

Plan Your Handmade Year Worksheets

From Little House in the Suburbs.com

WHAT do you already make?

Below, list your current specialties. Do you sew, crochet, soap, cook great brownies, can, stitch, knit? Write that down. You never know when that idea will be useful to more people on your list. What have you made in the past that people liked?

Brainstorm and be specific!

My Specialties

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

WHAT if I don't have a specialty? Can I try something new?

There are plenty of great projects out there for first-timers. And if you already have a specialty, like crochet, your gift is even better with homemade lotion bars or body butter. It takes no talent or previous experience to make them. The same is true for bath salts and other mixes.

The easiest way to get a thorough scan of everything you could do is to flip through our book, *Little House in the Suburbs*. Inside you'll find plenty of recipes for jams, cordials, vinegar, cosmetics, soaps, washcloth patterns, herbal treats, and gift baskets. You'll know what you have on hand.

For example, on page 121 there are instructions for homemade beeswax dipped candles. Since I already plan to order beeswax for another project, I think I'll go ahead and let the kids make some of these to add to some of the baskets of goodies.

If you don't have the book on hand, on the next page is a list of projects and page numbers that we feel are "no experience or special equipment required" projects that would be good make-ahead gifts.

Little House in the Suburbs Great First-Time Projects

On the following two pages are all of the best first-time projects from our book. Some are already grouped into baskets, but feel free to pick out individual items and assemble your own!

Page	Project	Like	Notes
Edible Gifts			
130	Greek Seasoning Blend	<input type="checkbox"/>	
130	Sunshine Seasoning Blend	<input type="checkbox"/>	
130	Italian Seasoning Blend	<input type="checkbox"/>	
130	Southwestern Seasoning Blend	<input type="checkbox"/>	
131	Herbes De Provence	<input type="checkbox"/>	
131	Tuscan Herb Salt	<input type="checkbox"/>	
132	Lemon Herbal Oil	<input type="checkbox"/>	
132	Provençal Herbal Oil	<input type="checkbox"/>	
132	Lemon Olive Oil	<input type="checkbox"/>	
134	Herbal Vinegar	<input type="checkbox"/>	
144	Honey Candy Drops	<input type="checkbox"/>	
146	Berry Liqueur	<input type="checkbox"/>	
147	Vanilla Extract	<input type="checkbox"/>	
147	Lemon or Orange Extract	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Individual Pamper Items			
121	Dipped Beeswax Tapers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
154	Lotion Bars	<input type="checkbox"/>	
155	Lip Balm	<input type="checkbox"/>	
165	Hand-milled Gardener Soap	<input type="checkbox"/>	
156	Sugar Scrub	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Items from the Pedi Basket*			
182	Lavender foot soak	<input type="checkbox"/>	
183	Peppermint-Avocado Foot Scrub	<input type="checkbox"/>	
183	Calendula Shea Butter Lotion Bar	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Items from the Pet Lover Basket*			
185	Pet greens grow kit	<input type="checkbox"/>	
186	Cheddar Oat Dog Biscuits	<input type="checkbox"/>	
186	Fleece rope Dog Toy	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Page	Project	Like	Notes
Items from the Gardener Basket*			
188	Twig Plant Markers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
188	Gardener's Lotion Bar	<input type="checkbox"/>	
188	Homemade Dibble	<input type="checkbox"/>	
157	Homemade Insect Spray	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Items from the Spa Basket*			
191	Oatmeal Bath Milk	<input type="checkbox"/>	
191	Body Butter	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Items from the Tushie Basket			
179	Calendula Diaper Cream	<input type="checkbox"/>	
179	Diaper Pail Freshmakers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
178	Diaper Wipe Solution Concentrate	<input type="checkbox"/>	
179	Flannel Wipes	<input type="checkbox"/>	

*Baskets with a star originally contained lye soaps or knitted cloth patterns. I won't tell you to learn to knit before Xmas, but homemade lye soap really only requires guts and a stick blender. Pringles cans make great soap molds. If you're feeling game we have the soaps listed below.

Page	Project	Like	Notes
Soaps			
160	Our first-timer veggie soap	<input type="checkbox"/>	
162	Pure Lard Soap	<input type="checkbox"/>	
163	Pure Olive Oil Soap	<input type="checkbox"/>	
164	Peppermint Rosemary Soap	<input type="checkbox"/>	
164	Lavender Rosemary Soap	<input type="checkbox"/>	
185	Conditioning Pet Soap	<input type="checkbox"/>	
190	Honey Conditioning Soap	<input type="checkbox"/>	
188	Poppyseed Lemon Scrub Up Soap	<input type="checkbox"/>	

So, do your project ideas naturally group themselves? Mine do. I usually have

- One or more BATCH BASKET projects with individualized touches or accessories.
- Big STITCH projects
- Some little individual projects (Grampa's shaving soap, my agent's cookies, etc.)

List your general groupings below.

Batch Projects (Baskets):

Individual Time-Intensive Projects:

Individual Short Projects:

TALLY TIME

Now it's time to see what's worth doing and who might like it. On the next page, write your project ideas on the left side and your people/#occasions across the top. Print a few if you have lots of people

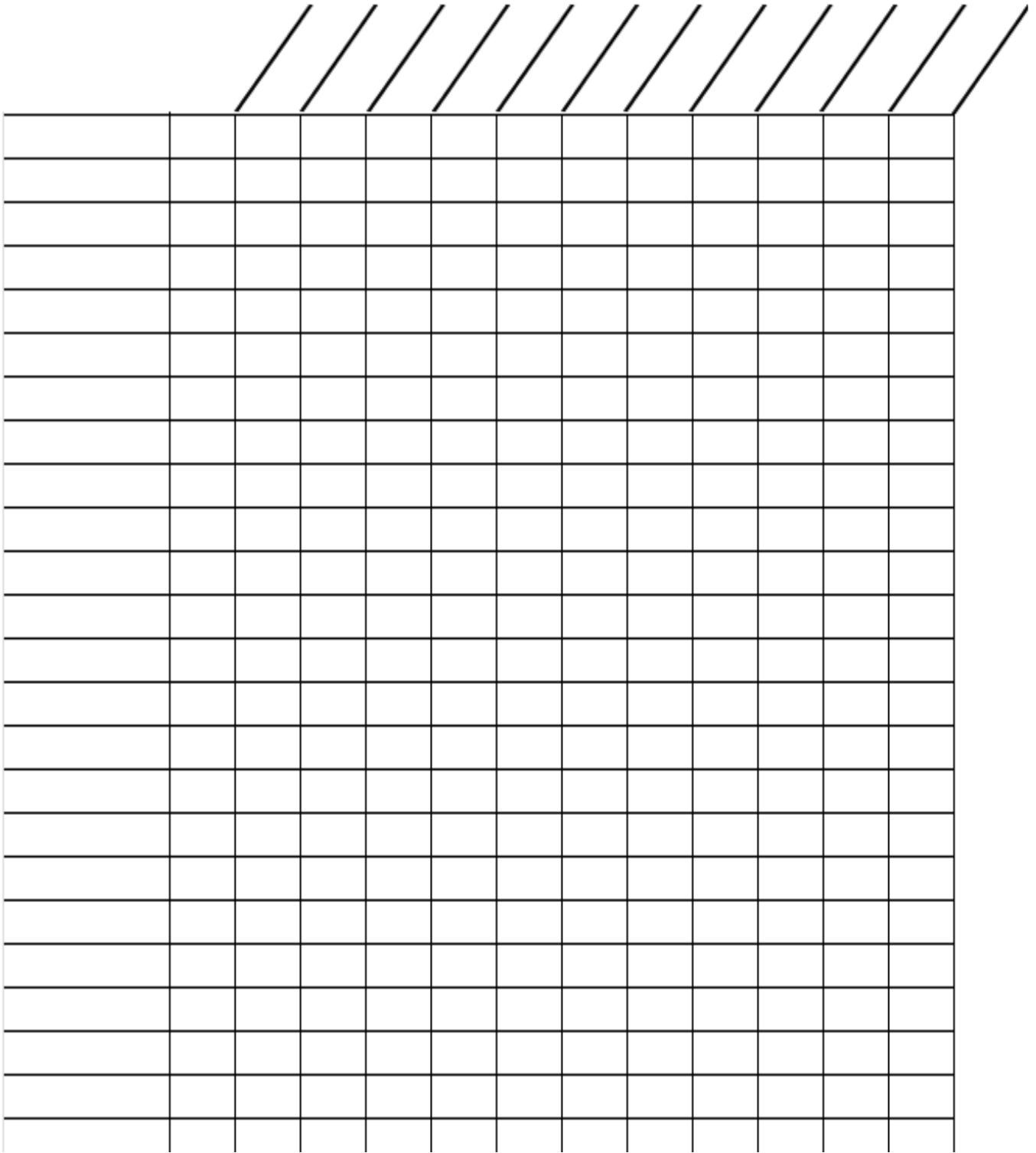
Underneath each basket category, write each individual item you might include. This is because not everyone who would like a Bath Basket, would like every item. And at the bottom of any "BATCH" list, I always write "custom accessory." Some people can have plain baskets while for others I might be able to stitch or buy a little doo-dad that relates to "things they're into" (p2).

It seems nuts to think about making your Dad bath milk, but it's important to try out every item on every person in your mind. He may not want a whole basket, but there might be a product you're making that he'd dig in the stocking. It's wild what you realize people would like when you think about them, the item, and the "things they're into."

BTW, I also usually include a line that says SHOP, because some people just aren't going to be into what I make or I might run out of projects before I get to all their occasions.

Project/Item Idea

Name and Number of Occasions



Project/Item Idea													

NOTES:

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

- (1) Go back and circle the BEST main ideas for each person, considering the number of occasions that year. For people with THREE occasions, see if you even HAVE three good ideas.
- (2) Considering what you circled, total up the categories and individual items at the end of the columns.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOU NAIL ANYTHING DOWN

Multiples

By now you have a pretty good idea of what you could make and for whom. For the folks that you have a single occasion, go ahead and decide what to make. This will dictate what you will do when for the people you gift multiple times a year.

Spread Out the Biggies

Spread bigger, time-consuming projects like afghans and big embroidery patterns out over the birthdays throughout year. Bunch up batch projects like candles and soap and cookies on big holidays like Xmas. You can always add special touches to make the basket specific to that person.

Example: My MIL likes several things that I make. I'd really like to stitch something for her this year for Xmas. But, since I already have a big stitch project in the works and I'm making all kind of bath products for one-gift-a-year people at Xmas, it makes sense to do her bath products then too and save the stitching for her birthday. Bummer.

Do I have time?

Soap needs AT LEAST six weeks to cure. Lots of the extracts and liqueurs cure for a month. Make sure you've left yourself enough time. And how fast do you knit? Don't plan 20 washcloths for next week. Move your projects around to adjust for the time you need to get it done.

Don't forget your budget.

It might be nice to make our luxury lotion bars and pure beeswax candles for every member of your family, but these things can get pricey. Take the recipes from our book over to the web (Brambleberry or Essential Wholesale are our usuals) to get an idea of what you'll be spending.

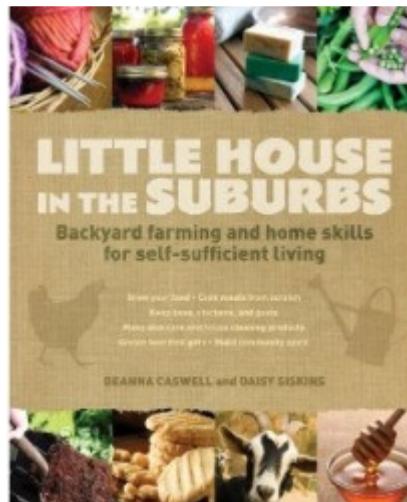
Now, sit with your list for a couple of weeks to make sure you like it. But, don't wait too long to get ordering! Remember that soap for teachers needs to be CURING by Halloween. And any other school year gifts need to be done ten days or more before Xmas when school lets out. So, schedule yourself accordingly.

Congratulations!!!!

You've really done the hardest part. Now you just have to go sweat!

Put all of your work in a binder for next year or keep records of what you're doing in our mini planner [HERE](#).

And don't forget to check out our book!



[Available at Amazon](#), and on [Kindle](#)
[Barnes and Noble](#), and on [Nook](#)