



PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Cammy (15months) on Christmas Day 09, he opened his pressy, loved it and hasn't stopped playing with it since!

REGULAR FEATURES

- Question of the Day
- Website of the Day
- The Daily Brainteaser
- Gizza Peek @ (weekly themed photo thread)
- Wednesday's Weekly Chat Night, 8:30pm onwards
- Bridget's Week Day Wonders
- Forum Games
- Poll of the Week
- Caption of the Day

CHEEKY MONKEY BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Big congratulations to Shanan and family on the safe arrival of their baby boy! Ryda Lee Orchard was born on the 3rd of April at 12:43am, weighing 9lb and 53 cm long.

Also congratulations to Courtney and family on the birth of her wee girl! Kaitlyn Grace Stewart was born on the 4th of April at 2:23am, weighing 8lb 3oz and 50cm long.

Cheeky MONKEY

PRACTICAL PARENTING SUPPORT

CHEEKY MONKEY ANNOUNCEMENT

Farewell, Thank You and Welcome.....

This month has been a sad one for the Team here at Cheeky Monkey as we have had to farewell one of our Team members who was someone who helped to build the very foundations CM has been raised on.

Kristy made the hard decision to take leave of the Mod Team for personal reasons and while we have had to respect her decision, we hope she always remembers how much she has done for CM with her amazing ideas, and her drive and determination.

We hope that eventually, when she is ready, we may see Kristy around the boards again and that she always feels most welcome here at CM as she will be missed while she takes her leave!

The news is not all bad though, as she left behind her such big shoes to fill, that we had to take on not one, but TWO new Mods to replace her!

So as well as a farewell, we also have some very warm welcome's to two fabulous ladies who you all know and love, who have joined the Team!!!!

MEET THE TWO NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MOD TEAM

Jax- mum to two gorgeous little boys Morgan (2 in May) and Jack (1 in December). I live on the beautiful Kaitiaki coast with the boys, my wonderful husband (married a whole 6 months now) and our grumpy-feet attacking cat Azlan.

I can't say I do much outside of being a stay at home mum. I still meet up with the antenatal group for coffee once a week and I have a love of baking. Biscuits in particular (I seem to make a lot of sultana biscuits) though I also love cake baking and I'm about to attempt a great work for Morgan's birthday.

My favourite colour is green. I love emeralds and butterflies. I am considering taking up digi scrapping and I hate cold coffee.

I look forward to working with an awesome group of people on such a great site!

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 4th - Shanan (Shanan-0)
- 5th - Jax (Jax)
- 7th - Evangeline, 2009 (J'n'E's DD)
- 10th - Morgan, 2008 (Jax's DS)
- 12th - Kennedy, 2003 (3 monkeys' DS)
- 19th - Anthea (EZMum)
- 20th - Steve, 1997 (Lee's DS)
- 21st - Sharyn (Whoopsiebaby)
- 21st - Selena (Laugan)
- 26th - Maia, 2008 (Alysha's DD)
- 28th - Emilie-Mae, 2007 (spicyapple's DD)
- 31st - Ethan, 2004 (3 monkeys' DS)

Leesh- mum to Paris {10yrs}, Cam {19mths} and full time Step mum to Josh {10yrs}. I live in Auckland with the 3 kids and my Partner Ian.

I work 30hrs per week for St John as the Youth Administrator, and I also volunteer for St John Youth - I am a Divisional Manager of Onehunga Youth and I co-ordinate Camps.

My family is my life, and St John comes a close second. I love scrap-booking, but never seem to have the time for it anymore. I'm a self confessed tupperware-a-holic. I love baking and this year I am wanting to learn the art of cake decorating .

I am honoured to have been chosen to be a Mod! I love CM and I'm very excited to be moving into this new role.

FORUM NEWS

As well as welcoming two new mods onto the team, we are also pleased to announce that CM Store is officially open!

You can access CM Store through the Forum either on the main forum index page in the Navigator box on the left hand side of your screen or through the CM Store drop down menu at the top of the screen. Make sure you pop in and check it out as we will continue to source and add new products all the time. If you are a work from home parent and would like to share your wonderful creations with other Kiwi parents and children then feel free to drop us an email or leave a message over on the Forum. We would love to advertise your products in CM Store. We are always looking for ways to support our parents and our main concern is keeping the 'Cheeky Monkey Practical Parenting Community Website' and also 'CM Store' free to use and access.

We'd also like to thank all of our members for making Cheeky Monkey such a great place to be and without you none of this would have been possible!



Cheeky MONKEY

PRACTICAL PARENTING SUPPORT

DIGITAL SCRAPBOOKING

by Sharyn

Is it time for a new hobby? Want to try something new? Why not give digital scrapbooking a try. Below are some tips to get you started. If you decide to give it a try, we would love to see your finished LO's so make sure to post them in the Forum and feel free to ask questions as well, we're always happy to help.

Do you have hundreds and hundreds of photo's sitting on your computer, that you have taken of your precious bundles, your treasured tots and your adored family?

Do you leave them in their folders forever and occasionally look at them, and think you should do 'something' with them but never can think of what you could do with them so you can see them?

If you have a computer, then why not try digital scrapbooking?

Most people have seen a 'paper' scrapbook at some point... You know, those books, with loads of photos, stories, stickers, cute embellishments and memoirs that you can spend hours and hours glueing and stapling things into....

Well, Digital Scrapbooking is a less messy, but just as enjoyable way of making your precious photo's into beautiful pages that help you (and your family & friends) enjoy your memories!

Digital Scrapbooking, is art, but personal art, that anyone can do! You don't have to be an artist and you don't have to be a computer expert to enjoy creating gorgeous pages that will protect your memories forever!

Thankfully, there are some amazing programs out there, that will help you do everything you need to. From offering you templates to show you ideas for laying out your pages and beautiful embellishments to put on your pages, to teaching you how to fill your pages.

As with any 'scraping' the content is your key ingredient!

Lots of people have wonderful photo's, but with 'scraping' there is more to it that just the picture.

Of course, this isn't a hard rule - as sometimes, a picture tells a thousand words and there are times where you don't need words.....

But for the most part, good scrap pages tell a story and when you are making your page, think about it from an outsiders point of view.... Think of it as if, in thirty years, your great-grandchildren might be looking through this

book and when they look at each photo, if you aren't there to tell them about it, how will they know what was so special about those moments?

There are really 5 'elements' to a good page:

- Images
- Title
- Journaling
- Dates
- Embellishments

Images

The pictures show the story. Whether it's an event, or a point in someone's life. The images you choose are how that time/event will be remembered in other people's minds.

Title

Next you want to have a good title. The title gives a focus to the page. A direction that the story will go in.

Journaling

This is one of the most important parts, as this is your story... But don't be daunted! You don't have to be a journalist to write your story, as the best journaling is your own words, in your own way. I say this as people stress out about 'how' to write good journaling. But all journaling is good! You see, when people read your stories, written by you, in your way, they will have a chance to get to know you. They will be able to see your personality and in their own way, feel more connected to you. You don't have to write a novel either, you can keep it brief... although people have been known to write long stories, and end up with 'scraps' that span two pages, with one for photo's and one for journaling! Anything is possible!

Dates

Dates are often overlooked but so important to your page. They really are key to a good 'scrap' page. Again, think to 30 years from now, when someone looks at a photo of you children (their grandmother perhaps...) they will want to ask, how old was Grandmother in that photo? If there isn't anyone to ask, they will never know. But if you have a date on your page, they will know exactly how old

Grandmother was - and it will also give them insight into that particular time in history.

Embellishments

These are the 'decorations' on your page. The background papers you choose should compliment the embellishments you choose and vice-versa. Your embellishments will often 'match' your photo's in some way, so the page has a common theme. But you can go in any direction you want to if your photo has no particular theme to it. Examples, a photo at the beach, might have shells, or beach elements. Whereas a photo of your toddler looking cute, might have a themeless page - you might embellish it with flowers, or mesh, or ribbons, or cardboard tags, or anything at all you think looks good!

So you can see, that building a good 'scrap' page is a bit like making a cake. You get all your ingredients, then you use your Scrapbooking Software, to mix it all together, so your printer can bake it! You see, with Digi-Scrap, you can either print your pages at home, or through someone like Harvey Norman and have them printed into beautiful, bound books for a very reasonable cost! They look absolutely divine, and as well as preserving your memories, people love them as gifts, or just to pick up from your coffee table and enjoy looking through!

So, have a go! I've included a list of neat software that can help you begin your journey, some free and some cost. But all are fun to use!

Remember too, we have an excellent forum for Crafts such as Digi-Scrap and we have some very talented people who love to help and teach who are always able to answer any questions you might have about how to start, or how to achieve a particular look!

Software List

- My Memories Suite
- Scrapbook Factory Deluxe
- Digital Scrapbook Studio
- Scrapbook Flair Software
- Photoshop
- Paint.net
- GIMP
- Scrapbook Max

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MEL'S GARDEN

The other day Silas, Lara and I headed up to the top garden. We'd been away on our Easter holiday so the garden had been somewhat neglected. There were cherry tomatoes everywhere! So many of them had gone to waste, with plenty more having burst on the vines. Lara thought they were awesome, the ones we managed to save, she managed to pop all over herself or drop on the ground. Of the 20 cherry tomatoes we picked Silas got to eat one!

Those cherry tomatoes will be put to use. I've saved the seeds so I can plant them again next year. Want to know how? Its the same for many other seeds. We've saved pumpkin seeds, beans, tomatoes, courgette seeds and can probably save more!

1. Rinse the seeds in some warm soapy water.
2. Lay out in a single layer on a paper towel (nicely spaced out so they aren't touching)
3. Leave to dry a cool dry spot.
4. Once dry store in a labelled envelope in a cool, dry dark place.

This May you should be planting:

Straight into the garden:

Broad beans, Lettuce, Peas, Raddish, Shallots, Snow Peas and Spinach.

Into seed trays you can plant:

Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage, Lettuce and Onion.

SPAGHETTI WITH CHERRY TOMATOES, SALAMI AND FETA

- 3 tbsp olive oil
 - salt and pepper to taste
 - 360g spaghetti
 - 100g sliced salami
 - 250g cherry tomatoes or sun dried tomatoes, halved
 - juice and zest of 1 lemon
 - 100g rocket leaves
 - 100g crumbled feta
- once until crisp.
- Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan and add the cherry tomatoes or sun dried tomatoes and cook, stirring for 1 minute until heated through.
- Add the cooked spaghetti, lemon juice and zest, rocket leaves, salt and pepper to taste and toss over the heat for 1 minute.
- Cook the spaghetti in a large pot of boiling water until tender.
- While the spaghetti cooks, place the salami in a hot, dry, large frying pan for 4-5 minutes turning
- Divide between 4 bowls and crumble over the crisp salami and feta.

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PRACTICAL PARENTING SUPPORT

SHOPPING TIPS

by Sara

This week I thought I would give you a few pointers on how you and your family can shop smarter...and save yourself thousands of dollars every year by changing the way you shop!

If you are like me spending money at the supermarket is easy! I'm such a sucker for promotions and "specials" it's easy to fill your trolley with things you don't need because you think you are getting a good deal! Here are a few tips for making sure you stick to your budget when it comes to your weekly/ fortnightly shops:

- Never ever go to the supermarket when you are hungry! You are far more likely to make unnecessary purchases!
- If you have young kids (toddlers) try to leave them at home (sometimes easier said than done!) but if you can it will save the tantrums when you tell the kids that fancy cereals, lollies and chocolates are off limits.
- Alternatively if you have older kids, take them with you. Get them to join you in finding the cheapest products. Turn it into a game for them.
- If you can try and plan your meals for the week/fortnight. Have a look at what you have and write a very specific shopping list of what you need to complete the meals and never buy anything that isn't on your list.

- Always write your budget limit at the top of your list.
- Always take cash with you. Eftpos and credit cards give you an unlimited buying power which doesn't help you if you are trying to save money!

- To avoid embarrassing money troubles at the checkout take a calculator with you and add up items as you put them in the trolley to

make sure you will come in under budget.

- Don't be fooled by specials and promotions...sure seeing a deal for 5 cans of baked beans for \$6 may look like you are getting a great deal but if you look around you'll also find one can for 75 cents.
- More often than not the generic supermarket brands (homebrand, signature range etc) are the cheapest. Always go for these products. You will find that often they are produced by exactly the same company that makes the same more expensive item.
- Supermarkets sometimes put the most expensive items at eye level so always search the top and bottom shelves for the generic brands.
- When it comes to buying your weekly meat, check out your local butcher. It's probably cheaper there and you can get the exact amount of meat you need for your family so there will be no wastage.
- Vegetables and fruit are marked up highly at the supermarket. Vegie shops are often a lot cheaper and the quality of fruit is better. If you're real keen grow your own!!
- Most importantly (and I'm guilty of doing this one way too often) stay clear of convenience stores! The mark ups are huge!

So to sum up, to help save its important to know your budget, write a list of what you really need and stick to it! Avoid being sucked into "specials" and "promotions" because if you didn't need it in the first place you are only adding to your weekly cost! Good luck!

SHEET PAINTING

This is a great outdoors activity, make sure they know the difference between their sheet and your washing and as with any activity supervise at all times.

- Spray bottle
- Water
- Poster paint
- Old sheet

- Fill a spray bottle half with water and half with poster paint.

- Hang an old sheet on a fence or clothesline and have your child spray paint on it.

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INDOOR WINTER ACTIVITIES

by Bronwyn

ORANGE, BANANA & STRAWBERRY SMOOTHIE

- 1/2 cup milk
 - 1 cup orange juice
 - 1/2 cup natural yoghurt
 - 1 ripe banana
 - 5 strawberries, hulled
 - 3 ice cubes
- Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.

CINNAMON FRENCH TOAST

- 5 thick slices of white bread, crusts removed
 - 1 egg
 - 1 tbsp sugar
 - 1 tsp ground cinnamon
 - 125ml milk
 - Butter for frying
- Dip the bread into the sweet egg mixture, covering both sides.
- Sprinkle sugar on one side of each piece of bread and gently fry, sugar side down, until golden.

- Cut each slice of bread in half to make rectangles.

- Beat the egg, sugar and cinnamon in a bowl and then add the milk.

- Melt the butter in a frying pan over a medium heat.

- Sprinkle tops with a little sugar and flip over. Cook until golden.

Serving Options:
Seasonal fruit
Maple Syrup
Yoghurt

OATMEAL PANCAKES

- 3/4 cup rolled oats
 - 3/4 cup milk
 - 1/2 cup flour
 - 2 tsp baking powder
 - 1/2 tsp salt
 - 4-6 tbsp sugar
 - 2 eggs
 - 2 tbsp butter, melted
- Sift together the flour, baking powder and sugar.
- Beat together the sugar and eggs. Add with the rolled oats and milk into the flour mixture.

- Mix together the rolled oats and milk. Let stand for 5 minutes.

- Add melted butter, barely mix

With winter fast approaching, I've been researching some fun indoor activities to do with Michael, especially as he's now beginning to reach that lovely toddler age where he's into everything!

So I thought I'd share a few of the activities I've found — I haven't tried all of these out yet, so please do let us all know if you find one or more of these work particularly well with your toddler, or if you have younger children that enjoy watching an older one (or if you can adapt it down to a younger level, let us know, too).

1) Plate of Bubbles

All you need for this fun activity is a small plate, a plastic drinking straw, dish washing liquid and tap water. Place two drops (that's all you need!) of dish washing liquid in the centre of a plate. Carefully run tap water onto plate, pointing water over the dish soap to create some foam or bubbles. Carefully place the plate on a flat, sturdy surface, such as the kitchen table, and have your child point his straw into the water. To create bubbles, blow gently and slowly into the sudsy water. Not too fast, it won't work! Slow and steady will create huge bubbles!

2) Formula Tin Stilts

Turn 2 formula tins upside down so that the plastic lids are on the bottom. Poke a hole on each both sides of each can using a screwdriver (parental supervision is recommended). Use rope, bailing twine, or several strands of yarn braided together for strength and thread through one hole. Thread the other end of the rope through the hole on the other side and tie off inside the can. Be sure that the rope is long enough so that when your child stands on the cans, the rope is high enough for them to hold in their hands comfortably without hunching over.

3) Cookie Cutter Glitters

Pull out the construction paper, glue, glitter, stickers and cookie cutters. Kids can trace around the cookie cutter shapes, spread glue over the shape and decorate

with glitter and stickers. This can be a messy craft, so be prepared with a disposable table cloth and garbage can for scraps. Using a vacuum with a hose attachment is a much easier method of cleaning up glitter than a broom.

4) Feely Box

Use any box that closes or has a lid, a shoebox is ideal. Cut a hole in the side of the box large enough for a child's hand to fit inside. Place an object inside the box and see if they can guess what it is. If they can't guess right away, let them ask questions or provide them with clues until they figure it out.

5) Hide the Object

Using any ordinary object (stuffed animal, vitamin bottle, drinking cup, etc), play this fun hide and seek game with your children. Simply have your child hide their eyes, then place the object somewhere in plain view (on the fireplace mantel, on top of the TV, near the front door, etc) and then have them look for it. Another idea is to use objects relating to a particular theme each day. For example, if your Kindergartener is focusing on the letter "A" that week, use objects that begin with "A" (apple, alligator [stuffed of course!], etc) You can adjust this game for older kids by hiding the object a little deeper. You might place the vitamin bottle halfway behind the picture of Grandma, or maybe tucked halfway down the side of the couch.

6) Threading

Collect a variety of round objects such as empty cotton reels, large beads, plastic hair rollers, large tubular pasta, or paper towel tubes cut into 3 cm rings. Show your child how to thread these onto a shoe lace or length of plastic tubing. Tie one of the objects being threaded to the end of the shoe lace or tubing to stop the rest from falling off.

May your house be filled with happy children this winter, not screaming to get outside in the wind and rain!

Kids: they dance before they learn that there is anything that isn't music.
- William Stafford

Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see.
- John W. Whitehead, *The Stealing of America*, 1983

Children are unpredictable. You never know what inconsistency they're going to catch you in next.
- Franklin P. Jones

There was never a child so lovely but his mother was glad to get him to sleep.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

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