Why “bury” a family time capsule?

This activity gives family members a chance to express what they value at this time in their lives. They do this by selecting an object to represent them and filling out a personal inventory sheet—both to be “buried” in a time capsule. As they focus on the present, they should try to imagine what they’ll be like when they open the capsule. When that time comes, they will have the chance to see how they’ve changed since they began this activity.

What do we need?

- a cardboard or tin box or other container; one envelope per person; personal inventory sheets (see pages 23 and 24); heavy-duty tape. Option: adding machine tape or track-fed computer paper and markers to create a family time line. Or you could tape sheets of paper together to make a long strip.

How long will it take?

- 5 to 10 minutes to explain the activity; 20 minutes for family members to complete their inventories; 45 minutes to assemble the time capsule.

What do we do?

Explain the activity to the entire family. Discuss:

- the kinds of things people would like to remember about this time of their lives
- how much fun it would be to make a time capsule
- what kind of box or container to use and where to put it after it’s been assembled
- how interesting it will be to go through the time capsule in a few years

If family members are interested, set a time to assemble the time capsule. Decide who will be in charge of finding the box or container to use. Consider decorating the box.
Making a Time Capsule

Give an envelope to each person. Each family member should place an item in the envelope.

Examples are:
- a favorite memento or keepsake acquired during the past year
- newspaper clippings, school report cards, original drawings, or poems
- anything that represents the person's interests, values, or hobbies
- photos of themselves and their friends

Option: Younger children can draw a picture of their friends, their family, or something they really like doing. An adult family member can write the child's explanation of the picture on the back of it.

Each family member then fills out a personal inventory sheet (pages 23 and 24) and adds it to his envelope. All envelopes should be placed in the time capsule. Ask family members to share what they have placed inside the envelopes as the envelopes are put into the capsule. When the time capsule is completed, seal it closed. Decide when it should be opened. Write the following on the outside:

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Family Time Capsule

(name)

Assembled on __________________________ (date)

Do not open until ________________________ (date)
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Decide where to "bury" the time capsule. Try to find a safe, dry place somewhere inside the house instead of actually digging a hole in the ground. You could bury it in:

- a basement storage room or closet
- an attic or crawl space
- wherever the family stores holiday decorations

Or family members could take turns keeping the capsule under their beds or in their closets.

Option. Make a family time-line mural for the past year. List the months of the year and write in special events and milestones. Include the mural with the time capsule.
What happened?
- How did family members choose keepsakes for the capsule?
- Were there many similar choices, or did each person value different items?

What did you learn?
- What did you learn about each other by doing this?
- Were there many special milestones in the last year?
- Were they “happy” or “unhappy” milestones?

Why was this activity important?
- Why is it important to think about what we treasure?
- Why is it important to think about how we have changed and how we are likely to change?

What’s next?
- When will you open your time capsule?
- How do you think you’ll feel looking back at the past year?
- Do you think the items you buried in the time capsule will still be important to you? For the same reasons?
- How do you think the members of your family will have changed by the time you open it?
TIME CAPSULE PERSONAL INVENTORY SHEET

Name: ___________________________ Age: ______

What would I like to remember about this year?

What do I like to do now, or what do I think about a lot?

Who are some of my friends, and what do I like about them?

What things do I buy a lot, and how much do they cost?

My favorites:

color ___________________________ food ___________________________

movie ___________________________ television show ___________________________

book ___________________________ celebrity ___________________________

music ___________________________ sport or team ___________________________

What do I think I will be doing in 20 years?
What do I like about myself?

What would I like to change about myself?

What things about myself do I hope stay the same?

What advice do I have for myself?

**Some thoughts about the other people in my family**

What do I really like about living in this family?

What was the most enjoyable thing we did as a family this year?

What was something important that happened in our family this year?