

Pointers For Parents-To-Be

Artful Ideas To Create A Memorable Baby Shower

(NAPSA)—A baby shower is a rite of passage and a time to provide the mom-to-be with the tools and knowledge that will serve her in the coming months. It's also time to gather family and friends for a party that



Ceramic Piggy Banks

promises laughter, joy, advice and the essential must-haves for welcoming a little miracle into the world.

Sandra Magsamen, author of "Living Artfully" and creator of the

Messages from the heart brand, available at JCPenney, shares her ideas on how to be creative when throwing a baby shower as well as gift giving.

- Instead of using a store-bought invite, be creative by using a baby picture of the mom-to-be on the cover. Invites can read: "This little baby is all grown up and having a baby of her own!"

- If you want your invite to really stand out, send inexpensive plastic baby bottles to your guests with the invite inside. This can read: "Join us for a drink to shower (Name) and her new baby with lots of love."

- At the shower, have your guests bring baby pictures of themselves. Pass around the photos and see which guests can match the person at the shower with the baby picture. Whoever gets the most right is the winner.

- Create a "Messages from the Heart Tree." Ask guests to write a message they wish to share with the new baby and the mom-to-be on a painted wooden plaque found at craft stores. Hang them with ribbon from the tree branches to create a beautiful centerpiece. After the shower, the mom can use these beauties to decorate the nursery.

- Decorate with flowers and flair. Use piggy banks as vases and baby bottles, too. Create a bouquet boutique and give all guests a beautiful bouquet as they leave the shower.

Gift giving can be challenging when it comes to baby showers, so being creative is key. The mom-to-be should register online to let everyone know her needs. Here are a few ideas:

- Create an advice book for raising a new baby. Ask friends and family alike to jot down a piece of wisdom—good advice for raising a healthy, happy child. Paste them into a book with a pretty cover.

- Buy a gift for which the packaging can be used again, such as the Messages from the Heart



Flowers in a Bucket

Flowers in a Bucket, where a baby T-shirt, socks, hat and bib are packaged in tiny pink or blue tins that say "a bunch of good wishes." These tins can then be reused as toy pails or storage for toys.

- Make a coupon book with special offers—good for one night of babysitting, good for one home-cooked dinner a month for a year, good for one day shopping with a friend or good for a night out on the town.

- Have fun with dress-up time in an adorable infant costume: lions, tigers and bears or a gentle ladybug costume that will give playtime a whole new spin and provide the best photo op.

Please visit Sandra Magsamen at www.sandramagsamen.com. For more gift ideas, visit www.jcp.com or consult its baby gift registry.