

Discussion 19

Everything Creative

PRESERVING MEMORIES

NARRATOR: The views and opinions expressed here are those of the guests and are not the official position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[Opening Music]

PRESIDENT DIETER F. UCHTDORF: The desire to create is one of the deepest yearnings of the human soul. We each have an inherent wish to create something that did not exist before. The more you trust and rely upon the Spirit, the greater your capacity to create.

NANCY HANSON: I'm Nancy Hanson, and this is Everything Creative. This program explores a wide range of creative ideas, talents, and experiences through interviews and discussions.

NANCY HANSON: Welcome to Everything Creative, I'm Nancy Hanson. Today we're talking about creativity in preserving memories through pictures, home movies, scrapbooking, journaling, and we've invited four women to join us today who are passionate about this subject. And I've asked them to come and share their thoughts and ideas with us. We have Robyn Hanson, Marcy Balfe, Deanna Lambson, and Jan Thomson. Thank you so much for being here today.

DEANNA LAMBSON: We're happy to be here

ROBYN HANSON: Absolutely

NANCY HANSON: Well, let's get started with each of you, maybe giving us an idea of how many children you have and their age ranges. Kind of where you are in your life, and a little bit about your involvement in scrapbooking. Marcy, let's start with you.

MARCY BALFE: Well, I have three beautiful children. I have a son who is ten. I have a daughter who's eight and my baby is four. And Nancy mentioned that, you mentioned that we have a passion for saving memories and, you know, I think it comes down to really just wanting to hold on to every moment of my kids lives. And I think my real passion started with my kids. I mean, before that, I had really neat things going on and what not in my own life that I wanted to write down, but pictures and really getting, getting that passion going started with my kids and I just wish I could just save every little darling thing they do and that's where it started.

NANCY HANSON: Thanks. Jan.

JAN THOMSON: Um, I have two children, an eleven year old daughter and an eight year old son, and I've always wanted to be a scrapbooker but I had a very very hard time making the time until I went digital, and that's really what kind of was the turning point for me. I was able to actually to get something done once I was able to do it on the computer.

NANCY HANSON: Interesting, I can't wait to talk about that. Great. Diana?

DEANNA LAMBSON: Well, she's able to take her scrapbooking with her cause she just pops her laptop in and can do it on the go. Which is a little hard for those of us who have a closet full of supplies.

NANCY HANSON: Right.

[Laughs]

DEANNA LAMBSON: So um, my name is Deanna Lambson. I um, I actually started scrapbooking when I was just a little girl. Was always interested in it, but more recently my husband and I are co-founders of Creating Keepsakes Magazine. Uh, which we launched in 1996, and since then I've been involved in a lot of just researching a lot of techniques and products and how people get it done and, and in the last few years just a little bit of free lance writing and some promotion spots and things like that, but my greatest claim to fame was scrapbooking is that I have six children. My oldest is on a mission and then I have one in every level of school. So one in college, high school, junior high, elementary, and in preschool. And so I think I'm maxed-out in the amount of stuff that comes home. The amount of different experiences that we want to preserve. And so I've been looking for a realistic, busy-woman's approach to scrapbooking and I would love to talk about that.

NANCY HANSON: Wonderful. Thank you. Robyn.

ROBYN HANSON: My name is Robyn Hanson and I have five children; a twelve year old son and then a ten year old daughter, seven year old twin boys, and our youngest is a two year old boy. And I have not been a long-time scrapbooker. I have had a passion for throughout my life for journaling; preserving memories has been something that I have loved always and especially through journaling. I've journaled a lot this year in particular though. I've um, kind of been through a health crisis this year and early on my doctor suggests that I find something that I love to do every day and I needed to do it for at least an hour every day. And I tried a number of activities but finally just settled on scrapbooking because it was the one thing and it's paper, scissors, glue scrapbooking. It's not the digital type, but it was the one thing that completely immersed my mind in the paper, in creating the memories and, and I kind of settled kind of more of a illustrated journal type scrapbooking, and, and it's really been a healing time for me, so it's only been about nine months but I've loved it.

NANCY HANSON: It's fun to be able to get back into that I think you probably had a time in your life where you had to set that aside.

ROBYN HANSON: Yeah, or never really had done it actually.

NANCY HANSON: Yeah, Yeah

ROBYN HANSON: This is kind of the first I guess. I had done some scrapbooks in college but other than that...

NANCY HANSON: Yeah. So have all of you actually paper and scissor scrapbooked. I mean you have the binders.

ROBYN HANSON: All of us have those that we started with. I think that scapbooking is one of the most creative things we can do. Many women think "Oh I'm not creative," but they scrapbook cause you start with a blank paper and you know you could put the same embellishments in front of, you know, ten different women and they would come up with something different on their page. And I think that sometimes well, you look at a page that might seem dated but it's fun to consider the person that built that page and how they put their personality into that and what was happening in their life at that time and what the trends were. And Marcy, I know that your mom was an amazing scrapbooking and that she really documented your life. Talk about that for a minute and what you have as a result of that today.

MARCY BALFE: You know, my mom actually, the thing about my mom and her scapbooking was that she kept it fairly simple. She was avid about doing it and keeping those memories but she was also, she's always been, she's still scrapbooking. She's always been very, um, determined to make it something that will last forever. So those were two things: To actually do it and make it last at least as long as possible. So with that she gave us all probably, I bet I have ten to fifteen scrapbooks of my very own when I got married that she just sent me away with. And for me to be able to go back and look at even my first doctor appointment, when my first tooth came in, and how big I was, and my first school work sheet. She has saved the little notes that I wrote to my brother or to her and the penny my brother gave me when I was born. I mean, things that maybe to someone else don't mean a whole lot but to me and my children they mean so much and even to this day she is um, you know, I get emotional talking about it, but um, every Christmas she brings us a scrapbook, um, for every family, of all the cool things we did as a family together that year. It just means so much, she's amazing.

ROBYN HANSON: You know what I love about that is that when we're doing this we tend to think, "Why am I spending all this time and effort and money?" But look right there that is a perfect example of, you know, it's something that is going to last forever and mean so much to the person that receives it.

NANCY HANSON: Yeah, I love that

DEANNA LAMBSON: You know, I have one comment on that Nancy. Like what Marcy was talking about. I think sometimes in the process of recording little things that you think are insignificant you realize the connection and I think that it's those connections that really touch your heart. So as was recording some things about my father one time he told me a story about breaking every one of the lights in his house and how he loved the way it popped, and it made such a cool sound when he stepped on these light bulbs. Well, a light went on in my head because I have a photo of my son Benjamin who had taken all of our Christmas lights and stomped on each one to hear this cool sound. And I told them, I said, you know you are just like your grandpa, guess what your grandpa did, and each one of those little stories creates a bond whether it's a silly story or whether it's a really meaningful one, but you connect through the generations cause so many times it's easy to think that, you know, I don't have anything in common with them they're so much older than I am or they lived a long time ago, but as we record things we realize we're the same in so many ways.

ROBYN HANSON: I love that Deanna, the idea you can make connections to the generations. I have um, my husband's grandmother is a twin also and I have had my mother-in-law tell me about them. I made a scrapbook page where I show my twins in a similar picture as their great-grandmother's and have written all about who they were and same thing, just connections to the generations, I love that idea.

MARCY BALFE: Well and you know what I think is fabulous about that it gives our children an enhanced self-esteem. They have connections to people who have been through life before, and in many cases through really difficult trials and they know that they come from that stock and they know "I can be like grandma so-and-so." They learn those stories and can relate to those people and I think it gives them strength and confidence in themselves. They learn about the shoulders they're standing on, you know.

NANCY HANSON: Yeah, so that's what I love about journaling and story-telling is being able to take those stories that you've heard and record them and put them in some sort of form that can be passed down. Is that what most of you do?

JAN THOMSON: Yeah I'd have to say I agree with Robyn. I think the journaling is the most important part for me. I love the pictures and everything else but it's the stories that bring it all to life. I think my kids appreciate that the most.

ROBYN HANSON: I kind of, have. The way I scrapbook is I have found twelve by twelve lined paper and grid paper and I kind of call it more of an illustrated journal because there's so much just hand-written journaling on the page and that is my favorite part but I love that the pictures are right with it that show the story.

DEANNA LAMBSON: I have something to say about journaling. I think for me, it's the hardest part, um, I don't know if you guys feel that way like you're getting. It's almost like two different parts of your brain that are working. So you get going on the creative part and then you go "ooh boy..." at least for me, "oh, what am I going to say?" And um, so there's a couple of little exercises that I've tried that seem to help that and one is to do the journaling first to pull out the photos or whatever it is you want to talk about and to force yourself to write it down to get on the computer; write something, put it in the textbox before you ever create because sometimes the dimensions of your page dictate how much you say about it. You bet, oh I've got this little tiny thing, I'll just put the date or just put who it was where as you know you have something to say about this you will allow room for it on your page.

NANCY HANSON: That is so good, I wish I'd thought of that before cause I do struggle with that same thing and when it really is about the story that's the thing that should take up the most. Jan.

JAN THOMSON: One thing that's helped me a lot that way is I've started a family blog. And I'm not a big avid blogger, I maybe get on a couple times a month, but that's the place where I hurry and I write the stories and I love to write and I love to express that way. But that way I'm not as intimidated when I go to make a page I literally just copy and paste it and that way all of the story part is done and I put the pictures around it like Deanna said.

MARCY BALFE: Well another thing I think that helps me not get intimidated by all of this story-telling if you will, is to write a story to my kids in my mind. If I'm looking at this picture and I want to tell a story I actually write it to whomever I'm making that memory for. If it's for my daughter I tell her in a story what was happening and I don't feel like I'm telling someone who might grade me on it or what not; it's just my daughter and I'm just telling her what happened and what was special about that and why I want her to remember it.

ROBYN HANSON: Yeah, that's so good.

DEANNA LAMBSON: It is, and I think sometimes too we're worried we have to impress people; we have to be clever, we have to be snappy and zippy. At least I felt that way when you know this is likely going to be published or that lots of people are going to look at it. But if you think of who your audience is and basically it's people who love you. It's your children, your grandchildren, and your friends, your spouse. I had one more comment I wanted to make about journaling and that is the difference between captions and journaling. I think sometimes you can look at a photo and you can say, "This is on the beach at San Carlos, look how Betsy caught a crab." But if you pull back from the photos and step back and try and say, "Why do I even want to record this experience?" Then you sometimes find yourself not saying the specifics but saying maybe a deeper meaning behind it. So you might talk about why this vacation meant a lot to you or how you feel when the family gets together, or some, you know, I think maybe pulling yourself back and what I like to

do is say I have to do both. That I'm going to get on the computer and I write something. I write the story; the feeling, the emotion, the meaning out of it, and then on the page it's easy to write the captions. This is the when, where, what, and how.

ROBYN HANSON: I think it's important to remember it can become overwhelming, especially if you have six kids like Diana. It's overwhelming to think about documenting, journaling our kids lives and I think it's important to step back and I try to remember every story that we do document, that is just one story more that they have. It doesn't have to be their entire life. I only have a couple captions of journaling written by my mother and their precious to me and it feels like, it's wonderful. So everyone that you do do, that's one more that they have. It doesn't have to be, you know, comprehensive like Marcy's mother although I would love that.

MARCY: You know what's interesting too, I think, what my mom chose was simplicity. She does not have brads and bows and she really doesn't. And she has said if I'm going to do it that way I'm never going to get what I want to get done. And so she made a choice and kind of said, for me, it's all about just getting it done and I think that's the thing is, you know, we were talking a lot about scrapbooking but there's a lot of ways to save memories and there have been times in my life where I've had to say, alright this is as good as it gets, I'm going to write you a little two-page letter and tell you why you are special to me right now. You know, my kids still cherish them and I think it's like you said, it means a ton to them no matter and some women, some people may really enjoy the bows and the brads and that's their way of, you know, expressing themselves and I think that's great but it does not have to be that way; it can be very simple.

ROBYN HANSON: You know, Marcy, my favorite way of preserving my families memories is I have a journal for each of my children and I just kept those, and I wouldn't say they're huge, but it's just something. It is the most precious, I mean if there was a fire in my house I'd get my kids out and then I'd get their journals.

NANCY HANSON: How often do you think you write in them, do you have kind of a planner or schedule to remind you?

ROBYN HANSON: I try, well, I set the mode with my first child, and so I've tried to maintain that but it seems like when their young it's probably it's four or five times a year maybe six times a year. As they get older, eight, nine, ten, it kind of goes down to once or twice a year but they have me read those to them cause they don't read my cursive well so often and that is probably the most precious thing to me so it's not a lot but like you say it's...

JAN THOMSON: It's a huge relief to hear because I've been beating myself up that I'm not doing it more often because I've got journals for my children too and I feel like I should be doing it so often but...

ROBYN HANSON: No, but it's wonderful even three times a year, that is, your kids will love that

NANCY HANSON: I know

DEANNA LAMBSON: Well, you know, I think we've all touched on a little bit. It's easy to feel pressure and to feel guilt about what you think you're supposed to be recording, and I remember making a baby scrapbook and keeping a calendar when I had my first baby and I'd write something every day. And people would say, don't do that, you won't be able to do it with your third and fourth, and you know what they were right!

[Laughing]

DEANNA LAMBSON: But that's ok because there are things that every little piece of life is something you're sharing and it doesn't have to be a journal and it doesn't have to be a scrapbook. I've been looking for other ways to just preserve things that I care about and to let go of the guilt. And, you know, Robyn was talking about this, when you record one story, that's one story that would have been lost. So you're one story, one page ahead, instead of thinking I'm five years behind. I mean, how have we heard that? [Gasp] I'm a year behind or I'm ten years behind! Well, you know, I'm a lifetime behind but I am so many stories ahead and so...

NANCY HANSON: ...a better way to think about it.

DEANNA LAMBSON: Yes, yes, and you know, just recently I've looked at other ways to preserve things that, that spare my time a little bit because it's spread. You know everybody's time is precious and I have this son that's on a mission right now and there's a lot of people who do wonderful mission scrapbooks and I thought, you know, if I try to do a scrapbook for him I'm going to be guessing who these people are, where these places are. I can try and help him when he comes home, but instead I printed out a wonderful picture that he had sent us and printed out every one of his letters from the first year and bound it and I did it in a day and I'm just going to have two volumes. There's the first and the second year. He'll have a record of everything that he wrote home and we'll have a record of everything we wrote to him because there's letters from home, letters from him. That's a wonder... I mean letters are a wonderful way to save it. It didn't require me to write anything in addition and I don't have journals of my children. I'm sure they would love that but if I started them I would likely forget to do it, but each one of these little things, another little thought is, when we go where I try to grab postcards and sometimes I'll have the kids just write something on the back of a postcard and then I just have a little ring; I punch a little hole in it and put it in a ring and it's just a little postcard album. The places we've been and one little thought from a child of where we've been and you know it's kind of a simple way. It'll bring back all those memories without taking all the time of me trying to scrapbook it.

MARCY BALFE: I love that Diana

JAN THOMSON: I do too

MARCY BALFE: Well and I think you can have your kids get involved in this memory saving. I know my kids on Sunday will get their journals out and we kind of this set, once a week time, and I couldn't save the memories that they have of their life the way that they have them.

DEANNA LAMBSON: From their perspective

MARCY BALFE: Absolutely. So they can write their own perspective and it's precious. I love it, and the misspelled words and the things they think are important. It's something that I couldn't do for them.

DEANNA LAMBSON: Well it's interesting for me to watch Jan, our children are friends, our sons are friends and through this process I realized how incredible she is on the computer and to watch her kids doing their own scrapbooking on the computer. I don't know, maybe you can tell us how that's been. I you know, my kids are anxious, they're going, Sunny knows how to do this, Cal knows how to do this.

JAN THOMSON: Yeah, they do, like, when they have a big poster due for school they do it all in photoshop and we just print it up at Costco so it's a big two by three and instead of you know, actually pasting the things on it they've arranged everything and it definitely is their own work because it, part of me, you know, you want to cringe but you love it because it's adorable because it's awful. Yeah, they really really love it.

DEANNA LAMBSON: Well, and I think it... I'm amazed because I'm just getting started in the digital aspect of this. I think in some ways it inspires more creativity because you can always undo it, move it here, move it there, you're not using up your supplies and so you can experiment as long as you want. So.

NANCY HANSON: Well, you're joining us on Everything Creative today on the Mormon Channel. We're talking about scrapbooking and I'd like to just go for a minute to the digital world. I mean, I think we've all experienced, you know, you get a digital camera and suddenly you take like 500 pictures where before you could've only taken 24 and then you have to put in a new role, whatever. And so we end up with so many pictures, and I'm just wondering how any of you ladies manage that and then Jan I'd like to talk to you more about how you found the digital scrapbooking is more efficient and quicker and easier for you to do. So let's talk about the pictures. Am I the only one that takes way too many pictures of the same event?

ALL GUESTS: No

DEANNA LAMBSON: And we still have a hard time throwing any away. I mean you have 200 photos of the same graduation picture but you can't drag it to the trash because I'm too scared of throwing anything away. It might be that perfect look that you're afraid to get rid of.

JAN THOMSON: So I've gone back and just look; I've lost a significant chunk of my children's lives and it just killed me, digitally. So I'm missing a year. And as I've gone back and I've just organized to make sure that these are stored in five different places and everything else, the one thing that I, the conclusion I came to is I'd like to be taking pictures a lot more often and I'd like to be getting rid of a lot of them because there's so many it's hard. It's really paralyzing when there's that many.

MARCY BALFE: The one thing I think for me, I have allowed myself to realize I don't have to print them all, I don't have to scrapbook them all, but I have them. And some of the ways that are easy for me to actually utilize them is just throw them on a slideshow. I mean that is so easy and there's so many computer programs out there right now that will just do all of that automatically for you. And you know, I have the same illness you do, I take far too many pictures, but sometimes when you're pushing your shutter, your button down and it takes three pictures per second it gives you those looks that are so sweet you can't delete but that's one thing that you can do is just throw them in a slideshow and my kids will watch those three different little faces within that second and love every one of them but it took, you know, cents for me to buy a CD or a DVD and they just love them.

DEANNA LAMBSON: So you just have them running on your computer all the time, it just runs through this continual slideshow?

MARCY BALFE: You can do that, I mean that, that's one thing that we do as well, but I'll actually burn a CD or a DVD and they can actually watch it on TV and you add a song to it. I mean it takes you 15 minutes with the program that I have and they love it.

ROBYN HANSON: I think it shapes the memories in a remarkable way I know that my husband does a lot of our digital slideshows. He has made the funnest, just the way he shapes the memories, we have one son, one of the twins that seems to get caught a lot on camera with a frown and he put it to the music "You Had a Bad Day" and there's probably 50 different pictures and we watch that at least a couple times because it just makes us laugh so hard and it kind of shapes that. I don't know it's, well you know the other thing I make a lot of movies. We'll go to, Robyn is actually my sister-in-law and we went this year to cut down Christmas trees with the family. So here I was with my camera, my brother's laughing at me and like, "What are you doing? Why are you filming everything?" But I came home and I put it all together and I really didn't even cut anything out, it was pretty easy, and put some music behind it, and it's probably about 15 minutes long.

NANCY HANSON: But it has captured that experience we had which was so fun, it really was a beautiful day, it was so fun with all the cousins and we just had a blast, but they watched that

movie and it just solidifies even more that "wow that was a great experience" they'll never forget. It makes it an event.

ROBYN HANSON: Yeah

NANCY HANSON: You know, she put it to this cute music. We're going to get the Christmas Tree.

ROBYN HANSON: It just makes it seem more fun in a way than it really was.

NANCY HANSON: Exactly!

[Laughter]

DEANNA LAMBSON: My son was watching the same sort of thing, as slide show that someone had put on a CD of a camping trip that was not particularly a great experience. He's watching it and he went, "Wow, I guess I had more fun than I thought!"

[Laughter]

ROBYN HANSON: It's kind of like Disneyland, no one really likes the moment there. It's when you look back with the slide show. No, I'm just kidding.

[Laughter]

ROBYN HANSON: And that's the thing about scrapbooking too. I have memories of when I was a child. I'm not sure it's really a memory of that event but I look at the picture so much that I've recreated that in my mind and it helps me and my kids will do the same thing. They look at their scrapbooks and say, "Oh I remember this!" And I'm not sure if they would if we didn't have those pictures.

JAN THOMSON: I think, and I'm not a neurologist, but I think it's true that the more you reflect upon a memory the more solid it becomes and I think the way that we preserve it like you say. I think that it can shape it. It's powerful.

DEANNA LAMBSON: You know, I think too, scrapbookers whether it's, or journalers, or whether it's digital or whether it's, you know, cut and paste, I think you actually appreciate life in a deeper way. I really do, because I think you are more aware of how quickly time goes by. You are constantly looking at these photos and realizing that photos from one year ago look totally different and so you kind of cherish the moment a little bit more. You know, I guess the downside is we do all is walk around with our cameras so there's that danger of not living the moment but trying to photograph it instead. And so, you know, there has to be a fine balance there, but I do think it really causes me personally to appreciate everyday life and I say to my husband often, if we were to take a picture of this scene right now and put music behind it, it would make me cry. This very moment, whatever it is, whatever silly thing it is, at the dinner table, playing in the backyard, trying to fix the

car, trying to fix the go-cart, whatever it is, if you look at it with that perspective you appreciate it more.

ROBYN HANSON: I think that brings up the point of how important those candid moments are. I think we're inclined as parents to always take pictures at the birthday parties, and, you know. But I remember from my wedding I had a professional photographer, but last minute I had another photographer as a candid, and I never even look at the professional pictures, I don't really care for them, but I have an album of about six rolls of candid shots that are by far my favorites. So I think you're right how important it is to preserve the everyday moments, you know.

MARCY BALFE: Absolutely, well and I think that battle between having the camera at your face and living the moment, that is so tricky for me. I just think, I want to capture all this but when daughter's, you know, my son or my daughter's [saying], "Mom, come over!" "Just a minute, I got to put the camera away!" I think what, I mean what do?... It's so hard you have to kinda keep yourself in, I don't know, in that moment, you really do, but you do have to find those really important moments too where you need that camera because how many times have you out and thought, "Oh, I wish I had my camera!"

DEANNA LAMBSON: Ok, you know, that brings up another point and that is, you don't have to have a picture of it to preserve it, and sometimes you know, I'll go through my photos and think, "Ok, what should I scrapbook?" And it's based on what I have pictures of but there's an awful lot of more stuff that's probably more meaningful that I don't have pictures of that I could still record and it's ok, you know, give yourself permission to put a picture of you and your husband at a totally separate event but you tell a story about him, and that's ok, but we think it has to match, you know, we think it has to be taken exactly when that experience happened, which it really doesn't matter.

NANCY HANSON: Well that's just a good thing to remember. I really made myself an anniversary book and I was going to take a picture of my husband and every anniversary and write a little thing about where we went.

DEANNA LAMBSON: That's a great idea!

NANCY HANSON: Isn't that a great idea? That's what I thought!

DEANNA LAMBSON: Ok, did you keep it up?

NANCY HANSON: No!

[Laughter]

NANCY HANSON: No because we would come home from going to dinner or whatever and I, you know, it is always in the back of my mind, "I should write that down!" And I didn't take a picture so

I don't have the picture so I'm not going to write it down, or, you know, I don't know. So it's a great idea and I hope that some of the listeners will use that anniversary idea and actually follow through. You know, it is a struggle.

DEANNA LAMBSON: Anything you record is something that would have been lost otherwise so even one year is good. You're one year ahead.

MARCY BALFE: You are.

ROBYN HANSON: I need to think about that.

NANCY HANSON: Well, you're listening to Everything Creative on the Mormon Channel. We're having a great discussion with four ladies today about preserving memories and scrapbooking. Jen will you talk to us about, I'm just curious how you do your digital, because a lot of people are familiar, you know, paper scrapbooking, but how is it that you organize your pictures or present them or do you print them out? Do you do it in book form?

JAN THOMSON: Right now I am printing a created page on my computer and then I do print them out and put them in a book and I'm toying to the idea of going just for bound books which you've seen, you know, all over the place.

NANCY HANSON: Yeah.

JAN THOMSON: But, right now I am just creating a page at a time.

NANCY HANSON: So you just take photos from your photo library and use them on a blank page and just drag in different papers and create it that way?

JAN THOMSON: I do and it's amazing the breadth of things that are out there and I, a lot like Marcy's mom, I keep things pretty simple, but even if you like things really really fancied up they have brads and bows and staples and stitchings you can make it look like your sewing machine is zig-zagged across. There's almost anything you can possibly think of that you can do paper can also be done digitally. In addition to some other things because you can warp the picture you can make it look like it's actually a water-color painting. There's a lot of flexibility that way and you can crop and move in.

DEANNA LAMBSON: So Jan, tell everyone about your process of printing out a large one of them and duplicating it for your kids because I thought that was such a great idea.

JAN THOMSON: Well, it's probably the scrooge in me but I like to get the best deal and the price for printing a 12 inch by 18 inch is the same price of printing a 12 by 12. So I just make my 12 by 12 page and then I make two little 6 by 6's so that rounds it to a 12 by 18 and I have two children. So they each have a little 6 by 6 book that's identical to our family book that's a 12 by 12.

NANCY HANSON: So what do you do with the pictures? Do you put them in sleeves and they go in the little book?

JAN THOMSON: I have little 6 by 6 albums for them.

NANCY HANSON: Oh cute.

MARCY BALFE: You know that's a great idea because they actually have something that fits in their hands, that becomes part of them. It can probably sit on their shelf and they can read it every day. I love that idea.

JAN THOMSON: It gets trashed and I don't care because it was free.

MARCY BALFE: Absolutely! Well, and I think that's part of what we need to be doing with our memories is actually sharing them, that's always another struggle. Where do you put them, because you want them to be safe and you don't want your kids to be into them, at least my youngest, my four year old, and I can't just let her open those heavy, big, spiral-bound books whenever she wants because the pages fall out and she picks things off, but I think I love that idea because it gives them access to memories that they should be cherishing whenever they want them.

ROBYN HANSON: How many of us have, cardboard little shoe boxes full of pictures that someday we're going to scrapbook?

MARCY BALFE: Oh yeah, all of us.

DEANNA LAMBSON: Mmmhmm

ROBYN HANSON: And I think it's better to get them out of there and just slide them into sleeves and let the kids look at them now, because by the time we get around to it they may not be as interested or, you know, just kind of pass that window up.

JAN THOMSON: One thing that saved me that way on just things that they bring home from school that I always use to think for the first few years of my daughters schooling I thought, okay, this is all going in a book because I'm going to take her Halloween art projects and it's going to coordinate with the pictures I took of her in her costume and those are going to be my embellishments, well, they're still in a box. So what I've done with all the things that come home was at the first of the year I just take a three-ring binder and it's not fancy and I take a picture of them the first day of school, and I do digital scrapbook the cover of the book so it slides in. You know those binders with the clear on the front? So that has kind of been digital scrapbooked and then the rest of it is filled with sheet protectors that are eight and a half by 11 and the second it comes home from school, if I'm not keeping it goes in the trash and if I do keep it, it goes straight in there and I never embellish it. At the end of the year sometimes I go back and try to organize it a little bit, but it just gets

full throughout the year and it's got a really cute little cover and a cute little spine but no other effort was put into it other than putting whatever came home straight in a sheet protector and that has really saved me.

MARCY BALFE: That is a great idea and a friend to actually take a photo, because here I am keeping these tubs of these projects. She said, "Are you seriously going to hang on to this big poster?" And I thought, "Well, how can I throw this away, it was so much work and it's darling and it's wonderful." She said, "Take a picture of it." So that's what I've started to do is just take pictures of things too which makes it easier for me to slap it on the slideshow or in a book and I don't have to hang onto it so there's even another idea.

JAN THOMSON: And that's what I've done for things that are either too full of glitter or for things that are too big for the book.

ROBYN HANSON: That's great, I love that.

NANCY HANSON: So when... I want to talk about when you ladies find time to do scrapbooking. I know when my first daughter was born I just got so into it and I love the creative process. I would stay up till three in the morning sometimes, it would be like one more page and then I'll go to bed and it was consuming me and she has these really fun books, you know, but that was only with the first baby because I could nap when she napped but I just have found it's so hard to find time.

DEANNA LAMBSON: We're all silent on that one.

JAN THOMSON: I know! I think it's the biggest problem.

DEANNA LAMBSON: You know, I'll tell you a couple of ideas that I've heard people do. I have a sister-in-law is one of those rare people who tries to keep up to date with everything that is happening in her children's lives and she has seven children and she pulls everything out at general conference time, like maybe a month before general conference and she puts it on her table and says, this is not clearing off until I'm caught up. And so she has like a month where it's like a blitz. She just, it's day and night, the kids eat somewhere else and they, you know, this is mom's month basically to get caught up. So she does it in conjunction with general conference, it's October and it's April. You know, for me, I try and hit some memories here and there and doing it lots of different ways so I'm just trying my first bound photo book which I'm really excited about because I can go, just go on the computer even if I just have five minutes and I don't have to pull anything out. I don't have to get out all my supplies and put them away. So I can just pull it in, and I'm doing a family year book that way. So I'll just do that, it'll probably take me a couple of days to get that together and then it'll be done for the year and I'm calling that good for the year. So I've also invited my son, my son has some friends who love scrapbooking

and so I tell them to call me when they want to scrapbook and it makes me do it because otherwise there's always things that kind of bump that out of your schedule.

NANCY HANSON: Sure, Marcy.

MARCY BALFE: Well, one of the things I've had to do is utilize that same strategy, and that is get friends involved and I have a darling group of just a few of us who are committed to doing this but it's very difficult in our everyday lives so you know what, we pick up and we pack and we leave for a weekend twice a year and it has been so wonderful. Not only is it fun and rewarding but we can get some things done. I mean when you don't have the kids and you don't have to fix dinner and you don't have work or whatever else you have you can really focus on that and get a lot of things done in those three days, and you know we're lucky if we get a shower in. We celebrate because we're women on a mission.

ROBYN HANSON: I think one thing key to the paper and glue scrapbooking style is if you can. When I started scrapbooking this year I cleaned out my storage room and Nancy's been down there. I've cleaned out, I've cleaned out my storage room and bought a space heater and set up a little scrapbooking place. I think if you can find a corner of your house that you can leave up with the paper-style scrapbooking that putting away is something I think that will leave anyone not wanting to do it. So if you can find a little corner and when you've a little extra time. I can just run down for 10 minutes and kind of work on a page that I'm in the middle of.

NANCY HANSON: I too have started making some of the bound books and I do like that because one of the books I made was simply from a ski trip we went on. We took our family skiing for the first time and I took what, maybe 15 photos of the whole trip but I came home and threw those in a book really just a very simple one that only had rooms for captions and a little blurb at the end and I just called it, you know, "Family Ski Day." And pushed send and it came in the mail and it was probably a week after we had gone skiing and the kids look at that and it's another one of those experiences where their like, "Wow! Our family went skiing!"

[Laughter]

NANCY HANSON: But it just you know, captured just these cute little moments of us and our first time skiing and I'm so happy to have that and I honestly think because I did it probably the day we got home or the next that it took very little time for that and sometimes for me it's kind of like the Christmas Tree movie, if I don't do it as soon as the event and I keep thinking that I'm going to get to it someday, then I kind of lose my excitement about it and I also kind of forget. So, I don't know, I think it's just as soon as you can after a little event, even just writing things down helps.

MARCY BALFE: Absolutely.

JAN THOMSON: And I think that's what finally converted me to digital is just having to pull everything out was paralyzing.

NANCY HANSON: It is paralyzing.

JAN THOMSON: And you know, on my computer I can get halfway through a page and all I do is minimize the window. And then I've got five more minutes so I try to either finish up the page or make a little more progress, but that was the main reason I switched was being able to work in small time chunks.

NANCY HANSON: So you do have a couple of books for your kids though that are the, the other traditional scrapbooking?

JAN THOMSON: I don't know if we've got a couple of, quite honestly. I've got a half a dozen pages that are paper and they're really pretty. I just, I couldn't.

NANCY HANSON: Yeah, one thing I wondered, is someone needs to come out with a way that we can scan those pages and also have them bound in a book; just to make them available that way and as one more copy of it, you know, to keep on hand, and I know some women who Marcy, it sounds like your mom maybe will make scrapbooks for each of their children, maybe five different pages of the same event for each one of their children. And I thought maybe I would do that early on, and I switched over to, oh no, we're just having a family scrapbook so if someone has a birthday that goes in the family scrapbook and when we went here, this goes. So, I think it's sometimes lowering our expectations as we have more kids and realizing, okay, I'm going to just change from one for each kid to a family thing and maybe in the future I will find a way to get them all together so that I can to. Yeah.

JAN THOMSON: I've got several friends that will do a scrapbook for the first year of their children's lives that's for that child and then once they turn one, everything's in the family book, because that really is kind of a, you know, it's the first steps and the first teeth.

MARCY BALFE: Well, and I think you can do a highlight book for each child.

JAN THOMSON: That's what I do.

MARCY BALFE: Honestly, my mom did start out making five different pages the same exact, but what she has done is she'll make them and because there's no ribbons and brads, it's really just colors of paper and captions and maybe she'll throw some stickers on. She'll actually go and find archival paper and she'll have them just photocopy, a color copy, but she has to be really careful about where she goes. She has to make sure the ink's archival and everything, like I said, that was one of her big goals was to make sure it lasted as long as absolutely possible. The other thing on that is when you go digital and make books, I actually make digital books myself, usually, depends on what company you go with, but

you have that on file forever, is what most companies are advertising, so in five years, say when my son turns 16, maybe I'll want to hit copy and make him his own copy of some of our family scrapbooks, and that's the beauty also of digital scrapbooking is it's just a matter of hitting a button and paying for another book.

DEANNA LAMBSON: Well, Nancy I have a thought too, whether you're doing digital or not traditional scrapbooking, but because we take so many photos because it is the digital era we take so many photos we really have to let go of that concept that we have to scrapbook each photo and totally let go of that, and whether you're making one page or you're duplicating it for multiple children, you just have to say, okay, I have X amount of time, what is the most important thing I want to preserve? Maybe at some point in our lives we are willing to document our child's first popsicle but now I'm not anymore. I'm not because it just doesn't matter to me anymore, that's not, even though that's a fun little detail or it might be a cute photo, you know, that you really have to do some, as my friend Stacy Gillian calls it, she calls it, photo triage. Where you pull out, you know you look at your photos, and you say, I'm not going to scrapbook all these, I'm going to pull out my favorites and talk about why I love these or what it shares about this person and let the others still be on your screen or still be in the box and let them go and just save the things that really matter to you.

JAN THOMSON: Yeah on that point I've got a friend who was hesitant to pull out her camera, because she knew if she took pictures she'd feel the pressure to scrapbook them.

NACY: That's true.

ROBYN HANSON: Oh dear.

MARCY BALFE: You know what I think works for me though, I know that I still have those, because for one thing if I want to scrapbook, the real highlights, whether it be of the trip, whether it be of a certain stage of my child's life, it doesn't matter because I have those that I can still throw on a movie or I can throw on a slideshow. And for me, honestly, my answer: do a little bit of everything. I am not stuck in one hole where I can only do paper and stickers or whatever it is or digital or movies or what not. I like to do a little bit of everything, including journaling and then to me, you know, it's like you say, you do as much as you can and feel happy with it.

ROBYN HANSON: One thing that I think scrapbooking does wonderfully is I've noticed I've started looking at my pictures and creating events in scrapbook form, and it makes me think about pictures that I do take at events. I have been scrapbooking and realized, you know, I never took a picture with my children with a certain grandparent, you know, and it really changes, you know, not like your friend that you say can't take a picture because afraid she has to scrapbook it. It does make you look ahead a little bit and go, what in this event do I want to preserve, you know.

JAN THOMSON: It's true.

NANCY HANSON: This is a great discussion. I think we've been able to share a lot of good ideas about preserving memories and I so appreciate all of you being here today on Everything Creative, and this show talks about creativity, and as I've said before I just think there's no really greater way that we can... I mean it's fun to create things that are of your family and of your life, and so we really appreciate you being here and talking about all of that stuff with us today. One thing that I think is so great about preserving memories with scrapbooking is that it's not something you have to... I mean like, we've talked about really all you need is a pen and paper. You know, a lot of times I know I'll write something on a sticky, and even if it's just three or four words, that will remind me of that little event or those cute things that your kids say. You know to just stick them somewhere on a piece of paper and then I have a file of just all these things, but I'm glad that I have those because I can sometimes go back through and look and just remember those few little words will spark this memory that maybe I'll write about someday, but the fact that we can just quickly journal and just keep, if you don't have the resources or the funds to, you know, buy scrapbooking materials and to even take pictures that you can preserve these memories on a piece of paper with a pen and pass them down through generations and what those mean. My husband has... his parents didn't ever have video-cameras and like mine did. I have lots of video of when I was little, but they didn't have any and they rarely took pictures, but the few things that his mom has saved in like in a baby book; they're just precious. And so as we've talked about that today I'm reminded that sometimes we can go big and huge and extravagant and we can make books about ski trips and you know, do these huge, big scrapbooks, but sometimes it's just writing down the simple thoughts and memories that are just as meaningful and we will... you're children and your family will take whatever it is they can get.

ROBYN HANSON: Isn't it interesting that with all of our modern technology and all the amazing things we can do it really comes down to the paper and the pencil, something that's been around for hundreds of years that is simple, and that is preserving the memory.

MARCY BALFE: Well, and you think about all of our ancestors. I'm sure you have stories of your and I have stories of mine and if there's a picture, you're very grateful, but it's very few and far in between but that does not make me value their legacy, their life, any less. It really is about those stories. So everyone can do it.

NACY: Yeah, it's so true.

DEANNA LAMBSON: One more thing to add, I heard a program on, I think it was National Public Radio, but it was a program that was... they have someone come on every few days and they do an essay called This I Believe and maybe you've heard that, but it was a powerful thing for me to listen to these, and every once in a while I'll catch another person sharing their

philosophy of life, and I thought it would be so great if you could incorporate that into your scrapbooking, if you could say, you know, this is what I believe through whatever your love is. Whether it's the creativity of the page, or digitally, or whatever it is, even if it's quilting or journaling, if you could share that of this I believe, this is what matters to me, that's a huge legacy to pass down.

NANCY HANSON: I love that, and that reminds me of Elder Uchtdorf's talk on creativity which is really what we base this show on, is that we each have our own creativity inside of us and there are different ways to express that and when we can use that to share and preserve memories and to help people to see who we were and you know when we're gone all the better

DEANNA LAMBSON: You know Nancy, I remember hearing that talk and I felt like jumping up and applauding.

ROBYN HANSON: I did too.

DEANNA LAMBSON: Because he said you can be creative in the ways that you help a child to smile. You can be creative in the ways you make your home a lovely place and I felt like, you know, so often we're told, oh you shouldn't spend time, you know, be careful what you spend time on, which of course we should, but for me it validated that creativity is a God-given gift and that it's expressed in so many different ways. I felt like jumping for joy and I thought, you know, we can share our creativity; it really is a gift from heaven.

ROBYN HANSON: And when we create it lifts our soul, you know, I mentioned earlier, this has been such a healing year for me and Elder Uchtdorf's talk, as I remember, he was talking about two ways in which to lift our spirits, and he's absolutely right, creating gives us hope and when I scrapbook or write in my journal, I'm so immersed, the worries are gone. I'm immersed in that and I feel hope and joy when I go back and read my journal, it feels inspiring to me.

NANCY HANSON: Yeah, what a blessing.

JAN THOMSON: I think it's, I mean, so many hobbies have other benefits, like if you play tennis it's good for your body and everything else and I think one thing that I love so much about scrapbooking is I have a very selfish outlet where I can be creative because I love to write or I love to make something pretty, but there's such a great benefit to it in the legacy for my children. I mean it's... it's really kind of just a win-win situation because you get to really express who you are, express what you think you're good at, and...

MARCY BALFE: Jan, that is so true, I had never left my children to go on... I mean I'm really not someone who goes to lunch and hangs out with friends or, you know, I just don't do that kind of stuff very often because I always want to be with my family but I will leave them twice a year for my little weekends because I feel that same way. I feel like, not only is this good

for me and it's fun, and I get to be creative, but guess what, it is something that is very important to me and I'm passionate about saving these moments in life that are so fleeting, and I'm saving them for the most important people in my life.

NANCY HANSON: Well, your families will definitely be blessed by all of the work that you do and the time that you spend, you know, putting into these scrapbooks and preserving these memories. Well let's talk about ways we can share our testimonies through journaling, and through pictures, and through our scrapbooks, what are your thoughts on that?

ROBYN HANSON: You know, Nancy, I find when I look back on my kids journals that I mentioned earlier, so often as I'm just recording things I almost wind up at the end of an entry, I start them, you know, "Dear so and so." I almost always wind up sharing my testimony and recording spiritual events, I was just reading, just the other day in my oldest son's journal of an account. We were at a ward Christmas party and they were reenacting the Nativity and he watched Mary and Joseph walk from person to person, and they got refused from door to door, and after like the third refusal he jumped and he yelled, "We have a room!" And I wrote in his journal, I wrote, "I hope you will always have a room in your heart for the Savior like that." And I have so many of those that I have; I just find it's an opportunity for me to bear my testimony forever, in a preserved way to my children.

NANCY HANSON: Yeah it's just as important that they know, that more important than about all the fun family events that you did, know that they know that you knew and that you believed.

ROBYN HANSON: It's the most important thing to record.

NANCY HANSON: Right.

MARCY BALFE: Well, I think the things that you do record tend to be those very meaningful things. Those times where you're with your family which really that is on a spiritual level, I mean, that's why it means so much to us is because that's really what life is all about. I know for me I bear my testimony throughout everything I do, I also have recorded things that are really meaningful such as my thoughts after my children have been blessed, baptized, my feelings at certain times in my life and that's all a way for me to share my feelings about life in general and my testimony about why I'm here, about what we're doing and I think that legacy will go on forever, and I know that for me, I actually have a daughter named Phoebe and the reason why her name is Phoebe is because of someone who took the time to write down her thoughts and her thoughts and her life and so someone who's a relative of her who also looked in and found records and even expanded more on her writings and made a book about her. And she's a relative of mine, and my great-great-aunt Phoebe Draper means a lot to me because someone took the time to record her life and she took the time to share her testimony and to say why she was the kind of pioneer woman that she was and what she went through. And I hope my daughter will take that, those records, and become that type of woman because of that.

DEANNA LAMBSON: You know, I think sometimes it's hard when you're in the creative process of putting photos down and choosing backgrounds which is such a fun creative outlet, it's hard to maybe make that photo of a popsicle and you're sharing some deep conviction that you have, but as you... A couple ways that I've tried to incorporate it a little bit more is to write a dedication at the beginning of the book or at the end of the book kind of like you were talking about, and sometimes it's a way of saying, the reason I record this is because this is what matters to me, this is what I care about. I think sometimes we get scared of the word testimony too, we get scared of saying I'd like to share my testimony, but you don't realize that when you're sharing your heart, you're sharing your testimony.

MARCY BALFE: Absolutely

DEANNA LAMBSON: And you're doing that through your entire album. Another thing too is if there was an event that you're scrapbooking and there really was a very spiritual part of it or perhaps a lesson learned something that is very dear to your heart. Sometimes it's hard to type it up and have it out there on the coffee table for everyone. Do you know what I mean?

MARCY BALFE: Ummhmm.

DEANNA LAMBSON: And so, sometimes I've heard of people where they just, they'll type it up or write it up and just slip it behind that particular page and maybe indicate on the page that it's there. So it's not necessarily for everyone's eyes, but it's recorded, and when people go through it they will have a chance to read that and enjoy it.

MARCY BALFE: Right.

JAN THOMSON: I am reminded of a talk by Elder Eyring that counseled us every day to record how in some way to remember, to remember how we saw God in our lives. I can't remember which conference talk that was and obviously I'm paraphrasing, but I just remember that he talked about how that journal that he kept was so important to his kids and this year I've been journaling pretty intensively and so much in my journaling I will often record scriptures and things like that because it... Through the process of journaling perhaps if I started journaling in a time of despair, I find that it gives me hope and by the time I'm done journaling and recording my thoughts and ideas and I see the hand of God in my life and it gives me great hope and I know that as a covenant daughter of God all things are possible.

NANCY HANSON: Thank you so much for being here today with us on the Mormon Channel for sharing your thoughts and your ideas and reminding us of the value of preserving your memories. I'm Nancy Hanson and this is Everything Creative.