

Susan Beacham: The perfect Valentine's Day gifts -- kid-friendly and inexpensive



Beacham

“Valentine’s Day gifts under \$150”

That’s the email I received this morning in my in box. I was stunned. \$150??? For a Valentine’s Day gift??? In today’s world \$150 can be what a family has to spend on a week’s worth of groceries.

I love (excuse the pun) Valentines Day as much as the next person, but cannot get over the “deal” that is made over this holiday. Sure, a gift to someone you love is a great idea. But what kind of gift? And does it really need to cost alot of money to say “I love you”? I don’t think so – in fact, I know so!

Here are a few “kid-friendly” ideas that I have come across over the years that fit the bill, at a lot less than \$150:

Home made cards

For this you need the simplest of craft tools. Grab a few colors of construction paper, scissors and a few markers or crayons. Take a square of construction paper and fold it in half and draw a half of a heart on one side so you can cut out the perfect shaped heart. Use the markers to write your message and decorate. Receiving one of these homemade works of art will put a smile in anyone’s heart. Strawberries and melting chocolate.

Actually, any fruit, fresh or dried, works for this project. First wash your fruit and put aside to dry. Take some grocery store chocolate chips – I use the Hershey’s mini chips – in a glass bowl. Put a paper towel over them and place them in the micro for about 30 seconds. Take them out and swish the chocolate around and let is sit for a moment and then start dipping. Place the chocolate covered fruit on a piece of wax paper lined tray and place them in the fridge to cool. When you bring these beauties out they will look like you spent a ton of dough.

Tissue Paper flowers

Everybody loves flowers. But flowers can be mighty expensive. Especially around Valentine’s Day when they are in high demand. So, grab some tissue paper, scissors and string and take a look at this link <http://tiny.cc/kQmNm> .I like this link because it gives you a picture for each step. It is simple and easy and fun. And inexpensive.

Store bought gifts

My girls are older now so I do buy things for them on Valentine’s Day. I usually have something “red” that I bought just after the holidays on sale. I add a pair of Valentine’s Day stockings and some hot chocolate and marshmallows and every body is happy.

Buying “red” after the holiday is a good tip for next year. I usually find “red” wrap, stockings and candy that I can freeze that is anywhere from 75-90% off. It takes some planning ahead and a willingness to share some of your freezer space for several weeks, but it is worth it in savings. Take the kids and have them help you find the “red” in the sales. It will teach them how to be a Money Savvy spender.

Any of the above would make a great gift for a parent, teacher, grandparent or even a child. These really are all purpose, low cost, lovely ways to say “I love you!” I am confident there are many more – so readers, if you have one to share – please let me know and I will get it posted.

Susan Beacham owns the Money Savvy Generation, a financial education company in the Chicago area. Visit her blog at www.susanbeacham.com.