

PRECIOUS
MEMORIES

**CREATIVE WAYS TO PRESERVE
YOUR BABY'S KEEPSAKES**

By Brette McWhorter Sember



We all want to hold on to the fleeting moments when our child is a baby. Taking the time to preserve meaningful mementos will secure your memories and give you something to hold on to long after your baby is grown. Your mother may have bronzed your baby shoes, but today there are many other creative ways to capture and preserve memories. To find the products listed below online, click over to ePregnancy.com, scroll down the home page to the Go Codes section and enter the corresponding number.

WE'RE PREGNANT! The moment you find out you're having a baby is one of the key moments in your life. Some moms want a tangible reminder of that moment. Trina Lambert of Englewood, CO, says, "I have the positive pregnancy test kit from the doctor's office. The blue dot has long since faded, and I'm not quite certain where to put it, but I'm not throwing it out."

COIN TOSS: You can purchase a commemorative coin set from your child's birth year from the U.S. Mint (Go Code 8637). Either buy one coin or an entire set with the birth year on them, and you can also buy them mounted in display cases. In addition to capturing memories, these coins grow in value and are nice display items when your child is an adult.

WINING: Collecting wine for a child from his or her birth year vintage is a custom that started with European winery families and has recently become more popular in the United States. "My father did this for me when I was born," remembers Jennifer Elias, creator of the wine knowledge game, WineSmarts. "He bought six bottles of 1966 Chateauneuf-du-Pape, and I enjoyed a bottle on my 30th birthday. It was an incredible delight for me to pull out a bottle of wine that my father had thought to buy when I was born."

Another twist to the tradition involves "collecting wines starting with the birth year and adding an exceptional bottle for every year after that," says Barbara Drady from Affairs of the Vine, a wine education company.

"If the child is born this year, don't expect to get this year's vintage of wine right off the shelf. Wine from this year's vintage will be harvested in the fall of this year and will then be fermented and aged before it is released," says Elias. Wine is usually available within 2 years after the vintage.

If you don't want to wait, you can buy futures. Drady says, "To purchase futures, you pay for the wine in advance and the winery ships it to you when the wine is released." You can also purchase futures from your local wine merchant.

NEWS YOU CAN USE: Save your local newspaper from the day your child is born and preserve it in a glass or plexiglass case. If you forget to save it, which is understandable since you'll be a little busy that day, you can order one in a protective vinyl cover from Go Code 8638 for \$40. When your child grows up, she will not only be able to read about the events that happened on her special day, but will also see the ads

and get a sense of what prices were like.

Save the year-end "year in review" edition of your favorite news magazine. This will provide an excellent summary of the big news of the year, as well as include photos of important events.

Keep a copy of the newsletter you include in your holiday cards at the end of the year. Your child will enjoy being able to read about your first year together as a family.

A TREE GROWS: Some families plant a tree to commemorate the year of their child's birth. Kim Francis from Wheeling, WV, remembers she had a lilac bush she couldn't find a place for until her baby was born. "My dad put an 'It's a Girl' sign in the yard. It hit me that it was the perfect place for the small lilac bush. So, I planted it and it has bloomed beautifully for the last 3 years."

Jon Feldman, owner of G. biloba Garden Environments in Nyack, NY, recommends that parents choose "a species that is long-lived" when planting a birth-year tree, such as a ginkgo, black walnut, dawn redwood, blue spruce or grand fir. Plant the tree in the spring or fall (check with your local nursery about optimum planting times in your area) and watch it grow with



OUTGROWN BUT NOT GONE:

Once your baby starts to outgrow the layette and baby clothes, set aside the pieces you like the most and have them made into a quilt once you have enough. The quilt makes a very special wedding gift for your child and also ties all of your memories together in one place. Melissa Sheffel from Newport, KY, says, "As my kids grow, I'm putting aside some of my favorite outfits — the sleeper and blanket they came home from the hospital in, the shirt he was wearing when he took his first step, the pants he looks so cute in, the first shirt he 'asked' to wear. I plan to keep doing this as they grow, then, someday, when they've gone away to college or something, I'll piece them all together and make a patchwork memory quilt. I've even thought that maybe I'll cut up my wedding dress and alternate pieces so that every other one is either a 'memory' or a piece of white satin."



SHAKE, RATTLE, ROLL...

AND BITE! A silver rattle may not be your baby's favorite toy, but it's an attractive keepsake from which your baby can get some use. And it's something that can be handed down for grandchildren to use in the future. Having it engraved with baby's name and birth date makes it even more special.

You can also get a silver teether engraved with your baby's name and birth statistics. The Birth Record Teether (shown

on this page) from The Silver Gallery makes a perfect keepsake because the silver is soft enough that when your baby bites on it, she'll leave tiny toothmarks behind. It's not only functional, it's also beautiful enough to display for years. And it's rumored to be a favorite among celebs; stars like Geena Davis and Gwyneth Paltrow have Birth Record Teethers for their children. Find it for \$34 (plus \$18 to have it engraved) at Go Code 8655.

SMILE!

Some lucky moms receive 12 months of baby portraits as a shower gift. The photographer takes a picture of your baby once a month for the first year. If you want to do this you can either hire a photographer or take your own monthly photos. Displaying them in a large frame will show your baby's journey, and you'll always know what he or she looked like at every stage. Try the First Year Photo Frame from Harriet Carter at Go Code 8653 for \$12.98. ☺

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As you begin the amazing experience that will take place in the months to come, BellyBeats wants to offer you opportunity to grow even closer to the miracle inside your belly by renting of our BellyBeats Fetal Doppler Heart Monitors.

BellyBeats Fetal Doppler is of the same quality as the one used by your doctor and can detect the fetal heart rate as early as 8 weeks into your pregnancy providing you peace of mind that your baby is safe.

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your child. You can find information about planting trees, as well as hundreds of species to order, from The National Arbor Day Foundation at Go Code 8639.

COMING HOME: The outfit your baby wears home from the hospital carries special meaning. Once she outgrows it, consider placing it in a shadow box and displaying it or simply preserving it in a plastic shoebox. The ankle band and cap from the hospital are also precious artifacts of your child's entry into the world. Displaying these in a box will keep them safe and always remind you of how tiny your child once was.

TAKE MY HAND: Creating a handprint or footprint of your newborn will capture forever his tiny fingers and toes. Buy a plaster impression kit in a cute tin from Genius Baby for \$10 at Go Code 8640 or one you can frame and hang on the wall from Babyprints at Go Code 8641 (\$40). You can also get an ink kit with a frame from Pottery Barn at Go Code 8642 (\$32; shown on this page). If you don't want to buy a kit, just use a regular, washable ink pad and create a hand or footprint in ink on scrapbook-quality paper.

BOX IT UP: A keepsake box provides the perfect repository for gathering special memories in one place. There are many types of boxes available, so choose one that suits your tastes. Order online at Go Code 8643 for a personalized one or shop local mass market stores for boxes from the John Lennon Collection or Winnie the Pooh. The box can hold whatever you choose, from the ankle band, first pacifier and nametag on the hospital bassinet to baby cards from friends and family.

Cheryl Hosmer from Michigan is planning on giving each of her sons a special cedar chest filled with mementos of their childhoods. "I want them to value their past, learn how to live well in the present and hope for the future," Hosmer says.

HAIR TODAY: That first haircut is a milestone in your baby's life. If you save the hair, you might want to buy a special container (try Go Code 8644 for a silver box from Jewelry Crossings for \$58). That lock of hair can be a wonderful,

tangible reminder of your baby's soft hair. Brigitte Thompson from Williston, VT, kept hair from all three of her children in special containers. "I have it saved with a note inside. The note has the child's name, date of the first haircut and a bit about how the experience was for them."



HOLIDAY TREASURE: Purchase a baby's first Christmas ornament for your tree. Hallmark carries new versions every year. Whenever you hang this special ornament, you'll remember your first holiday as a parent. You might also turn this into a family tradition. Buy your child a special ornament every year and create a collection he or she can take along to share with a spouse or children in the future.

EMBROIDERED WITH LOVE: Embroidered items are often treasured reminders of childhood. A special blanket embroidered with baby's name and birth date is a lovey your baby will enjoy for



years. Order a fleece blanket (shown on this page) from The Baby's Nursery (\$25) at Go Code 8645.

Wendy Fix from Bismarck, ND, says one of her most treasured keepsakes was "a bib and burp cloth/hand towel someone cross-stitched" for her son. Her son is now 13, and she still has the burp cloth. You can get a personalized burp cloth from Baby Burps at Go Code 8648.

Some teddy bears or stuffed animals can also be embroidered on the paw or ear. You can order a teddy bear with a custom embroidered outfit from Vermont Teddy Bears at Go Code 8647. Polkadots & Moonbeams even offers Gund stuffed animal security blankets that you can have personalized. (Find them for \$27 at Go Code 8646.)

ANNOUNCING: Frame your baby's birth announcement (or have it done by Frame Your Day at Go Code 8649 for \$65) and hang it in a special place in your home. If your announcements are store bought with fill-in blanks, ask a friend or family member with beautiful handwriting to fill in a special one for you to frame.

A BABY HISTORY: You might cringe when you think of the time it takes to put together a baby book, but there are lots of products that make it easier on you. Mutual Memories specializes in simple scrapbooks, and their baby book walks you through great ways to give your baby a unique memory book. The kit comes with an album, page protectors and cute paper, as well as cards and envelopes to hand out to friends and family so they can write your new baby a letter and send him photos of themselves. Get yours for \$30 at Go Code 8650.

If you're really short on time but still want to keep a baby book, you need Baby Time. "A fast, fun keepsake album" created by Charise Harper, a mom who was given beautiful baby journals when her daughter was born — and still hadn't recorded anything in them 2 years later. She designed Baby Time to be a simple way to jot down memories. You just record the date, circle the baby's age in months and fill in the blanks about things like baby's first step, word and what he thinks is "yummy" or "yucky." It sells for \$16, and you can find it at Go Code 8651.