

CREATING MEMORY BOXES



There is a saying that, “if you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day, but if you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a life time.

It is clear that no program can supply every hospital in the world with memory boxes. After 10 years, we supply less than 500 hospitals a year.

There are more than 500 hospitals in California alone.

Nurses and social workers at hospitals often tell me that they wish that they knew how to make memory boxes.

I tell them that it is not difficult and often walk them through how to make them.

I talked to Tera about teaching people to make boxes to increase the number of volunteers. If, in addition to this booklet, we could offer volunteers to walk them through the first lesson that would be even better. I know that, that won't always be possible, but perhaps some of the people who live near hospitals, that want to be in the program, would volunteer to set up a lesson for groups at the hospital, church, scout meeting,

etc., who wants to create boxes for a hospital. For people who teach decorative painting, this could be a source for new students. For chapters - potential members.

We decided to write this booklet that can be downloaded from the website, to try to help people who work in hospitals, and others, help us create more boxes.

Let's Get Started:

Supplies needed:

Cheap Styrofoam plates

Paper towels (to protect your work space)

1 inch brushes (one will do about 3 boxes)

1 sea sponge

Varnish

1 brush to apply varnish

A container of baby wipes, to which you have added a half bottle of alcohol (for cleaning your hands, and wiping off any paint that gets on the inside of the box)

Acrylic paints:

Gold, white, and pastel colors for the boxes

Boxes

The boxes should be at least 8 inches in diameter and 4 inches deep (like the ones that WalMart sells for \$1.97 – or you can buy sets of 3 that are about 10 – 8 and 6 inches and 4 to 8 inches deep.

Varnish – can be canned varnish like Varathane or Flecto Diamond – in satin or gloss – or you can use Ceramcoat, Folk Art or Americana varnish, in satin or gloss.



FOR DECORATING:

Stickers, Wallies, Wall Art, Decoupage, Rub ons, Stencils or Stamps, or anything else that you know of that will produce a pretty box.

PAINTING A BOX:

Paint the inside of the box with GOLD paint, using a DRY sponge brush. This will cover in one coat and look nice.

You use the sponge brush dry, because a wet brush will dilute the paint. If you are going to paint with another color, and **MUST** use the brush again before it dries out, wash it and press it between paper towels to get as much moisture out of it as possible. Wash the brush as soon as you are through with the color you are painting, or it will dry in the brush and probably won't come out.

After you paint the inside of the box, when the paint is dry (several hours) – Varnish.

The benefit of varnishing before painting the outside, is that paint will wipe off of the varnish, if you get it on the inside of the box.

I buy several boxes at a time and often paint and varnish the inside of boxes while I watch TV at night and then, whenever I want to paint a box, the inside is done.



Next, paint the outside of the box. If I don't have a lot of time, and want to make some boxes in a hurry, I often paint the outside of the bottom of the box gold, as well. Then that just leaves the top to paint with a pastel color, which will take 2 or 3 coats of paint. If I paint the bottoms gold, I varnish them when I varnish the insides.

Next, paint the outside of the box (or the lid, if the bottom is done in gold)





When the boxes are dry, you can sponge over the pastel boxes. If you don't have a sea sponge you can get a nice effect with about 12 or 15 inches of Saran Wrap. You mix some white paint with water – to make it fairly thin. You use a sponge brush to brush over the box – do it one piece at a time. Then, while the paint is wet you use the balled up Saran Wrap to pick up the wet paint. It will give you a nice effect.

This is what the first step will look like:



This is how it looks after you have pounced it with Saran Wrap. If you have too much paint, just wipe the Saran Wrap on a paper towel, or get a clean piece and keep pouncing till you get the desired look.

When you use a sea sponge you get a different effect. You wet the sponge and then squeeze out as much water as possible, and then pounce up and down on the paint – take out excess paint on a paper towel, and move the sponge in different directions.

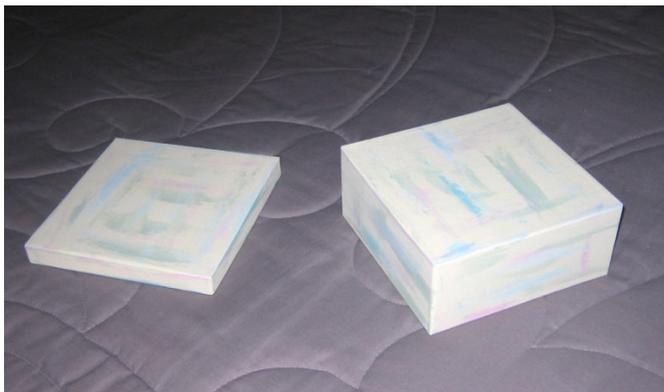




This will give you an idea of what they will look like after they are sponged. Practice on the bottom of the box first, in case you have too much paint on your sponge. IF that happens, pounce more paint off of the sponge before you proceed. When you have finished and the white paint has dried, you can clean your sponge and then sponge some of the original color on the box, to get the base color back on the box.

You don't have to sponge in white. You can use a lighter or darker color, or more than one color – white and a darker color – or ??? It's your creation so use your imagination.

Another way to easily add color to a box, as a background, is to use your sponge brush. Just dip the tip in paint, rub it into the brush a little and “slip slap” it on the box. That's just what it sounds like – lightly brush it back and forth on the box.



DECORATE YOUR BOX:

This is the fun part. You can cut out pictures from wrapping paper, decoupage paper, pretty cards, etc. I will show you some simple boxes done with Wallies and Wall Art Stickers. These are easy to find. The Dollar Tree carries Wall Art and Michaels, WalMart, etc., carry Wallies.

Be sure that the paint on the box is very dry. It won't hurt to give it overnight or at least several hours to dry. When you apply the stickers, Wallies, etc., be careful to push all of the air out from under the attachments, before you varnish. You will have air bubbles under the attachments, if you don't do that.

Here are some samples:



These are done with Wall Art from the Dollar Tree. The flowers are in small groups, and you can arrange them in any way that you think will look nice. They also sell a page of butterflies that add to the arrangement.



These are Wallies and the little dog is from a sticker page.



This little bear is done with a Rub on – with a few comma strokes around the lid.



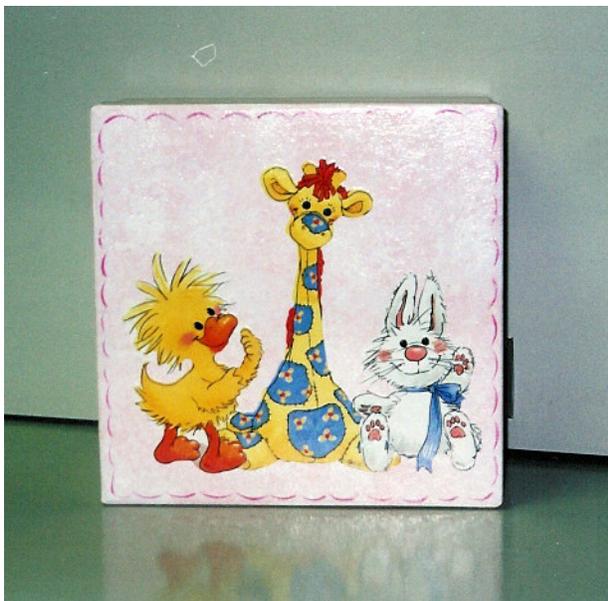
This box was sponged, and the edge was done with paper mosaic, glued on with decoupage paste. The Precious Memories was printed on the computer on colored paper, and put on with decoupage paste.



This box was done with a picture cut out of wrapping paper. I did paint the flowers, but another cut out could have taken it's place, or you could use sticker flowers.



This is a Wallie!



More Wallies!

I think that you can see that it is NOT hard to create nice boxes, without having a lot of experience as a painter.

Our motto is, if the box would make you feel good, if you were the recipient, then it is a good box.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to email me or Tera. Our addresses will always be on the Memory Box Artist website.

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