



Hello and happy spring!

Spring always gets me in the mood to clean up and clear out. What about you? Have you cleaned out your scrapping space recently? This is something I try to do at least once a year... more to help me remember what I have (and use it!) than anything!

Here are some of my favorite tips for organizing and then keeping my scrapping area tidy:

1. Sit down and scrap a page from scratch, using your normal process. Is there anything that's not working for you? Maybe it took you too long to search for the right paper. Or maybe those perfect letter stickers were shoved so far back into a cabinet you didn't see them until after your layout was done. Start here with your organizing and revamp that problem.
2. Are you no longer liking or interested in certain papers or products? Either get rid of them (donate, sell or give away) OR, if you hate seeing things go unused, see if you can use them in another way. Maybe that patterned paper is too busy for your tastes now, but what about the backside? File it away that way and see if you don't use it for the more neutral pattern.
3. Make a place for everything. If you're unsure about where to put something away, set it aside and see if you don't run across other things that need a home. Perhaps you'll notice a pattern or theme and can fill that hole in your organization.
4. Keep a "new" file or basket. When you buy new products or your kit comes from Back Porch Memories, put these goodies out where you're more likely to use them first! We're usually excited for new stuff, so see if you can use it before it's time to incorporate it back into your stash.
5. Keep a "to put away" file or basket. This way, you can keep working, but don't have to stop everything every time you need to put a tool or product back into your stash. At the end of your scrapping session, put all of this stuff away at once.

After I tweak my space, I give it a good cleaning. Then I sit down and enjoy the fruits of my labor by working on a project with a cup of tea. ☺

Happy scrappy spring cleaning!

Paula



## A Note About Our Guest Designer Contests

With our gallery being down, we are suspending our Guest Designer contests until it's back up and running again. Thank you for your patience!

## Layouts in 15 Minutes {or Less}

by Margy Eastman

This month I have to be honest with you. Even if I had everything planned out, my 15-minute layout would have taken me at least that long. So in the spirit of honesty, this month's quick layouts will be 15 and 30 minutes. However, I bet some of you could turn this out in 15 minutes...I'm not known for my scrapbooking speed. So here it is:

I used the "Saturday" papers and embellishments from *Little Yellow Bicycle* included in the April Medley kit. I had just the photo and had been waiting for the perfect blue to come my way. Next year Jack is getting a red jacket to make my scrapping easier!

### 15 Minutes

#### Ingredients:

Cardstock – red and kraft Bazzill  
Patterned papers – Vintage Bliss, Pants and Patches, Easy Breezy  
Diecut "pocket"  
Cardstock Stickers – Favorite Pieces  
Felt and burlap flower  
Stick Pin  
Alphabet – Cricut Plantin Schoolbook

The sticker borders covered the seams on the patterned paper strips saving me the border-punching time. I'd used a chunk of the spool-end border on another layout, but the pocket hid the gap. I apologize for the lovely photo, but it was easier than

scanning before the letters were firmly fixed.

### 30 Minutes

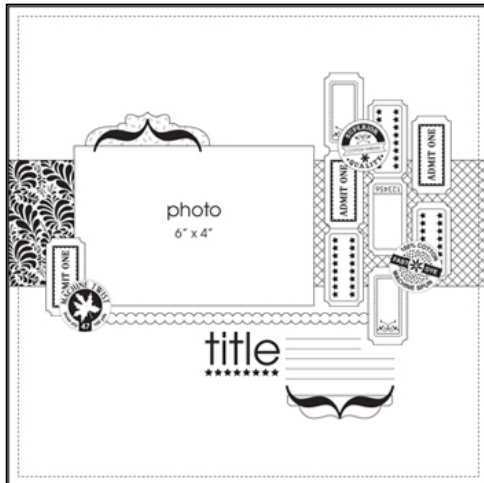
#### Additional Ingredients:

More kraft cardstock  
More cardstock stickers  
Ribbon from April's Medley Add-ons packaging  
Dimensional stickers  
Sewing machine and thread

How much do I love these stickers? And I'm not usually a sticker-girl. I machine stitched the border and across the letters. I stitched the letters to the pocket before I sewed the pocket to the background. The brad flower center helps hold the journaling card in place. I admit that since I finished this layout and scanned it, I've added a few more stickers behind the journaling spot. I just can't help it! I hope you enjoy playing with this kit as much as I did!



**{April Sketch}**  
selected from [www.pagemaps.com](http://www.pagemaps.com)



**April Sketch**



**Alissa Trowbridge**



**Margy Eastman**



**Danielle Price**



**April Design Team Projects**

With our gallery going down, our Design Team couldn't upload their projects to our gallery as usual. We have added their layouts, cards and other projects to our home page on the website.

Once our gallery is up and running again, our Design Team will add their layouts to our gallery as usual.

## Design Tip {Rule of Thirds}

by Danielle Calhoun

How often do you follow the rule of thirds with your scrapbooking layouts? There are so many spoken and unspoken rules when it comes to designing your layouts. Are you a scrapbooker that goes with the trends, or one that walks to the beat of your own drum? I have not thought about the rule of thirds in years. And I mean YEARS! When I was creating my layouts this month with the April kit, the rule of thirds crossed my mind. I had just completed this layout:



I thought to myself, many of my completed layouts will often use the rule of thirds without thinking. Many times, my brain goes that route without me thinking about it. It's nice every once in a while to think about some of these scrapbooking "rules." It brings a fresh, new perspective to your creative spirit! Think about the rule of thirds on your next layout and see what you come up with!

1/3 photos + 1/3 title & embellishments + 1/3 white space = well designed layout. ☺



## Scrapbook Shortcuts {Acrylic Stamping Tips}

by Alissa Trowbridge

This month, instead of showing you a shortcut, I want to share some of my “secrets” of using acrylic stamps. I’m still thinking of this article as a “shortcut,” because if you have stamps that make good images, you’ll save yourself lots of time and frustration!

First of all, some acrylic stamps stamp better right out of the package than others. I always test a stamp on a scrap piece of paper with the ink I want to use on my project first. If I don’t get a good image, I clean the stamp using a good cleaner for acrylic stamps. My favorite is the one by Technique Tuesday, but there are plenty of others out there. Fragrance-free baby wipes or mild soap and water work great, too!

Then I reink and try again. Still not a good image? Take a regular pencil eraser and gently rub it all over the stamp. Sometimes there’s a film left on the acrylic from the manufacturing process and this will take it off. Be sure to brush off any eraser “crumbs” or rinse the stamp in water and dry well to remove them. This almost always works to make the stamp work cleanly!

If you’re still having issues with the stamp, try a different ink. If you’re using a pigment ink, switch to a dye-based ink or vice versa. Staz-On ink is another option to try, but be aware it will stain your stamps and the cleanser to remove it is a lot harsher on acrylic stamps.

That should do the trick. If you’re still having issues, contact the manufacturer. It’s possible you got a bad stamp.

## **“Blessed” Mini Book**

by Danielle Price

This month's album was super fun and super cheap. What a great combo! I had the opportunity to also work with the Solo Kit this month and I almost used all of it to make this album. I went to the Dollar Tree and purchased one of those plastic 4 x 6 albums to make this. Here is how I did it.



Of course, always begin with gathering your supplies. I like to have everything in front of me. You just need the basic supplies for this, your kit, paper trimmer, adhesive and scissors.

You will need to take out at least half of the pages. This is so the album doesn't get so bulky. I did this by putting a piece of cardstock under the page I was removing and slicing it with my exacto knife. Don't do it too close to the seam because you don't want your book to fall apart. I left about 1/8" of the page after I cut. Once you add things into the book and it starts to expand, you won't even see the flap! Tip: I left the middle alone, so I started there and worked my way to the beginning and then to the end removing every other page.



Start adding your paper and photos. For my book the covers were slightly larger than a 4 x 6, so be sure to measure. But the rest of the pages were as big as the photos.

The fun part about this album is that all the embellishments are added on top of the plastic covering of each page. Start adding to your heart's content. In the photos shown I did a couple of tricky things. First, on the back of the embellishment packs in the Solo Kit, I cut out the flowers and used them as an embellishment. Second, I tied the orange ribbon around the center of the book into a knot at the top. And third, I trimmed the border strips to different sizes so that they could fit to my pages. I liked the result.



*Continues next page...*



For a journaling block, I used my white patterned paper and some kraft cardstock and then used a stamp I have that has journaling lines. I then added them on top of my pages that were just patterned paper.

Here is how it all turned out. I used every embellishment included in the kit. I only had the two yellow buttons left. Enjoy and happy scrapping!

