



SNAPSHOT

a guide to
memory making
& keeping



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three things you should know about me

one

I've always been a little bit obsessed with trying to capture memories. When I was a kid, I remember using every single image on my disposable camera roll to capture my week at summer camp—and then being on pins and needles waiting to pick up those photos from the drugstore. In college, I was the one waving my digital camera in everyone's faces (before the days of smartphones), insisting that pictures were a necessity because, "in thirty years, you'll want to remember this." It's not hard to imagine that I was also the person uploading excessive albums to Facebook from my dorm room (back in the days when you had to have a college email address to even be on Facebook).

And since I've had kids? Well, my camera roll is *overflowing*.

two

Something else I love?

Creating special memories for my kids. I *love* thinking about how I can take an ordinary experience and add a little something extra. (Do I do this every day? Or with every experience? Absolutely not.) But every so often, I like to throw in a little something special, something to make a holiday or birthday or a random Thursday afternoon a little more memorable.

three

My absolute favorite way to capture memories is through words. In fact, that's what brought me back to writing in my thirties—the desperate need to try and capture life in a fleeting season. I'd loved to write as a kid but slowly drifted away from it as I got older. Then I had a scary birth experience with my third baby. After being readmitted to the hospital with postpartum preeclampsia (oh yes, it can happen *after* you've given birth) and spending a terrifying night alone in the hospital, drafting "just in case" letters on my phone to my family, I started looking at things from a new perspective. As soon as I emerged from those first few exhausting newborn months, the words started pouring out of me. Photos are precious, but my camera roll doesn't tell the whole story.



a brief intro

I've lived in (and loved) North Carolina my whole life, and I am thrilled to be raising my family here. I spend my days working part-time in between bouncing from carpool line to carpool line, picking up the Legos covering my floor, overusing the word y'all, reading my way through stacks of library books, and scouting out the perfect coffee shops to work or write in.

I write a monthly letter titled "Snapshot," and each month, I share a snapshot of my month and help you create a snapshot of yours. You got this guide to memory-making & keeping because you subscribed to my newsletter (thank you! I'm so happy you are here!).

Each month, my newsletter will include a printable PDF to help you remember a snapshot of your month. This is designed to be a quick & flexible way for you to record the things you most want to remember. You can fill this out in ten minutes (or you can pull out all your craft supplies and get fancy—whatever works for your life!). Either way, at the end of the year, you'll have a ready-made scrapbook.

The other thing I'll send each month? A few low-key ideas for making memories. I firmly believe that you don't have to spend a lot of money or even a lot of time to create memorable moments. If you can provide a little enthusiasm and imagination, you probably already have what you need in your house to turn an ordinary Thursday afternoon into a special memory.

This memory-making & keeping guide will jump-start coming up with some fun ideas and it includes bonus sheets you can add to your monthly Snapshots.

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memory making

When I was in high school and college, I worked as a summer camp counselor at an overnight camp, and I loved it. In fact, it's safe to say I was *obsessed*.

There are a million different reasons why (and just as many things I learned from those summers), but one of my favorite parts of the job—and one that trained me well for being a parent—was coming up with *memory-making ideas*.

I wanted the kids in my cabin to leave feeling like they'd had the most magical week of their lives. Summer camp is already built around making memories, but I wanted to take it up a notch.

If we were playing Capture the Flag, we'd go all out with the face paint. If afternoon swim got canceled because of a thunderstorm—we'd have a fashion show in the cabin instead. I was always thinking about how to take the things we were already doing and turn them into *memorable moments*.

I'll be honest; I don't have the same amount of energy I did back then. And though I felt very responsible at the time, I didn't have the mental load of laundry and school lunches and paying bills and car inspections—all the things that come with being an adult. I don't want to lead you to believe that every day in my house is a magical, memory-making affair. There are plenty of very ordinary days where we're scrambling to find shoes and figure out what's for dinner, and making it to bedtime seems like a huge accomplishment.

But I try and sprinkle in intentional memory-making when I can. It's not every day or even every week—sometimes, we're in survival mode, and anything extra just isn't possible.

Release yourself from the pressure to create nonstop magic for your family. Trust that when you *do* have the time or energy, the littlest bit of effort and imagination will result in incredible memories. Whether it's with your kids, roommates, or neighbors, being willing to exercise your creativity (and sometimes get a little bit silly) is all you need to make intentional memories.

A little brainstorming always gets the creative juices flowing. On the following page, think about special events (like birthdays and anniversaries) that you want to intentionally celebrate this year. Add in your favorite seasonal activities, and refer to this page whenever you need a creative boost throughout the year. The next page has a few ideas for making ordinary moments memorable, as well as room to include your own ideas!



memory making

January

July

February

August

March

September

April

October

May

November

June

December



make the ordinary more memorable

Theme dinner: If dinnertime is a drag around your house, try putting a fun spin on it. You could go all out and decorate to match the meal, or you could ask everyone to dress up for dinner (Wacky Wednesday! Formal Friday!). Or if the weather is nice, have a picnic instead of eating inside (you can make this super easy by getting take-out—our family loves a Chick-Fil-A picnic).

Make it a competition: A little friendly competition is a great way to create memories. If you are stuck inside on a rainy day, grab your baking supplies and have a cookie decorating contest. Dreaming of travel? Hold a trip-planning contest. Each participant gets a set amount of time to devise a trip itinerary to pitch. Need a low-prep way to fill a little time? Look up some Minute to Win It games. The possibilities are endless!

Do something unexpected: Something as simple (and unexpected) as ice cream for breakfast can create a fun memory to look back on. If you have a birthday in your house, decorate the kitchen or fill a room with balloons. Or, go all out and plan a surprise party or day trip.

Take it to the next level: Every now and then, take something you do all the time and amp it up a bit. If every Friday night is an at-home movie night, create an at-home-theater experience one week. Or get surprise tickets to the movie theater. Putting an extra "oomph" into something ordinary can have a big impact.

Build a party kit: Next time you host a party, add the leftover decorations, paper products, and birthday candles to a "party kit." Then, anytime you feel like celebrating something on a whim, grab your party kit and celebrate away. Whether you got great news at work or your kid wants to hold a birthday party for their favorite stuffed animal, you'll be ready!

Add your own ideas:



memory keeping

Did anyone else have a diary when they were a kid?

I think mine went something like this:

"Square pizza for lunch, homework is boring, I don't want to practice piano."

Riveting stuff, right?

Sure, it can be interesting to look back and know what you were doing on certain days five, ten, or twenty years ago. But a play-by-play of my day doesn't *actually* tell me what I want to know.

Memory-keeping is more than recording a captain's log of our daily activities. We're aiming to capture feelings and emotions, so we can return to the memories that matter.

Even if a memory feels burned into your brain right now, sharp and crisp and vivid, eventually, the details will start to fade. Writing down a few key things can be the difference between a fuzzy memory you wish you could recall and a memory you can sink back into years later.

The next page is a guide to help you record *all the essentials* of those moments you want to remember forever. Print it out as many times as you want!

Following the memory-keeping page, there's a Travel Snapshot to help keep those vacation memories fresh.

The final two pages are to record quotes and songs that define your year. I recommend adding to these pages throughout the year. We always think we'll remember, but life gets busy, and details start to fade.

Each month, you'll also get a monthly Snapshot page download in my newsletter. Take a few minutes to fill it out, and by the end of the year, you'll have your memories already recorded (no feeling guilty about that scrapbook you've been meaning to get around to for months... or years.).



memory keeping

photo

memorable moment:

who, what, when, where:

details to remember:

how I felt:

why this memory matters:



travel snapshot

memorable moment:

when & where:

memorable moment:

details to remember:

memorable moment:

favorite meal:

favorite sight or activity:





quotes that spoke to me

A series of horizontal lines for writing, alternating between light blue and light red colors. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page.





a mixtape of my year

Side A: _____

Side B: _____

Cover Art:

