

CREATING A TIME CAPSULE OR MEMORY BOX

1 Choose a duration for your time capsule. Consider who you would like your audience to be. Would you like to open the time capsule yourself? Would you like to share it with your own children or grandchildren? Would you like your message to last long into the future? Remember young children change fast, so a time capsule that is opened in 2-3 years will still be interesting.

2 Decide where you will store your time capsule. Burial may not be the best choice, for several reasons. It is very likely to be forgotten or lost, and it is much more susceptible to damage from moisture. Consider an above ground option. Pick a closet shelf or other out of the way place to store your time capsule so that it's not noticed. One interesting alternative is to store your time capsule items in a stainless steel vacuum food jar (you could even try Space-bags) and then hide this inside a camouflaged polyurethane hollow rock or log. These above ground time capsules are called Geo-capsules and can provide a further level of adventure to the time capsule experience.

3 Select a container. How much stuff do you want to preserve? Think about how long this collection must last and where it will go. If you will store it inside your home, a shoebox, bin, or old suitcase might be quite adequate. Using desiccant "gel bags" such as those included in the packaging of electronic goods or in vitamin bottles to absorb any moisture that may have been present at the time of encapsulation.

4 Collect the objects to go in your time capsule. Who will open your time capsule, and what would you like to tell them? Have fun with this step! Objects for time capsules need not be of high monetary value. Rather, choose things that reflect the spirit of the present. What is unique about today, about you or your family? Anything that captures the spirit of the present is a candidate, but you might want to consider things like these:

- Popular toys or tools.
- Labels or packaging of favorite foods or other products. Include price tags, if you can. Wash and dry thoroughly before placing in the capsule.
- Newspapers or magazines showing current events or current trends.
- Photographs.
- Filled Journals.
- Letters.
- Currency.
- Favorite things.
- Clothes and fashion items of the current time.
- Personal messages to and from others.
- Indicators of high technology. Even if nobody can read the contents of a DVD in 50 or 100 years, you might still enclose one to demonstrate the state of the art. Just be sure to remove all batteries so they don't corrode.

5 Include a Family Tree Chart. Or, if you have favorite family stories, write them down and put them in the time capsule. Storytelling is a lost art, so you might include a request that whoever opens the time capsule read aloud the story (ies) you've included.

6 Do something to remind yourself or others of the location of the time capsule and the date you intend it to be opened. Use a calendar, a journal, a plaque, your will, or a special date such as an anniversary, birthday, etc.

7 Seal the time capsule store it. Remember that a personal time capsule does not need to be of great duration or durability. Even five years from now, the world will have changed and the artifacts of today will stir memories.