but thin enough to be flexible and able to be sewn through.

Stack all layers so that the outer layers are facing to the outside and the filler layers are inside. You can put a couple of large straight pins through all layers to keep them together. Now sew right across the middle of the stack. Sew across the middle again, perpendicular to the first stitching. You will have divided the square into 4 squares. Sew across the stack again from corner to corner, and again from the other corner to corner. The layers should be joined and sturdy now.

To bind off the raw edges of your creative handicraft, trim with scissors so that all the layers are again even at the edges. Open out one folded edge of the bias tape. The wider bias tape might seem to be easier to use, but the narrow type makes a neater finished product. Starting at one corner, line up the edges of the tape with the edges of the potholder, and start stitching through all layers along the first fold line, which will be about 1/4 inch from the edge. Stitch neatly and slowly, attaching the opened tape all around the edge until you reach the beginning corner. Cut the bias tape off, leaving 3 inches, (7 cm.) to make into a hanging loop.

Fold the bias tape over the raw edge so that the middle fold lines up with the outside of the potholder and the other fold is hiding the raw edge of the bias tape. Now, for best results, hand sew the binding down, forming a loop on your creative handicraft when you get to the end.

This potholder is just one example of a creative handicraft you can create if you have a sewing machine. When it is finished, you will have a useful item made from all recycled materials. Feel free to give this creative handicraft away or keep it for yourself.

Handicraft Gift Idea: Make an Apron

If you are looking for a handicraft gift idea to make for someone special, perhaps that person would like an apron. When we think of aprons, we often think of mothers and grandmothers in the kitchen, but men can often benefit from having an apron as well. They often enjoy barbecuing, for one thing. They also can use an apron in the workshop. Children, too, can use an apron for many of their activities, such as arts and crafts. Here are simple instructions for making a handicraft gift of an apron that can be adapted for anyone.

Start with a piece of sturdy fabric suitable for the individual for whom you are making the handicraft gift. The fabric needs to be wide enough to wrap 1/2 to 3/4 of the way around them and long enough to cover them from collar bone to just above the knee. For a large adult, 25 to 30 inches wide by 36 to 40 inches long should be about right. A slimmer adult can use a narrower apron, but if they will be wiping their hands on the sides of it, they might appreciate the extra width. An apron for a child of 10 could start with a piece of fabric about 18 inches wide by 25-30 inches long.

The best types of fabric to use are sturdy cottons, such as medium weight denim or twill. Soft cottons such as broadcloth or muslin are all right in the kitchen, but will not last long, and would not hold up in the garden or workshop at all. Other materials you'll need are thread and a sewing machine. You will also need enough extra fabric to make a strap to go around the neck, ties for the back, and pockets.

When designing the handicraft gift, you can be as creative as you like with pockets. Every apron is more useful with pockets. A person who cleans houses, for instance, can use pockets for odds and ends they pick up as well as for their spray bottles, sponges, and scrub brushes.

To make the apron, fold the piece of fabric lengthwise. This will allow you to cut the shape with one cut, making the two sides symmetrical. What you will be shaping when you make the cut will be the bib section of the apron. The bib for an adult sized apron will need to be about 9 inches wide. Measure from the fold about 5-1/2 inches. This is half the width of the bib plus an inch to fold under twice to form a hem. The piece you will cut off the side to shape the bib will be a half bullet shape with the tip of the bullet being where the ties will be attached. The length of the half bullet shape should be about a foot, and the width will be from the spot you marked 5-1/2 inches from the fold to the outside edge of the fabric. When these pieces are cut off, the result should be an apron shaped piece of fabric.

Now decorate the apron with pockets and any other decorations you desire. After this it is time to fold under the edges all around and stitch down with sturdy stitching for a nice hem all around the handicraft gift. Cut two pieces of fabric a yard long by two inches wide. Fold lengthwise and fold raw edges to the inside. Press and stitch down along the length to make the ties. Attach the ties at the waist of the apron handicraft gift. (If these ties seem a little long, it is because a lot of people like to bring the ties to the front and tie them there.) Cut another piece of fabric 18 to 20 inches long by 5 inches wide fold in half lengthwise and press. Press again with the raw edges of the long side tucked under 1/2 inch. Stitch down the open side. Attach this piece to the

sides of the top of the bib, sewing it to the back of the bib and topstitching on the front side of the bib. Be careful not to twist it when you attach it.

People who work hard at homemaking, barbecuing and in the workshop will appreciate a handcraft gift of a sturdy apron. Mostly they will appreciate the effort and design you have put into making a handcraft gift that they can use.

Paper Crafts: Scrapbook and Greeting Card Basics

Paper crafts are a popular pastime right now. Scrapbooking is a fun way to display pictures and chronicle family history. Other paper crafts include making greeting cards and even making hand made papers.

When getting started at paper crafts, it is easy to spend a lot of money! Go easy at first until you know what sort of paper craft products you are likely to use. For instance, you may find that you love using stickers in scrapbooks, but rarely use your rubber stamps. If this is the case, you would be better off spending more on stickers and less on rubber stamps for your paper crafts.

Almost everyone has at least some of their photographs stored somewhere in a shoe box. Scrapbooks are a great way to get those photos out where people can enjoy them. You will need a loose leaf binder, some plastic page protectors, and some colored cardstock for starters. Many paper crafts experts insist on only archival quality materials. Check the labels as you buy. Most paper products, even the cheaper ones, are labeled "acid-free," which means that it shouldn't fade or otherwise deteriorate if stored for a long time. Sunlight will bleach almost anything, but your paper crafts should not be out in the sunlight very often.

To start a scrapbook you have several options. You can select photos that all relate to one event, such as a trip or a child's participation in sports. This type of scrapbook will be short, but can be designed around a theme. This is a good choice if your photos are not in a jumble. If they are, then you may wish to choose 3 or 4 photos around a general theme, and change the theme for each page. You may want to include some 2 page spreads in your scrapbook.

Attach your photos to the cardstock with double-sided tape squares or a gluestick. Acid free glue/tape is best to use if you do not want to damage your photographs. Then it's time to decorate the page with stickers, paper shapes, or rubber stamped designs. In addition, you can use a colored gel pen to write dates, names, and other highlights about the activities in the pictures.

Other items are available in paper crafts stores. These includes die cuts, which are pieces of paper already cut into shapes and objects. There are also special scissors that cut paper with an interesting edge. A pair of the type called "deckle" scissors is very useful for making elegant looking scrapbook pages, greeting cards, and other paper crafts. If you also have an old pair of pinking shears that are too dull to cut fabric, you can use those for cutting out shapes and photos.

Many paper crafts enthusiasts begin with scrapbooking, but then branch out to making their own greeting cards. Greeting cards may or may not have an original poem written on the inside. A simple "Happy Birthday," "Get Well Soon," or even just "Hi!" is enough to brighten someone's day, so don't worry about not being a good enough writer to make your own greeting cards. Rubber stamps often make beautiful greeting cards. You can even attach small ribbons, beads, and other items to hand made cards. A handmade card is sure to please anyone, whether they are interested in paper crafts or not.

Clay Pot Crafts: Make a Bell for the Porch

Clay pot crafts are a cute way to make home decorations. In clay pot crafts, clay flower pots can be crafted into a variety of decorative things that appeal to gardeners. Usually, the crafter begins with new pots. The pots are often decorated with paint as well as being tied together with rope or cord to create things.

Pots for clay pot crafts can be purchased in many different sizes, from tiny ones not more than 2 inches in diameter, to huge ones over a foot across. For a beginning project, start with smaller pots. The beginner should also choose clay pot crafts that don't use too many pots in too elaborate a design.

An example of a good craft for someone new at clay pot crafts is to make a bell from two clay pots. Buy one pot that is about five or six inches in diameter, and another that is very small. You will use the small one as the clapper for the bell. You will also need some decorative cord, two large wooden beads, and paint in desired colors. You may also wish to purchase some glue-on jewels to decorate the bell. The bell makes a nice decoration for a front porch.

Cut the cord two feet (60 cm.) long. Fold the end over 3 inches (8 cm.) and tie in an overhand knot, making a loop. This loop is for hanging the bell from a hook or a nail. Now turn the larger clay pot upside-down. Pass the loose end of the cord down through the hole in the pot. Lay the pot on its side and slide one of the large wooden beads up the cord until it is about 10 inches (25 cm.) from the loose end. Now tie the cord around the bead so that the bead cannot slip from its position on the cord. If you have done this correctly, you can lift the pot by the loop. In clay pot crafts, the beads must be large enough to stop the cord from going through the hole in the bottom of the pot.

On the loose end of the cord, you are going to attach the small pot in the same way. Slide the small pot up the cord to make it easier to tie the other large wooden bead on the end of the cord. Now when you lift the entire arrangement by the loop, the smaller pot should hang freely inside the larger pot, making a pleasant sound when it claps against the larger pot.

Decorate the outside of the larger pot with paint as desired. You may like to paint it in black and white patches for a Holstein cow theme. You may also like to decorate the top of the bell with silk or dried flowers and greenery and a ribbon bow.

For a variation on this craft, make three of the bells and hang them from a horizontal piece of driftwood or other interesting piece of natural wood. When making hanging clay pot crafts, always make sure the beads are large enough and are tied tightly in place, because the clay pots will break if they fall to the ground.

Other clay pot crafts include making a large doll or scarecrow of nested pots strung together and painted. The doll can sit on a chair or a step of the front porch. Paint his face to look like a scarecrow, a jack-o-lantern, a gnome, or a child. Clay pot crafts are especially suited to being displayed outside.

Holiday Crafts: Thanksgiving Decorations Kids Can Make



Thanksgiving is a wonderful holiday! What a spiritual renewal to take a day to reflect over the past year about just how good God has been to you and your family, to give you harvest and shelter, health and hope. To get the most out of this joyous occasion, make some holiday crafts with your children. These days, Thanksgiving often gets squeezed out by Halloween's spooky decorations and the lights and gala of Christmas. With the following holiday crafts, your home can be decorated for this quieter but important celebration.

Turkeys are a natural choice for decorations. A familiar project at this time of year is for a child to trace around her hand and make the resulting drawing into a turkey. The thumb is the head and the fingers are the tail feathers all displayed. While many of the turkeys that are raised for food are now the domestic white variety, the turkeys eaten by the Pilgrims at the first Thanksgiving were the wild brown ones. The tail feathers on a wild turkey are brown, but they are iridescent, catching light and appearing to be multi-colored. This is why children color the tail feathers in bright colors.

The turkey's head has a wattle under the beak. This is a vertical flap of loose skin that is red colored. Be sure to draw this in order to make the hand turkey look like a turkey. Add skinny legs and bird feet. When done, the children can cut out the turkeys and hang them on the wall. It's really cute to make a whole flock of these turkeys in the sizes of all the hands in the family. The little hand shapes are particularly sweet.

Another nice turkey decoration to make when making Thanksgiving holiday crafts is a turkey door decoration. Make a brown construction paper body and head of a turkey. Now make a large number of colored feather shapes. Each family member writes on a feather something he or she is thankful for before attaching as part of the turkey's tail. Repeat until all the feathers are used, and hang the turkey on the front door to greet visitors with a message of gratitude. Make a sign to accompany the turkey that says "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good!" or simply "Be thankful!" or "We're thankful for you!" or whatever you like.

Children love making construction paper chains. To further decorate the house for Thanksgiving, let them make a paper chain in fall colors as one of their holiday crafts. Using 9 by 12 inch construction paper, cut the paper in half across the long side and cut the halves into one inch thick six inch long strips. Use a stapler to attach the ends of the strip into a circle. Loop the next strip into the circle and staple it. Continue the process alternating colors of brown, red, yellow, and orange. When the chains are long, you can drape them along the ceiling or stair rail. If you don't make the door turkey, the children can write something they're thankful for on each strip of paper before adding it to the chain.

Thanksgiving is too nice a holiday to let the other more commercial holidays crowd it out. By making holiday crafts to decorate the home for Thanksgiving, you can keep

this day special, too. The extended family, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc., will be pleased to see the holiday crafts the young ones have made to decorate the house and make it cheerful for their visit.

Christmas Craft: Bead and Pipe Cleaner Ornaments



Christmas ornaments made from ordinary pipe cleaners and inexpensive acrylic beads are very pretty and easy to make. They look quite impressive yet are easy enough for small children to make. This is one Christmas craft idea to use again and again. Older people will enjoy making this Christmas craft, too, which can be varied to make a number of different sparkling ornaments for your Christmas tree.

To make the bead and pipe cleaner ornaments, you need common pipe cleaners in desired colors and acrylic beads. Two types of beads are particularly effective when strung on pipe cleaners. One type are called sunburst beads, but are also known as paddlewheel beads, snowflake beads, or starburst beads. These beads have six faceted paddles spaced equally around a center that contains the hole for stringing. When several of these sunburst beads are strung consecutively, they fit against each other in an interlocking pattern.

The other type of bead that is also effective for this Christmas craft is called the tri bead or propeller bead. It has three rounded bumps arranged around the stringing hole. Like the sunburst beads, the tri beads interlock when strung consecutively. For the most sparkly and attractive Christmas ornaments, get tri beads and/or sunburst beads in translucent colors of red, green, and clear. The tri beads can also be found in metallic gold and silver which can be used in this Christmas craft as well.

Pipe cleaners can be found in silver and gold tinsel as well as chenille of all colors. For the Christmas craft, the best colors to use are the metallics and Christmas colors. The beads cover the pipe cleaners, but the ends will need to be twisted together and made into hangers, so they show.

Anyone, even small children, can string these beads on pipe cleaners. Bend up the end of the pipe cleaner so the beads don't fall off. The pipe cleaner works like a needle, making a needle unnecessary. For best results, show the children how to alternate colors when stringing, or start a pattern of three colors. When the beads are strung on the pipe cleaners, they can be bent into different Christmas shapes. For instance, string red and clear beads alternately, then bend down one end of the pipe cleaner for a candy cane shape. Or alternate red and green beads and form a circle for a wreath. Use red pipe cleaner to form a small bow to decorate the wreath. Form a hanger for the Christmas craft or simply slip the circle over a branch of the tree.

If you experiment with clear beads and silver pipe cleaners, you can make some beautiful snowflake or star ornaments. Snowflake designs can be twisted of silver pipe cleaner only, without the beads for a simple but pretty decoration.

Bead and pipe cleaner ornaments are a Christmas craft you will find yourself using every year. Children and their parents will both appreciate this simple yet pretty Christmas craft.

A Favorite Past Time: Hobby Ideas You Will Like



What is your favorite past time? Hobby enthusiasts know that spare time is not to be "spent" but savored. If you have a past time you enjoy, you will never look at your spare time in the same way again. If you're not sure what past time hobby you would enjoy, here are some suggestions.

Many people listen to music as a favorite past time. There is much you can learn about any style of music. You can learn composers, famous melodies, and all about performers past and present. You can develop sophisticated tastes in jazz or classical music or collect a large assortment of CD's. Music makes a great past time hobby.

A lot of people love animals. Pets of all sorts can become your hobby. Perhaps you enjoy watching birds. If you have trouble finding them in the trees to watch, maybe you'd like to get a pair of canaries, a budgie, or a cockatiel. People who live in the country sometimes become interested in raising ornamental chickens, pigeons, or pheasants. It is very interesting to watch a mother bird take care of a nest of young chicks. Perhaps you can even raise some prize winners!

Dogs make a great hobby, too. Walking and enjoying a pet dog is one thing, but breeding and raising show dogs is something else entirely. Show dogs may require a bit of an investment, but many puppies are free. There is also the aspect of training a dog in obedience. Dogs give a lot of love back to their owners, too, so if you start a past time hobby of caring for a dog, you will never be lonely. However, dogs require quite a bit of work and attention, especially when they are being trained, so keeping dogs is not for everyone.

Bicycles can become your favorite past time. Hobby bicyclists are becoming more and more common to see cycling along lesser traveled highways seeing the countryside up close and personal. Bicycling requires a helmet and suitable clothes as well as a small tool kit for roadside repairs. Or maybe you would enjoy cycling on a smaller scale, simply taking fun rides with your family. The choice is yours.

The world is full of interesting things to learn and do. Don't merely sit back and watch TV. Get interested in a past time hobby. It's good for your mind. In fact, it might even keep you from going senile in your old age, if you stay active in a past time hobby. And it's a good example to our kids and grandkids if we spend our time doing something meaningful.

An Invigorating Family Past Time: Sports Activities

If you are feeling bored, listless, and out of shape, you need a new past time. Sports activities will get your blood pumping and help you get back into shape. Not only will you be getting good exercise but you will be starting a valuable family past time. Sports activities are a great way to spend time with your kids. So get up off the couch, put down that soda, and get out in the yard for a little touch football.

If touch football is not for you, why not play a little kickball with your kids. Set up a diamond similar to a baseball diamond. Now the pitcher rolls a large soft ball, like a playground ball, on the ground to the "batter." Only in kickball, the batter kicks the ball and runs to first base. Since the ball is soft, the fielding team can throw the ball at the runner to get him out. Since the kicker will almost always manage to kick the ball and foul balls are rare, this is a classic game to play with young kids and others who are not very athletic.

A fun family game that makes a good past time sports activity is tetherball. This rousing game can be played with one or two people. Tetherball is called that because the ball is on a tether - it is on a rope tied at the top of a pole. The ball hangs about hand level. The object is to hit the ball and make the rope wrap around the pole. The two players attempt to make the ball go different directions. If you have never played tetherball, you should give it a try. It is really fun! And it really gets you moving (and laughing!)

Sand volleyball may have started on the beaches, but many towns are now installing sand volleyball courts in their public parks. The littler kids can sit in a safe place and play with their sand toys while Mom, Dad, and the older kids hit a beach ball or volleyball back and forth over a net. The sand feels good on bare feet (but not so good inside your shoes!) The kids will enjoy this past time sports.

A cross between volleyball and tennis that many families enjoy is badminton. In this game, the object is to use lightweight rackets to volley a "birdie" back and forth over a net. The birdie looks like a little plastic funnel attached to a firm rubber ball. You hold the birdie by the plastic and drop it onto your racket to serve to the other team. Badminton moves more slowly than tennis and is a leisurely way to get moving with the kids. You'll get some exercise, though!

Kids are naturally energetic and active, making past time sports activities extremely attractive to them. Since parents need to be spending more quality time with their kids as well as needing to get more exercise, too, these vigorous games are a good idea for everyone. Some say that the family that plays together stays together. This could be so, since exercise gets positive hormones flowing in your mind, putting you and everyone else in a better mood. Don't get so competitive that your family past time sports cease to be fun. Just volley that ball or birdie for fun and exercise.

For Recreation, Sports Collecting is a Great Hobby

In this fast-paced, stressful age we live in, everyone needs a little recreation. Sports' collecting is a hobby that can fill your spare minutes with interest and offer a diversion to the everyday grind. Sports' collecting takes many forms depending on the person who is pursuing the hobby. Many people choose to collect memorabilia from their favorite professional teams, but others collect items related to golf, fishing, and other recreation sports. Collecting requires a certain amount of space, but collectors are creative about finding ways to display their collectibles.

If you have a favorite pro team or two there are many items you can collect related to those teams. For instance, you can create scrapbooks in which you save clippings about exciting games, favorite players, and special interviews. You can keep ticket stubs and photographs in your scrapbook, too. Other items, however, won't fit into a scrapbook, such as a game ball, team jersey, or a team's annual yearbook. These items will need other storage. There are stands for special balls, and jerseys look great hanging on a hanger on the wall.

You might like to collect souvenir items from all types of sports. Most professional teams sell small metal pins with their insignia on them. Pin collecting is a widely practiced hobby, and sports teams are one of the hottest types of collectible pins, as are those commemorating the Olympics. Another option for sports collecting is to collect antique sports equipment. Vintage baseball gloves are an example of this type of collectible.

Baseball cards have long been a source of recreation. Sports collecting enthusiasts have collected baseball cards, football cards, and basketball cards for many years, although baseball cards were the first. This is such a popular hobby that some cards are worth a lot of money, such as a rookie card of a player like Willie Mays.

Other collectors like to accumulate things that illustrate their favorite recreation sports. Collecting items decorated with fish, horses, or golfers are examples of these types of collections. For instance, if you enjoy hunting with dogs, you can decorate your home in a hunting dog theme. There are throw pillows printed with handsome hunting dogs, as well as with the game they help you find. You may find lamps that have a hunting dog as the base. You can even have curtains made from hunting dog printed material! The same can be done around the theme of golf, horseback riding, whether western or eastern, bass fishing, sailboats, and other popular recreation sports. Collecting is a hobby that offers many options!

Pin Collecting: A Friendly Obsession

Pins are a hot collectible that offer an added advantage over other collections - they are small and do not take up much room. Pins are available in many motifs and themes. Some of the most collectible themes are Disney characters, sports teams, and Hard Rock Cafe. The first rule of pin collecting is to specialize. If you like the San Diego Padres baseball team, for instance, you can start pin collecting with souvenir pins that celebrate this team. And just because these themes are popular doesn't mean you have to collect them. Be original and collect what you like.

Many pins are centered around modern entertainments, but many pin collecting enthusiasts collect campaign pins from election campaigns. Buttons are a similar item and are collected by many of the same people who do pin collecting. Pins created to advertise businesses and services are also very collectible.

To display pins you have several options. When you wear a jacket with lapels, you can wear a few of your favorite small pins. The same goes for wearing a cowboy hat or a vest. Many pin collectors wear a few on the front of a cowboy hat. Tote bags, purses, and fanny packs are another place where some pins can be displayed.

Of course, as you get into pin collecting, you will soon find that you have too many to wear the entire collection at one time. A bulletin board, perhaps covered with a plain piece of fabric, like dark blue velvet, makes a nice backdrop for a pin collection. The pins can either be pinned into the cork of the bulletin board through the velvet or attached to the velvet first.

Another way to display and store pins is in a notebook. This method works well if you wish to take some of your pins to an event where you can do some trading with other pin collectors. To make the notebook, purchase sheets of hard felt or craft foam. Either punch holes in the side so they fit into a looseleaf binder, or slip the pages into page protectors after attaching the pins to the pages. The type of looseleaf binder that zips closed is the best to use for pin collecting.

Sometimes pins get scratched, especially if they are stored in a notebook arrangement such that they hit each other. The scratches can be smoothed over with a tiny bit of liquid car wax. Future scratching can be avoided by using page protectors in notebook collections.

Pin collecting is a very popular hobby. You can find groups of likeminded people with which to trade pins, making pin collecting a hobby that helps people make friends.

Civil War Bullet Collecting: A Hobby that Honors the Past

Did you know that during the Civil War, more than 1000 different types of bullets were used? This is one reason Civil War bullet collecting has become a popular hobby. Another reason is that the time of the Civil War saw changes taking place in the development of firearms and ammunition. The old round musketballs of the Revolution were being replaced with bullets in the shape we are accustomed to. While musketballs are found on Civil War battlefields, the most common type of bullet used was the .58-caliber bullet with three rings around the base. Many bullets found are splattered out of shape. If you've always been fascinated by the Civil War and firearms, Civil War bullet collecting is a hobby you will enjoy.

With the advent of Internet buying and selling, Civil War bullets have become more collectible, and the prices have gone up quickly. Not only this, sometimes sellers are not informed and ask more than the bullet is worth. For these reasons, if you are just starting out in Civil War bullet collecting, you will want to buy a good price guide. You can even find a price guide online if that works better for you.

Many Civil War bullet collectors also collect bullet molds and other relics from the Civil War era. A real enthusiast might even investigate the possibility of becoming a Civil War reenactor, acting out battles with others in towns and fields across the Southeast.

Civil War bullets can be collected by buying from other collectors, or you can begin by going directly to the battlefields to dig and search. A metal detector will make Civil War bullet collecting easier. You may also find buttons from uniforms, bullet molds, belt buckles, and other metal items from the battle. Some of the bullets may be buried quite deep. You will need to wear a headset and pay close attention to the changes in tone in your metal detector. Hunting Civil War relics is prohibited on protected battlefields, but there are still old homesites where battles were fought. Be sure to get permission from the owner and fill any holes you dig.

Some people have the idea that hunting for bullets with a metal detector indicates a lack of respect for the soldiers who died there. They get this idea because sometimes bullet hunters find bones along with the bullet. The fact is, however, that many of the bullet hunters who have found bullets this way have chronicled and mapped out there finds, resulting in many of the facts that we now know about the Civil War.

The Civil War fascinates Americans because of everything it stands for. While everyone agrees that slavery is a terrible blot on the history of the U.S., there are some people who still discuss the issue of states' rights versus a strong central government. Civil War bullet collecting is an interesting hobby, though somewhat sobering at times when considering the great number of casualties. The memory of brother fighting against brother out in the cornfields and pastures will never go away. Civil War bullet collecting is one way to commemorate this monumental historical event.

An Educational Past Time: Stamp Collecting

Stamp collecting, also known as philately, is a popular and educational past time. Stamp collectors save stamps from letters, especially those from other countries. They also search out old stamps that represent a past time. Stamp enthusiasts can be found everywhere. Their notebooks and glassine envelopes filled with stamps are fascinating to look through. Many of the stamps they collect are very valuable as well.



Materials needed for starting a stamp collection include a stamp album and special mounting tapes called hinges. Tools you will find useful are a pair of small tongs or tweezers for carefully lifting delicate old stamps and a magnifying glass for finding minute details. The beginning philatelist can start with the stamps on the mail that arrives this very day. To remove a stamp from an envelope, carefully tear away the envelope from around the stamp being careful not to tear the stamp itself. Now soak the stamp in warm water. The remaining piece of envelope will turn loose, allowing you to lift the stamp from the water with the tongs.

Lay the stamp on absorbent paper. When dry, place a heavy book on top of the stamp to flatten it. As a past time, stamp collecting requires precision and neatness. Place the dried and flattened stamp in the album by using one of the hinges, or store it in one of the tiny glassine envelopes unique to stamp collecting.

Many collectors specialize in collecting currently available commemoratives as a past time. Stamp designs are varied, beautiful and interesting. Commemoratives are those special stamps that are released by the post office for a limited time. They can commemorate special people or events. Most nations print commemorative stamps from time to time. American stamps have featured wild life, artists, antiques, and many other themes. In fact, there is an annual contest in which American school children compete to draw the best picture of a wild duck. The best duck art is featured on a stamp.

A fun way for a young person to build a collection of foreign stamps is to find a few pen pals in foreign countries. This activity helps people make friends as well as broadening their outlook. There are also companies that will send out introductory collections of foreign stamps in order to get stamp collecting customers on their mailing lists. These collections are usually colorful and contain a wide variety.

Stamp collecting is an educational past time. Stamp collections can sometimes become very valuable to the right people. If you are looking for a new hobby or past time, stamp collecting might be for you!

If You're Collecting, Ebay Selling is for You!

If you or someone you know is interested in collecting, Ebay selling is something you need to get familiar with! Ebay is a huge Internet site that allows people to sell or buy at auction almost anything you can think of. There are very few restrictions on what you can buy or sell. Are you fond of antique toasters? Bicycles? Vintage rhinestone jewelry? Stuffed toys? Elvis memorabilia? Whatever you are collecting, Ebay selling will probably have what you want.

Ebay is essential to know about if you are enthusiastic about your collecting. For instance, if you collect a particular type of antique or vintage dishes, such as Fiesta, you can search Ebay for exactly the piece you need to complete your set. In addition to finding the exact item you are looking for, there is a possibility you'll get it for a great price as well. That tangerine colored pitcher might be yours for a song. You just have to look.

Collecting is one thing, but what about when the collector gets more items than he or she can store? What if they inadvertently collected duplicates of the same item. Or what if you just have stuff you don't want anymore? That's where Ebay selling can help. You can list your item on Ebay, and another collector can find it and make a bid. Ebay is a great way to recycle unwanted used items and make a few dollars as well as helping you with your collecting. Ebay selling is not hard to learn, either.

For just about every item you can name, someone somewhere collects it, and they are probably searching Ebay for what they want. So whatever you are collecting, Ebay selling can help you generate the money needed to add items to your own collection while getting rid of things you don't need. In addition, you can be gratified to know that the item you didn't want, like the bikes your kids have outgrown, or your vintage clock, was exactly what some other collector was seeking.

Just like collecting, Ebay selling can get almost addictive. It's a fun hobby that many people are discovering. So where do you go if there's something special you are collecting? Ebay! Selling, you'll find, is almost as fun as collecting, so be sure to try it, too. Remember, too, that Ebay can not only help you complete your collections. It can also be a source for the things you need for other hobbies, interests, and needs in your life.

Have a Toy Game Hobby Night at Your House!

Build family communication and togetherness by having a weekly toy game hobby night. It is so easy these days to let work, school, and the business of life rule the day, that we can easily lose touch with each other. If we get together one night each week for a toy game hobby night, we can rekindle those family ties.

Those families with small children will probably focus more on the toy aspect of the toy game hobby night. Take the time to get down on the floor and play with those youngsters. Cuddle those dollies and call yourself "grandma" or "grandpa." Push those trucks around and pretend right along with the kids. If your back can take it, let them take turns riding you like a horse while you crawl around and neigh. Every kid loves that!

On summer evenings, try toy game hobby night in the sand box at the park. Using an old mesh produce bag, collect a variety of suitable sand toys to take along. These toys include various containers, a few wheeled vehicles, toy garden tools, and cast-off kitchen utensils. In the sandbox with your kids, you can create towns with roads, castles, or just about anything.

Modeling dough is also a great activity for toy game hobby night. Collect some small cookie cutters and old jar lids (for pans) and create fancy cookies and desserts - inedible and calorie-free, of course! The kids can turn a large box on it's side for a counter and place the goodies on display to sell. Of course, you'll pretend to buy, eat, and enjoy!

Some fun games for family night include card games like Uno, board games like Candy Land or Life, and dominoes. When choosing games to play there are several things to consider. Is Scrabble, for instance, fun for everyone, or does all the spelling and thinking feel like work to some of the players? Does the game take forever to play, so that some players' attention spans play out? Does the game encourage merciless competition, like Monopoly, leaving losers feeling left out? It's important for kids to learn how to lose and still have fun. Don't "throw" the game, intentionally letting them win all the time, but don't mercilessly beat them every time either. Make it fun. If losing is a problem for some of the kids, check out some of the new cooperative games where everyone is on the same team.

Hobbies are also great to share as a family. Maybe your family would be interested in pursuing musical skills together. Families make great singing groups because their voices match well. If that's not for you, maybe you'd all enjoy fishing. Square dancing is fun for some families, while others enjoy playing badminton or other active games and sports. The important thing is to have fun together.

Having a toy game hobby night every week will help you stay close to your kids as they grow up. It will keep the bond of love fresh and the lines of communication open. Plan a toy game hobby night this week!

Collect and Play: Have Fun With a Toy Hobby

Some adults never seem to grow up. They seem to retain their childlike wonder at the world around them. These are the adults who have started a toy hobby. Kids like to hang around with these adults because they seem more like kids.



Sometimes having a child or a grandchild can spark an interest in toys. Be that as it may, a toy hobby will keep a person young at heart.

Many women love dolls and never outgrow them. Some prefer baby dolls, some fashion dolls, and still others go for antique or decorative dolls. Often an interest in dolls will spill over into a craft interest, as the doll lover begins to craft clothing and accessories for favorite dolls. Sometimes the hobbyist becomes skilled at crafting the dolls themselves. Some types of dolls that are often hand-crafted are rag dolls and cloth bodied dolls with ceramic heads. It is not uncommon to find older women who have an entire room of their homes filled with special dolls on display.

Older men, on the other hand, (and sometimes women, too) often like cars and trucks. Antique metal cars are hot collectibles, with some older ones being quite valuable. Matchbox cars have always been loved, but so have the large Tonka dumptruck, road grader, and bulldozer. You can bet the grandkids will want to play with your trucks and cars.

A toy hobby that is extremely popular is collecting Beanie Babies. These small velour animals, made by the Toy company, each have a personality all its own. You can find Beanie Babies in every type of animal you can think of. A similar hobby is collecting teddy bears. There are many Beanie Baby teddy bears, but a teddy bear collector will probably want to branch out to collect other types of bears. In fact, many bear collectors have figurines and other items collected in addition to their teddy bears.

Wooden toys are popular among adults, both to craft and to collect. There is something quaint and pleasant about a child playing with a handcrafted wooden toy. Wooden toys make attractive home accents wherever they get dropped, which is not something you can say about the latest plastic gizmo. People who like country decorating often prefer wooden toys for their kids.

You don't have to outgrow toys! A toy hobby will keep you young at heart and make you a favorite among the kids in your neighborhood. Whether you collect toys or craft them, a toy hobby is something you can play around with!

Get a Hobby Kit and Learn Something New

If you are tired of the ho-hum of life and would like to branch out a little, maybe you should get a hobby kit. Many different hobbies have kits that can help a beginner learn about the hobby quickly and easily. It is not easy to teach yourself some hobbies, but with a hobby kit, you can learn from the kit.

For instance, if you have been wanting to learn how to do a needlecraft, such as cross stitch or crewel embroidery, there is no better way to start than with a kit. In a hobby kit, you will receive a piece of cloth with the design already stamped on, yarn or floss in the proper colors and possibly already cut to the proper lengths, and a needle. You may even get an embroidery hoop in the kit. When you buy a hobby kit, be sure to read on the package to see if any other materials or tools will be needed to do the hobby.

A hobby kit is also the best way to learn a hobby like building model cars. In a model car kit, you will get all the pieces you need and detailed instructions. In some kits, you might also receive paint, a brush, and glue, but read the label. You might have to provide these things separately.

When choosing Christmas or birthday gifts for a young person, consider a hobby kit, such as a candle-making kit or a rock tumbling kit. In the fall, the stores are full of kits that could start a kid on a hobby that would last throughout his life. You can find small weaving loom kits, glycerine soap making kits, bead craft kits, wood-burning kits, and art kits. There is a line of colorful books put out by the Klutz company that each gives instruction in a hobby and has a packet of materials for learning the hobby. Some of the topics Klutz books cover are polymer clay modeling, hair styling, and pompon creations. They are all cleverly written and lots of fun.

Another hobby that can be learned from a kit is starting garden seedlings, especially herbs. A seed starting kit typically contains a pot, a small trowel, seeds, fertilizer, and a greenhouse dome or cover. Potting soil may need to be purchased separately.

When choosing a hobby kit, be careful to get one that is appropriate for the recipient. Sometimes a hobby kit is quite challenging. An example of a difficult project is an electronics kit for wiring one's own radio. If a kit is a gift for a child and it is too hard, it will wind up gathering dust on some shelf. In fact, it might gather dust even if you buy it for yourself! Consider getting a smaller project that you can finish in a short time so you can get a feel for the hobby. The next hobby kit you buy can be harder if you find that you enjoy the hobby and have a real desire to learn more about it.

Returning to the Simple Joys of Home and Hobby

In the past decades, many mothers have made the decision to pursue careers, but that trend seems to be changing. Home and hobby are calling to these women, who are willing to make financial and personal sacrifices in order to be the primary caregivers for their small children. Many women have returned to being keepers at home, and hobby skills can help them meet the financial challenges of being a one income family.

One hobby that helps the mother at home is cooking. Though it could be considered work, cooking and baking are fascinating hobbies. One can explore the cuisine of different countries or learn to create gourmet treats. Baking can yield wholesome whole grain products that nourish the family for a fraction of the cost of loaves bought at the store.

Another home and hobby skill that comes in handy is sewing on a sewing machine. Many homemakers are producing quilts that are works of art. These beautiful offerings can be made inexpensively by recycling unwanted fabrics into squares and other shapes and artistically arranging the pieces. Other sewing skills that are useful for the stay-at-home-mom are mending, altering, and creating clothing. When polled about favorite pastimes, women often rank sewing at the top.

Some moms and their husbands actively work on remodeling their home, and hobby carpentry skills come in handy. One income families hold down the cost of living by learning to "do it yourself," a term that is used so much it has been shortened into "diy." The Internet has made it possible to find information on making all sorts of repairs and renovations to homes, furnishings and other belongings.

Gardening is a hobby that not only gets the participant close to nature, but also can put high quality produce on the family table. Some families are even investing in hobby greenhouses or growing enough extra to sell a bit each week at farmers' markets. A good practical hobby like growing a garden gives a person a sense of accomplishment when they realize their efforts have created something useful and profitable.

The homemaking parent that has a sense of art can inexpensively create harmony and beauty around the house, raising everyone's standard of living. It doesn't have to involve spending any money. Perhaps she can arrange dried wild flowers beautifully or create simple hand-lettered wall mottoes that lift everyone's spirits.

Yes, home and hobby call to the women of today, suggesting a simpler way of life closer to those people and things that matter most. While the career women are truly making an important impact on today's world, the quiet return of many to home and hobby may result in more impact than any of us realizes.

A Hobby Greenhouse Will Get You Growing!

For people who would like to do more gardening but live in a short growing season area, a hobby greenhouse is the answer. A hobby greenhouse is not large enough to produce vegetables or flowers on a commercial basis. It will, however, give you a place for a tomato plant or two and some fresh greens even if you live in the northern regions. Greenhouse enthusiasts even have their own association, called the Hobby Greenhouse Association, which publishes a quarterly magazine. The organization also sponsors events and helps individuals connect to get help with the aspect of gardening that they are interested in, whether it's growing cacti or saving seeds.

If you are in the market for a hobby greenhouse, there are several types on the market. The smallest type is not large enough to walk into and must be accessed from the outside. It resembles an old-fashioned phone booth made all of glass and outfitted with shelves. This type is designed to fit as many plants as possible in as small a place as possible. The shelves are made of glass to allow as much light as possible to reach plants on the lower shelves. Another inexpensive version of this sort of hobby greenhouse is shelving covered with a zippered tent of clear plastic. This sort of arrangement is great for the small-scale hobby gardener wanting a place to keep her flowers or houseplant starts.

There are a variety of designs of hobby greenhouse that are large enough to walk into but made entirely of clear glass or plastic. They are often about the same size as a small storage building. Some independent builders have started making these to sell locally. Among national brands, one of the nicest is called the "Solar Prism." It is called this because of its unique construction. This hobby greenhouse is made of a single piece of durable clear plastic which is designed to work like tiny prisms side by side. They trap the rays of the sun and shoot them back into the greenhouse at all angles. For this reason, these little greenhouses are said to glow when the weather is cloudy.

Better hobby greenhouses are equipped with automatic sensors that open vents which allow ventilation and keep the interior temperatures from getting too high. These are a great labor saver, but can get expensive. Another benefit sometimes found in nicer greenhouses is a built in irrigation or misting system. Members of the Hobby Greenhouse Association, or HGA, have invented many interesting designs of greenhouses.

If gardening is your hobby, greenhouse growing will interest you. With a greenhouse, you can have the earliest tomatoes and salad greens all year. You can also start seedlings for the main garden early in the spring when outdoor temperatures would kill them. A hobby greenhouse can be a good investment.

A Wealth of Kid Hobby Ideas

Every young person needs a hobby. An interesting kid hobby will help children learn as well as keep them entertained for hours. It might even help them stay away from a bad peer group and stay out of trouble. Some kids might think of video games or TV as an appropriate kid hobby, but most parents would like to see their kids doing something more challenging or educational.

A good kid hobby is playing a musical instrument. The guitar can often be self-taught from a book if a child has the interest, but for piano playing or other instruments, you will probably have to invest in lessons. Practice is, of course, an essential part of mastering any musical instrument.

Another type of kid hobby is pursuing an art or a craft. Kids can learn to draw, paint, or make scrapbook pages. They can learn needle arts, such as embroidery, sewing, knitting or crocheting. Beginning carpentry is a very useful kid hobby that may turn into a career, or at least skills that will be used for a lifetime.

Tinkering around on gas engines or electronics is another kid hobby that can lead to useful skills.

There are all sorts of things that kids might like to collect for a hobby. Some of the more common collections are of stamps, coins, and rocks. Stamps are interesting because they can be from many different countries, becoming a geography lesson. Coins and stamps both are of historical significance, and encourage reading to learn more about different eras in history. Rock collecting as a kid hobby requires looking into science books.

Other collectibles include bean bag toys or figurines of a certain thing, such as owls, frogs, or unicorns. Anything a child has an interest in can be collected. If a kid is interested in dolphins, for instance, she may not only collect dolphin figurines and posters, but also be motivated to read books about dolphins.

Construction sets also make a good pastime for kids. Many people may think of these only as toys, but children who have grown up with these sets and added components to them down through the years can create some pretty impressive models. They are also gaining skills in reasoning and perception as they build.

Making model, such as cars, boats, and airplanes, has always been a popular kid hobby. If your child is interested in making models, be very encouraging in the beginning. Model car kits can be very complicated and require a great deal of precision. If your child's first few creations leave a little bit to be desired, don't laugh or scold, or he is likely to never want to try to make anything again! Get the easiest kit he is willing to make and then patiently help him as much as needed.

Many kids enjoy sports, making any athletic activity a great kid hobby. Soccer, basketball, and little league baseball all come to mind, but don't forget about track and field events. Maybe your child would enjoy distance running or gymnastics. An

active kid hobby will help your child stay in shape as well as make an interesting pastime.

Wedding Crafts Ideas for Saving Money

Weddings are a joyous occasion but can get expensive in a hurry. With wedding crafts you can insert a personal touch and hold the price down as well. Here are a few ideas for wedding crafts to add sparkle and creativity to your big day.

It is not that hard to create your own wedding veil. To make this wedding craft, you will need a length of bridal illusion in the desired length. You will also need a comb to attach it to your hair and a hat or headpiece to cover the comb. Sew large running stitches about an inch from the end of the illusion and gather it tightly. Now sew the veil to the comb. Top with hat or headpiece. As an alternative, you can decorate a wide-brimmed straw hat with silk flowers, ribbon, and pearls.

The bouquets and floral arrangements can also be personally crafted. For a simple outdoor wedding, consider wild flowers. They are free and have a charm all their own. Bouquets can be arranged in large clear vases, with a bow tied elegantly around.

Favors for the guests are particularly appropriate wedding crafts. Refrigerator magnets are a simple and well-received favor. A really nice idea is to make a magnetic picture frame and include a picture of the couple. You could cut a frame out of craft foam in one of the wedding colors, arrange over the photo, and glue all onto a cardboard backing. Place self-adhesive magnet tape on the back of the cardboard. Decorate the front of the frame with foil heart stickers and a monogram of the couple's last name.

Bows for the ends of the pews or rows make simple wedding crafts. Wide velvet ribbons are nice for fall and winter weddings, while satin is more appropriate for spring and summer weddings. Loop some flat lace in with the ribbons. In the center of the completed bow, attach some silk flowers and pearl sprays with a hot glue gun.

Perhaps you'd like to try your hand at decorating your own cake. Check the craft section of the department store for pans and gadgets of all types to help you create a cake to remember. Do remember, though, that it takes a steady hand. Be sure to practice before starting on the real cake.

Preparing for a wedding can be expensive, but with wedding crafts, you can take some of the sting out. Plan early, however, because it will take a little while to make favors for everyone and all the other little details you will want to take care of. Maybe creating wedding crafts will even relieve some of those wedding jitters. In any event, crafting your own wedding items is a way to have a personal, beautiful, and less expensive wedding.

Start an Art Collectible Hobby and Beautify Your Home

Collecting is a fun hobby, and one of the most interesting things to collect are art collectibles. Many different items can be painted with artwork and become an art collectible. Hobby enthusiasts collect such things as saw blades, and wooden eggs which have had artwork painted on. People even collect designer rugs as art. Another art collectible hobby is collecting limited edition plates, thimbles, Christmas ornaments, and figurines produced by such companies as Bradford Exchange. And of course, many people collect fine art paintings.

The person with an art collectible hobby will probably find his or her own favorite artists whose works they appreciate. They can choose to focus on one particular artist, either past or present, or they can choose from the works of many artists. On the other hand, they may collect art and art objects around a theme they enjoy, such as cigars, wild animals, or piano music.

One may think of an art collector as a rich person who has the money to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on an original Van Gogh. A person of more modest means can collect art too, however. Post cards are a good place to start. Most art museum gift shops offer high quality, glossy postcards printed with some of their more notable acquisitions. By buying those cards one really appreciates, anyone can have an art collection.

Ebay is a good source of art collectibles whatever type of art or collectible you fancy. In fact, if you are just starting out, the choices and options can be overwhelming! Just remember that you can sell your own belongings as well as buying those of others. This should make the impact on the budget a little less powerful. Other ideas for inexpensively collecting art collectibles are scouring flea markets, thrift shops, and garage sales. You never know what treasure someone else may be getting rid of.

One nice thing about art collectibles is that artists can be found in every part of the world. The art collector should scout the local art shows, museums, and artist's hangouts to find out just what sort of talent can be had less expensively and close to home. Because of the local flavor of some artwork, art collectibles make good travel souvenirs. For instance, the artist Linda Barnicott specializes in paintings of scenes, buildings, and landmarks found around Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Similarly, collectors can find local artist almost everywhere.

An art collectible hobby will keep you interested in life and give you a home filled with art masterpieces as well. If you enjoy pretty and interesting things around you, consider starting an art collectible hobby today.

Arts and Crafts Idea: Foam Sheet Glasses Case

Are you a camp director, teacher, or homeschool mom looking for a new arts and crafts idea for your kids? Or maybe you are a recreation director at a senior center or nursing home and could use a new project. Either way, this arts and crafts idea will be interesting and fun for all. This glass case can be used, given as a gift, or converted into a necklace purse.

To make the glasses case, you will need the following simple materials: a square of craft foam, plastic or large blunt needles, lanyard lace or thick yarn. Cut two rectangles from the foam, each 3-1/2 inches (9 cm.) by 6 inches (15 cm.). With a hole punch, make holes on three sides of each rectangle, leaving one short side unpunched. Make the holes 1/2 inch apart and allow at least 1/4 inch between the hole and the edge of the craft foam. The holes need to line up so that the two pieces can be laced together. If you are preparing the craft for small children, you should make the holes yourself. Otherwise, the crafters can do this step if you have enough pairs of hole punches.

At this point the crafters can cut decorative shapes from other colors of craft foam, or you can buy sets of ready-cut foam shapes. If you are doing the craft at a special event, like vacation Bible school, choose shapes that echo the theme of the event. For instance, if the Bible school or camp has a cowboy theme, find shapes that fit well, such as boots, cowboy hats, and stars. Let the kids choose the shapes they like and glue on as desired. You might also like to provide beads or sequins to glue on as well, especially if the crafters are a little older.

The next step in this arts and crafts idea is to thread the plastic needle with the yarn or lanyard lace. Yarn might be a little easier to handle, but lanyard lace is shiny and attractive. In a pinch, some teachers of small children use a bobby pin as a needle. It is certainly a safe alternative. Simply loop the yarn through the opening and use the open end of the bobby pin as if it were the point of the needle. The children can now begin to lace the front and back of the glasses case together.

To turn this arts and crafts idea into a necklace purse, simply attach a piece of lanyard lace to each corner making a long handle. Kids will enjoy using this case as a place to store secret notes and small objects. If they'd rather, they can give the glasses case to a parent, grandparent, or friend who wears glasses. Either way, this arts and crafts idea will be interesting for all.