

## (Style on a Dime) Sending holiday greetings on the cheap

Written by

Wednesday, 25 November 2009 15:26

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I am embarrassed to confess that there is one aspect of the holiday season that makes me feel a bit anxious, and I know that it will begin happening any day now. I am talking about receiving that first holiday greeting card in the mail from a friend or family member. While I thoroughly enjoy hearing from my loved ones, my anxiety level usually increases slightly with each greeting card that our family receives. Sounds crazy, right? (I agree-Help me Lord!)

You see, I am much more organized in my mind than I am in reality, and walking out to the curb to pick up yet another envelope containing a Christmas card, is a nagging reminder that I have not yet sent my own cards out. Well, I decided that this year would be different; no more stress for me. Rather than buying expensive greeting cards for those on our list, I am adopting a new low-stress, low- budget, procrastination-proof Holiday Shout-Out letter. Yes, I'm going back to the old-school way of writing (read: typing) a short year-end letter to my loved ones.

Why do a shout-out letter??

Simple, you have been blessed this year! Your friends and family want to know that you are okay and that you survived 2009 --bumpy roads and all-- and you should want them to know that you are thinking of them and praying for their prosperity in 2010.

Where do i get supplies??

You probably have everything you need at home; paper, pen, or computer. If you want to upgrade from plain white paper, two of my favorite places to find pretty, colored paper on the cheap are at Dollar Tree (\$1) and Big Lots (around \$1-\$2). If you own a printer you can make copies of your letter yourself, otherwise, Office Max, Kinko's, and Office Depot are good options.

What should i talk about??

Remember the K.I.S.S.S. rule (keep it simple and short, smarty-pants!). In your letter, talk about something meaningful to you, something uplifting and encouraging. Start your letter with something like: "The most important thing I learned this year was..." or "One of my favorite memories for 2009 was..." or even "One of the ways I made a positive impact on someone this year was..." or "I was faced with a large challenge in '09 and this is how I overcame it..." In short, think of how you were impacted deeply in '09 and share your experience. Most likely your sharing will inspire your loved ones to do the same. Don't bore your friends with two pages of endless details about your extremely perfect (or extremely imperfect) kids and don't go on and on about what's going wrong with your life.

Take this time to focus on your blessings of the year. Let your kiddos contribute to the letter, too. Let them complete one of the above sentences, or write a poem or draw a picture to include in the letter. Finally, if you have a family picture that you'd like included in the letter, it's easy to reduce the size and copy it right onto the letter.

When should I write the shout-out??

For those severe procrastinators, this concept should work for you! Anywhere between now

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and January you can write a short Shout-Out. Because you create a customized letter on your computer (or on the public library computer) you can celebrate Christmas, Kwanza, New Years, etc., and there is not the stress of getting it out by December 25th!

What do you do with the holiday greeting cards that you receive when the season is over? Have you been saving them year after year, creating excess clutter or do you toss them after one or two weeks? If you want to cut expenses this season, save some trees, and add that personal touch that has gone missing from our modern-day society, consider making your own custom Holiday Shout-Out. Your friends will appreciate your creativity and you will appreciate the value! Enjoy!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at low costs. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.