

FUN VALENTINE IDEAS

Friendly Hearts

Your Valentine's Tradition

One of our family's favorite Valentine's Day traditions is to give "Heart Attacks" to unsuspecting recipients!

First we cut many hearts of all different sizes from red, pink, and white paper. On several of the hearts we write short verses or poems that we have found having to do with love or friendship. On one of the larger hearts we include a short message from us.

We then go to the home of the neighbor or friend we have chosen to "attack," preferably when they are not at home, and quickly tape the hearts all over their front door. We leave a gift bag with cookies or some other yummy treat hanging on the doorknob.

Our children all love the excitement and fun of surprising someone on such a special day!

A twist to this idea is to decorate your own child's bedroom door so that he or she awakes on Valentine's Day to a surprise to be excited about.

VALENTINE GAMES

Big Kiss Treasure Hunt

Your Valentine's Tradition

I always do a scavenger hunt around the house for my two boys with a giant Hershey's Kiss at the end. I send them each on their own hunt and they have to track down several clues before they get to their prize. I generally write the clue, plus have a clip art picture to help them solve the clue. (The pictures were especially helpful when they didn't know how to read yet.) If the weather is nice, I try to send them outside or to the garage for at least one of their clues. They love the hunt and the reward!

Cupid's Tree Scavenger Hunt

Tiny little clues lead to great big fun.

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WHAT YOU NEED:

tree branch
jar
marbles or stones
paper
small gifts
string

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Set up a Valentine's tree centerpiece on the dining room table; a small bare branch held upright in a jar of marbles or stones works well.
2. Write clues on small pieces of paper for items that the kids must find or make of paper and hang on the tree. Then tie the clues onto the branches of the tree.
3. When the kids come back with the last item, have small gifts waiting under the tree.

TIPS:

To create clues, try the following, or use your own funny riddles: 1. I like to bark and chase a stick. Draw a picture of me and hang it up quick. 2. I'm thin and long and colored red. I'm tied around the ponytail on a little girl's head. 3. I've got five points and twinkle in the sly. Cut me out of tinfoil and put me up high. 4. Although my name rhymes with stupid, I'm as cute as can be. Cut my shape out of paper and hang me on the tree. 5. I'm made of two letters and stand for a hug and a kiss. If you hang my picture on the tree, you just can't miss.

Throwing the Smile

In this game, players are forbidden to smile, but trust us--giggling and laughing will abound.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Players sit in a circle, making sure they can see everyone else. One player who is It starts the game by smiling widely, while all the other players are somber. It then uses his hand to wipe the smile off his face and throw it to another player who has to catch the smile with his hand and put it on.
2. This new It can then wipe off the smile to throw to someone else--though he will probably choose to mug wildly at everyone for a few minutes before relinquishing his

happy role. Meanwhile, all other players must sit stone-faced. One smirk and they're out.

TIPS:

The youngest players are the least successful at winning this game (they simply can't stop themselves from laughing), but they also tend to enjoy it the most.

Steal My Heart Game



Put your Valentine's Day sweets to a playful new use with this simple game.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. To set up, place a bowl of candy hearts on a flat surface within easy reach of the players and hand each person a pair of chopsticks.
2. Set a timer for about 2 to 5 minutes, depending on the ages of your players.
3. At "Go," contestants start removing hearts from the bowl using only their chopsticks, placing the candies in front of them. When time is up, the player with the most hearts wins.

Gigglebelly Game

Just the name of this game cracks kids up; playing it only intensifies their joy.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Have one player lie down on his back. The next player lies down with his head resting on the first player's belly and the next player lies down with her head on the second player's belly. Arrange all the players until everyone is zigzagged around the lawn or floor, each with his or her head on someone else's belly (if possible, make the line into a loop so that the last player can put her head on the first player's belly).
2. Then, the first player shouts, loud and clear, "Ha!" The second player responds with a vigorous, "Ha, ha!" then the third player chimes in, "Ha, ha, ha!" Continue until all players have shouted out their "Ha's" or (more likely) have dissolved into uncontrollable laughter, with heads bouncing on the bellies of giggling friends, uncles, cousins or grandmothers.

VALENTINE CRAFT IDEAS



Romantic Rocks

This is an activity and craft for the whole family to grab hold of. Find heart-shaped rocks out in the wild and then tame them at home.

CRAFT MATERIALS:

Heart shaped rocks

Paint

Newspaper towels

1. Search for heart-shaped rocks in the rockiest places near you: a stream bank, a driveway, the parking lot. They don't have to be perfect, as long as they have the two telltale lobes of a heart and some sort of point at the bottom.
2. Clean them and let them dry on newspaper or a paper towel.
3. Now it is time to get creative! Set everyone to work painting the rocks.
4. add Valentine message, quotes, names of kids...



Bighearted Hello

CRAFT MATERIALS:

Scissors

Red card stock

Hole punch

Heavy red yarn (we used chenille)

Tacky glue

40-millimeter googly eyes

Markers



White paper or card stock
Scotch tape

1. Cut 1 large heart and 4 smaller ones (ours were 5 1/2 inches and 1 1/4 inches across) from the red card stock. Or use our [template](#).
2. Punch 4 holes in the large heart and 1 in each of the smaller hearts.
3. Cut two 12-inch lengths of yarn, then thread each piece in through an armhole and out through a leg hole. Tie on the hands and feet. (use scotch tape to help keep yarn in place as needed)
4. Glue on the googly eye, then draw on eyelashes and a smile.
5. Write your message on a small piece of the white paper, then glue it to one of the hands.

Suggested messages:

- I've got my eye on you!
- We see eye to eye
- Eye'm glad you're my friend



Heart of Grass

Here's a desktop valentine -- a sort of Chia heart, if you will -- that will really grow on your loved one.

CRAFT MATERIALS:

Heart-shaped cookie cutter

New sponge

Grass seed

Plant mister

Plastic wrap

Paper

Colored marker

** Time needed: Weekend Project

1. Trace around a heart-shaped cookie cutter onto a new sponge, then cut out the shape. Rinse the sponge well to remove any pretreated disinfectant, then let dry.
2. Dampen the sponge slightly, then put it inside the cutter.
3. Sprinkle grass seed onto the sponge, spritz with a plant mister, then cover with plastic wrap. Place the heart on a saucer so dampness won't seep through.
4. Make a card with care directions using paper and a colored marker to attach to the plant. Remove plastic wrap when shoots appear. Spritz with water daily and mow as necessary.



Crayon Hearts

CRAFT MATERIALS: ■Crayon pieces ■Heart-shaped metal cookie or muffin tin (our hearts are about 1 1/2 inches across) ■Scrap paper ■Double-sided foam mounting tape ■Scissors ■Colored card stock ■Marker
Time needed: About 1 to 2 Hours

1. Heat the oven to 250°.
2. Fill each mold with crayon pieces and bake until the crayons melt, about 10 to 15 minutes. Tip: Place a sheet pan under the crayons to catch any drips.
3. Once they're cool, remove the hearts from the molds and smooth any rough edges by rubbing them on a piece of scrap paper.
4. Use small pieces of foam tape to stick each heart to a 3-inch circle cut from card stock -- or use our [template](#), then add your message.

Suggested messages:

- You color my world
- Valentine, you make my heart melt
- Have a happy Valentine's Day, for "crayon" out loud!