

Idea of the Month — January 2009

By Cathy Yaun, State Girls Ministries Coordinator, Kentucky

Wow! Another year has come and gone. For the next several weeks, I'm sure each of you will find it difficult to break old habits. How many checks will have an artistic 2009 made out of a 2008? If you're like me, probably at least a dozen or so before that new habit takes hold. Even with the anticipation of a new year, I often fight off a melancholy mood because all the excitement of the Christmas season has been packed neatly away in attic boxes. I've waved farewell to faraway family members, and the holiday vacation is over all too soon. It's now back to school and 'business as usual.' As Christians we have SO MUCH to look forward to. Sometimes we just have to FOCUS on the important things to RENEW our minds, bodies, and our spirit. It is my prayer that my January holiday picks will lift your spirits and rekindle your joy. And if you don't find something below that suits your fancy, you can always celebrate **Fruitcake Toss Day** on **January 3rd** (I've never liked those things). I've always loved renovating, refurbishing, and revamping. It's my prayer that this new year will bring new blessings to you and yours as you strive toward a new and improved you.



Serving Him Together,

Cathy Yaun,
Kentucky Girls Ministries Coordinator

4 TIPS FOR A NEW YOU IN THE NEW YEAR

1. **Renew** your listening skills. Hearing God's voice in 2009 is a priority, and there's no better way to fine tune those spiritual ears than with a commitment to fasting AND prayer. Begin on **January 1st** and start the **new year** off with a powerful habit! Start with one meal or one day. Then see where the Lord leads you. Rather than a thing of the past, allow fasting and prayer to be a priority in your present.
2. **Recount** your blessings. **January** is actually **National Thank You** month. If you are one of the many people who can't manage to mail out Christmas cards every December (like me), this holiday provides the perfect excuse to be late, yet still say "thank you" to the beloved people in your lives. What an opportunity to start a new family tradition! Let the kids help compile a list of people your family would like to thank. Divide the list among the family members and spend time writing together each evening, reflecting on the blessings that others have brought to your lives. Don't worry...you have an entire month to celebrate, so you've got plenty of time.
3. **Refresh** your personal spirit. Ladies, put everything else on the back burner on **January 8th** and enjoy **Bubble Bath Day** (yes, this is a real holiday). For you, fill the tub with the fragrant bubbles of your choice, light some of your favorite candles, and turn on the soothing music as you sneak a few much-deserved moments to yourself. Then pass the favor on to your kids. For them, it's simple. Just fill the tub with bubbles and toys and let them hop in. They'll come out wrinkly but relaxed. (Showers are SO overrated.)
4. **Return** the blessings you've received. Don't forget to celebrate **National Hugging Day** on **January 21st**. Use this extraordinary day to appreciate your husband, your children, and

treasured friends. For those who are not in "hugging proximity," be sure to take advantage of the instructions below for the January holiday craft idea. The Hugs Box Gift can go to places you can't go, and the hugs can go on and on!

January Holiday Craft Idea

Celebrate National Hugging Day (January 21st) with this HUGS BOX GIFT.

Here's how to make one:

Materials Needed:

Small Box
Tissue Paper (various colors)
Glue & Glitter
Colored Paper



Instructions:

- 1) Cut enough 2 inch x 2 inch squares from the tissue paper to cover the entire box. (You may want to use a small jewelry-sized box for this craft.)
- 2) Water down the glue - 2 parts glue to 1 part water.
- 3) Lightly brush some glue on the box and stick on the tissue paper squares. Be sure the squares overlap so no parts of the box are visible.
- 4) Set aside to dry. Once it is dry, you can lightly brush over your box with the glue and water mixture with a tiny amount of glitter added to make it more durable and shiny.
- 5) Finally, tie with curly ribbon as you would a wrapped present and attach a gift tag with the colored paper which reads as follows:

***This is a very special gift
That you can never see
The reason it's so special is
It's just for you from me.
Whenever you are lonely
Or are ever feeling blue
You only have to hold this gift
And know I'm hugging you.
You never can unwrap it
Please leave the ribbon tied
Just hold the box close to your heart
It's filled with hugs inside.***

JANUARY HOLIDAY RECIPES

*Surprise! January is also **National Soup Month**. Nothing says "HUG" more than a tasty, hot bowl of **CHICKEN TORTILLA SOUP** to warm up those January nights. Since several vegetables need to be cleaned and chopped, this recipe provides another opportunity for family time. Everyone can get in on the action.*

Ingredients:

4 large, boneless chicken breasts
6 medium carrots



3 celery stalks
1/2 of a large onion
2 T. fresh cilantro
1/3 to 1/2 bottle of cumin (depending on your taste)
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 can Rotel tomatoes
1 can Garbanza beans (drained)
1 can Ranch-style Texas beans (with juice)
Shredded mild cheddar cheese
Tortilla chips
2 ripe avocados
Chicken broth (enough to flavor the stock)

Boil chicken breast in tall soup pot. Chop the following vegetables: onion, celery, and carrots. Move them to sauté pan. Remove chicken breasts to shred. Pour part of chicken stock over veggies to sauté.

Add fresh chicken broth (enough to flavor) to the stock.

Add the following items to the stock: shredded chicken, sautéed vegetables, cumin, soups, tomatoes, garbanzo beans—drained, and ranch-style Texas beans—with juice. Heat through.

While soup is heating, coarsely chop the fresh cilantro. Once soup is heated, add the cilantro.

Pour the soup up in bowls and top with crushed tortilla chips. Finish off the bowl with shredded cheese and diced pieces of avocado to taste. YUMMY!!

*January also hosts **National Chocolate Cake Day** on **January 27th**.
Need I elaborate?*

Chocolate Lava Cake

Ingredients:

10 ounces semi or bittersweet chocolate (preferably 70%
cocoa)
4/5 cup of butter
8 eggs
1 1/4 cups of sugar
1 1/4 cups of all-purpose flour



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 10 large muffin tins or cups (paper liners are fine, too). Break the chocolate into small pieces and melt with the butter over hot water (a double boiler may be used). Beat the eggs with sugar. Then mix with flour. Slowly fold in the melted chocolate/butter. Bake for 8-12 minutes only. The outside will be cooked, and the inside will be molten chocolate!

January provides a fresh start for everyone. We've all heard the saying, "Out with the old...in with the new." Here's how the activity works:

- Meet with each family member and have each person make a list of everything he/she received for Christmas.
- Provide a large box or storage container for each person.
- With the list of new items in hand, each person retreats to his/her room and selects "old," but usable items, toys or clothing for the box. Remember: each person should select one older item for the box for each new gift received.
- The family comes together with their chosen items.
- Take time together to share in a family devotion on thankfulness and have a prayer for the blessings of the past year and new gifts received. The family then passes over the chosen items so that they would, in turn, be a blessing to others.
- Boxed items can then be donated to needy families at church, community center, food pantries, or the Salvation Army.



****Remember, ALL donated items should be clean, well-presented, and useful for others.***

