



YOUR OWN TIME CAPSULE PROJECT

..... SOME TIPS & IDEAS

Why not make your own Time Capsule? Time capsules are fun to assemble and, hopefully, meaningful for those who will open them at a future date. As an organization, group, family, or individual, there are so many reasons you might want to send a meaningful time “into the future”!

- Historic event
- Year of significance
- Special event, milestone, or anniversary
- Starting a new venture
- Graduation

Here are some things to consider when assembling a time capsule:

1. PICK AN AUDIENCE:

Who is this time capsule intended for? This will help you decide what to place in the capsule, whether that is you at a future date, your children, members of your organization, community leaders, or a stranger who might find it.

List possible items to include for your audience:

- i. ***For yourself*** – items of significance to you that may evoke favorite memories or milestones in your life. A favorite CD, letter, card, exercise routine, recipe, poem, artwork, a piece of jewelry or small item of clothing, or key to a special place.
- ii. ***For your children or grandchildren*** – things that might interest them about your life, the people you know or were inspired by, key events such as an award received, wedding invitation, or special activity you were part of, one of your childhood toys or memories. You might want to

include things that represent this time in history such as elections, technology, news articles, or event notices. If the capsule is about a child for them to open in the future, think about things from their childhood that might be of interest....a favorite toy, song they liked, game that they played, or picture of and/or story about a favorite pet.

- iii. ***For those who follow you in an organization*** – things such as customs, key members or decisions made, challenges, or visions of the future.
- iv. ***If for strangers or long into the future*** – think about including items that represent the times you are living in now and ideas about what the future might hold.

Add a letter of introduction or description of your intent in putting together the time capsule; include a journal, news clippings or photographs to add a personal touch.

2. DECIDE THE TIME CAPSULE'S OPENING DATE:

What is a meaningful future date to open the capsule? 5, 10, 50 or 100 years? Maybe to coincide with a graduation or anniversary of some sort? You decide!

3. SELECT A CONTAINER:

Once you have an idea of what you want to include, think about the container. Where will it be stored? Will it be buried or exposed to moisture or stored in a chest, attic or safe deposit box? For how long? The durability of the container should be up to the task of the site where it will be stored. It can be as simple as a cardboard box, or a plastic tub, or can be purchased commercially; something to consider if you are planning to bury the container.

4. ASSEMBLE THE ITEMS:

- i. ***Types of items*** – thinking of your intended audience, gather the items for the time capsule. Be sure that the items you are thinking of are fairly compact and non-perishable, avoiding food or liquids that could harbor bacteria, create mold, or spill. It is best not to put any items in the time capsule that are fragile or might break, leak, spoil, melt, ignite, or decompose (fluids, batteries, etc.). Such a catastrophe could ruin all the items in your container. Consider using archival paper with written or photographed items.

- ii. **Securing the items** - you may want to place some of your items in envelopes or plastic sheets or bags to further protect them. Be sure the items are snug; add packing peanuts or crushed paper to keep items from rolling about.
- iii. **Inventory** – make a list of the contents and place in the capsule so the future openers know what they are looking at and for.

5. DETERMINING A STORAGE LOCATION:

Where is a safe place to store the container?

- i. If the capsule is intended for you or your family, you could locate it in your home or yard. Just be sure its location is well-marked for future retrieval.
- ii. If the capsule is intended for a non-familial audience you may want to locate it, with permission, in a more public location that is not as susceptible to change in ownership, development, or near other sensitive land features.
- iii. The time capsule can be located within a building, such as in a wall space, under an entryway, etc., or can be buried outside in an identified area. Either way, it is important that the location be well identified and marked, such as with a plaque or marker for future retrieval and to identify its location in case of the site's alteration.
- iv. You can also store the item above ground in a camouflaged location, much like some people hide their spare house keys. These above-ground time capsules are called Geocapsules and can another element of discovery.

6. STORING THE CONTAINER

Ready to go?

- i. Mark the outside and the inside of the container with the date of burial or storage and its intended opening date. If storing outside, consider using a weather-grade paint, engraving, or other similar protection to aid in its perpetual identification.
- ii. Determine how you will remind yourself or others about the time capsule. Is there a digital or similar way to set a reminder? Should its existence be placed in an official organizational record, in a will, or letter to family, the organization or entity, or in a safe deposit box? You may want to be sure several people know of its existence.

- iii. When placing the time capsule in its storage location, take photos, note address or location by GPS coordinates or any other important information to help locate the capsule in the future.
- iv. Seal the capsule tightly and securely, place it in its storage location, and mark the site.

7. CELEBRATE!

This is quite an accomplishment....find a fun way to mark the occasion...you did it!

Maybe you'd like to share your story to inspire others to try putting a time capsule together, too. We did!

