



Monday, 1/25/10

Hi Room Parents,

Happy Valentine's Day! As you know, this sweet holiday is fast approaching. I put together a few fun party ideas to help inspire you. Hope they are useful! As always, if you have questions or need help with anything, please feel free to call or email me.

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#### VALENTINE PARTY IDEAS:

1. "You're A Lifesaver" Candy Necklaces: for this quick, fun craft, you'll need elastic cord & lifesaver candies in red, pink & white/clear (or whatever colors you like!). Mini lifesaver candies are also fun to include. Cut a piece of elastic cord about 18 – 20" for each child. Arrange different colored candies in bowls on tables in the classroom. Have kids string candies in repeating color patterns (or however they like!) on elastic cord & then double-knot the cord behind each student's neck. Fashion is sweet! (Idea: alternating between regular sized & mini lifesavers looks just great!).
2. "LOVE YA" Coupons: moms & dads will really appreciate this one! Buy some 8 ½ X11" construction or scrapbooking paper; solid red or any pattern you like (about 1 page per child). Cut paper in half on a paper cutter to 5 ½" X 8 ½" size; Have students use a ruler to make a 1" border around the outside edge of the coupon with a pencil. Use Valentine themed items to decorate the coupon borders like: small foam red hearts, pink glitter, stickers, candy hearts, M&M's, or whatever you like! Elmer's will work with most decorations. Variation: have kids draw hearts, cupid, arrows, or "LOVE YA" along the outside edge of their coupon with crayons or markers. Once the border is done & looks festive, in the center of the coupon, have the kids write something like: "THIS COUPON GOOD FOR ONE HUG;" "Happy Valentine's Day! Love, Susie; or "LOVE YA COUPON: Good for taking out the trash for a week;" or "GOOD TOWARD: Kisses all week;" "ONE ACT OF LOVE: Sweet Sayings for a day;" or "GOOD FOR: One Job of your choice around the house." You get the idea!
3. Valentine Swap-a-Toy Game: (This fun, lively game is like Secret Santa, but with a repurposing twist). Before the party, ask each child to bring in a small, gently used toy that he or she is tired of, never plays with, or would just like to swap for something else. Have each student wrap the toy in Valentine themed or homemade wrapping paper. Bring in a few extras in case you are short; make a stack of festive packages in the front of the classroom for all to see! At the party, ask each child to write his or her name on a slip of paper; collect them & put the names in a glass jar. Shake the jar & draw names, one at a time. The child whose name is called comes up & chooses a wrapped toy. When every child has a toy, open simultaneously! What a sweet sight! Watch as kids get excited & swap madly with their classmates for the toy of their choice!

4. Vanilla Cupcakes with Strawberries & White Chocolate Frosting:
  - a. (This idea adapted from “The Cake Mix Doctor” by Anne Byrne). Buy a regular white cake mix; prepare as usual but instead of water use whole milk; instead of vegetable oil use butter; then add two teaspoons vanilla extract to the batter before baking. Bake as usual in muffin tins for cup cakes. Make one day ahead for maximum flavor & texture.
  - b. For White Chocolate Frosting, you will need: 8 ounces coarsely chopped white chocolate (or white chocolate chips); one 8 oz. package cream cheese; 1 stick of butter at room temperature, 1 teaspoon vanilla extract & 3 cups confectioners’ sugar, sifted. In a large bowl, melt white chocolate in the microwave for about one minute; stir until fully melted. Add cream cheese and butter. Beat with an electric mixer on low speed until well combined, about 30 seconds. Add the vanilla & sifted confectioners’ sugar and blend on low speed for 30 more seconds. Increase mixer to medium and beat until the frosting is fluffy, about two more minutes. For extra festive cupcakes, add a few drops of red food coloring to the icing, for a beautiful pink Valentine cup cake! Frost cup cakes. Add a large whole strawberry to the top of each to garnish, or a wrapped candy kiss or small chocolate heart. Bon Appétit!
5. “Be Mine” Mini Photo Frames: Ask each child to bring in a small photo of himself, about 2” x 3”. Buy one mini frame for each student at a craft store like Michael’s. Bring in frames, Elmer’s glue & some small Valentine candies like: red hots, candy hearts, red licorice, gummy bears, dots, lifesavers, or any candy not too soft & easy to glue. Put candies in bowls on tables in the classroom & have kids glue candies to the edge of frames, by putting a bead of glue on the bottom of each candy. Allow to dry at least one hour. Spray with gloss Krylon to protect (or leave can with your teacher & ask her to spray the frames at the end of the day. This will preserve the candy. Send each frame home in a Valentine goody bag, wrapped in Valentine tissue paper. (Before having the kids glue on the decorations, take out the paper from under the frame’s glass & put it on TOP of the glass, to protect it while kids are making their frames. Insert pictures of kids & throw away the paper).
6. Ice Cream Sundae Party: have a festive & fun Valentine ice cream party with your class! Room parents can bring in ice cream & a scoop; assign each student an item to bring for the party: plastic spoons, bowls, napkins, chocolate syrup, caramel sauce, cherries, sprinkles, mini M&Ms, mini marshmallows, whatever you like. Bottles of water are also great to serve with the sundaes. Simply delicious!
7. Cookie Decorating Party: Mix cookies and kids’ creativity for an awesome Valentine party! You will need basic sugar cookies baked in fun Valentine’s Day shapes like hearts and “x’s” & “o’s,” some pastry bags (or just bowls) filled with pink, white and red icing; a few toppings like sprinkles, chocolate chips, candy hearts or M & M’s. Kids will have a blast as they make their edible works of art. Kids can enjoy them at the party and then bring some yummy creations home as Valentines for mom & dad!

For some other great ideas, check out: [www.familyfun.go.com/valentines-day](http://www.familyfun.go.com/valentines-day), or [www.holidays.kaboose.com/valentines-day](http://www.holidays.kaboose.com/valentines-day). Party on & see you at school!