

Picture Perfect GIFT BOOKS

By Linda Sattgast

Picture Perfect Gift Books—Teen Gift Books

You can use many of the ideas in the Gift Books for Adults section with teens as well, but in this section we'll discuss topics that are specifically oriented to teens.

This is a time of life that is fleeting and can be a lot of fun to record. How many of us wish we would have kept a better record of our high school and college years?

This is your opportunity to give a teen in your life the gift of their story in a way that they'll enjoy and appreciate all their lives.

Lesson 04-01: Yearbook Design

Before talking about how to make a great senior yearbook, I want to discuss some ways you can design your book. You really can't get started without having a plan in mind, so that's what this video is all about.

In 2008 I made a High School Senior Yearbook for a friend who graduated in 2005. I made the book in a scrapbook style mostly with photos I had taken during her senior year.

I hadn't looked at the book for awhile, so it was interesting to see that already her clothes were starting to look a little dated—not bad, but a little. AND it was interesting to note that my scrapbook style seemed a little dated also.

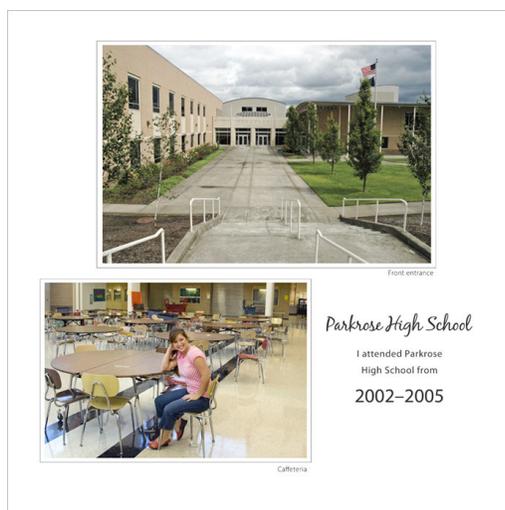
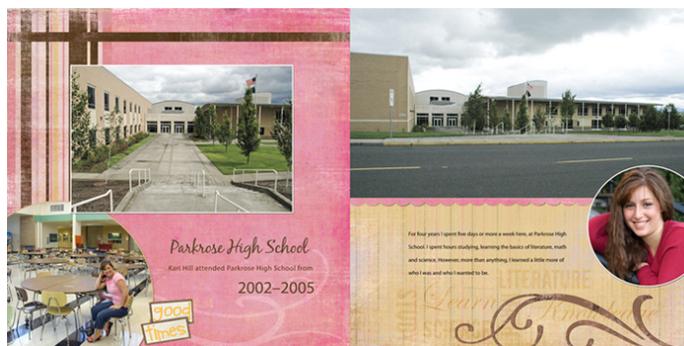
That's one of the inherent problems with a full blown scrapbook style. In some cases, that may be exactly what you want—your design style will reflect the time it was made, and that adds to the charm of the book.

Another choice is to use a more classic design that doesn't really go out of style. As a bonus, classic designs tend to be a lot easier and faster to create.

Also, classic designs appeal to a wider variety of people. It may be hard to predict what someone will like, but most people like a classic design.

Let's look at the first page of the book—my original design, and try out some alternative designs.

The first design is very simple—a black stroke outline around the photos on a white background with the same journaling as before.



My next design was to take away the stroke outline on the photo and add a stroke slightly away from the photo, leaving a white space around the photo where the background showed through.

Next I used the same black outline, but I put a layer mask behind the photo for an artistic feel. The edge isn't even because the photo is clipped to a clipping mask.

Next I tried adding a beige stroke outline to the photo itself to give it a frame and to help it stand out against the white background. I also changed the type to a dark brown to better match the brown stroke.

I also tried white stroke outlines, and since they didn't show up as well against a white background, I added a light beige paper in the background. It isn't a lot of color, but it's just enough to make your eye see the difference between the stroke and the background.

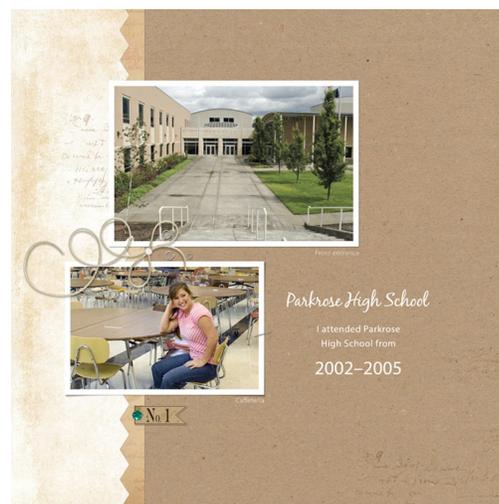
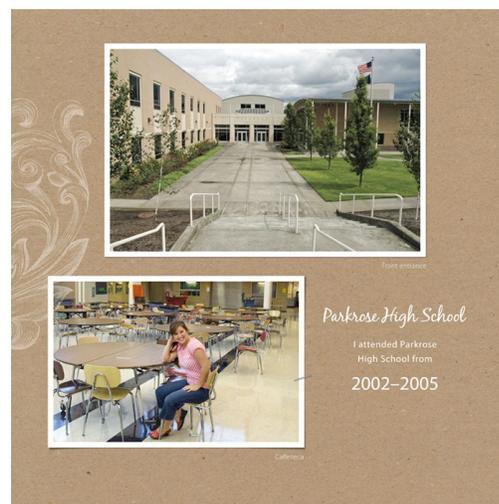
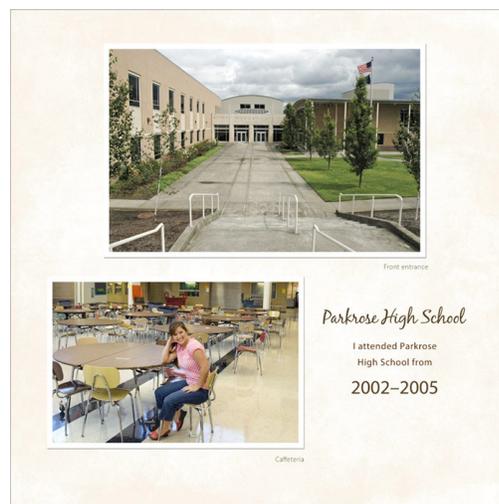
Next I tried a cardboard paper behind the photos, which made the white stroke outlines stand out nicely, and I changed the type to white.

Next I added just a hint of design elements: a staple and custom drop shadow on the bottom photo, and a semi-transparent flourish on the left. And I liked how that looked. I thought it added interest and made it look classy.

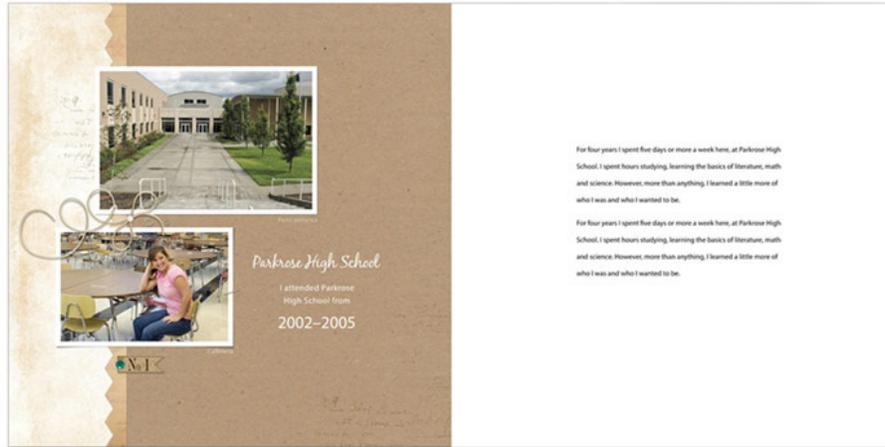
And finally, I tried a classic scrapbook page approach. I realized instantly that the large photos didn't look as good with a scrapbook design, so I reduced the overall size of the photo, but I zoomed the photos in a bit so you could still see the photo content.

Here are my thoughts and observations on this process, which, by the way, you might want to try yourself, just for fun.

- First of all, I really like the result of this scrapbook page, but it took me a lot longer to create than any of the other pages. It's amazing how long it can take to find just the right element and figure out where to put things so they look just right.
- Secondly, I realized that the focus had become much more about the page design than the photos. If that's your intent, then go for it! But make sure the recipient is also attracted to a scrapbook style of art. My husband, for example, expressed to me that for the first time ever he feels that even he could create a book like I'm showing in this class, because he doesn't know how to scrapbook and isn't really attracted to a scrapbook style. He's much more drawn to the classic styles I showed you earlier.



- The third thing I realized was that it's harder to pair a scrapbook page with graphic or classic pages. So my advice would be to either create all the pages in the same scrapbook style, or to put a scrapbook page on one side and a white page with journaling on the opposite side, which can be very pretty.



As I went through the designs, were you drawn to any of them? I liked certain aspects of all of them, but I chose the design with the plain photo that had a black stroke outline a little ways from the edge of the photo.



I also liked the version with the layer mask, but adding a mask to every photo would take more time and effort, and I liked the plain one just as well.

I'm also using a template for the black stroke outline that allows me to resize the width and height for any photo without changing the width of the stroke, so that makes it even faster.

White for a background can be quite pretty. Don't forget that the edges of the book itself will form a frame for your page, making the white pages even classier.

But whatever design you choose, is perfectly fine. My only caution is that you make sure the recipient will also appreciate the same design. If you're not sure, go with one of the classic designs.

Lesson 04-02: School Yearbook

Most schools come out with a school yearbook every year. I don't know about you, but all my high school yearbooks are kind of boring, and my college yearbooks are even worse. Maybe they make them better these days, but there's no way a school can create a book as well as you can—where the content is mostly about your teen.

If you're the parent or grandparent of a teen, this would be a great end-of-school-year gift, especially a senior graduation gift, though you could certainly create a book more often, since teens change so much from the time they enter high school to the time they graduate from college.

So where do you get photos?

If you're friends with your teen on Facebook, you can right click on a photo and choose a download option. The photos may not be perfect, but they'll be meaningful to the teen.

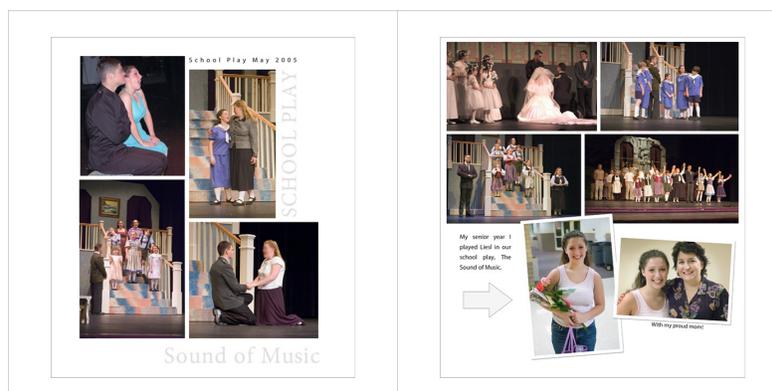
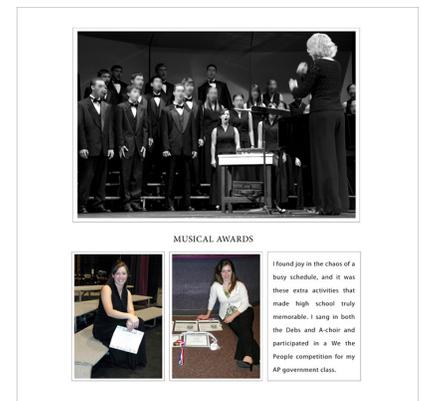
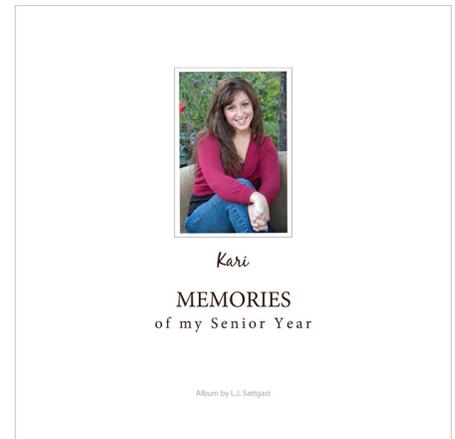
You'll also have family photos taken by the photographer in the family and your teen will probably have senior photos taken by a professional, or just someone who is pretty good with a camera. I took all of Kari's senior photos, and I'm not professional by any means, but they still turned out very nice.

Also don't be shy about asking the teen to pose for you or to supply you with photos of selfies and friends.

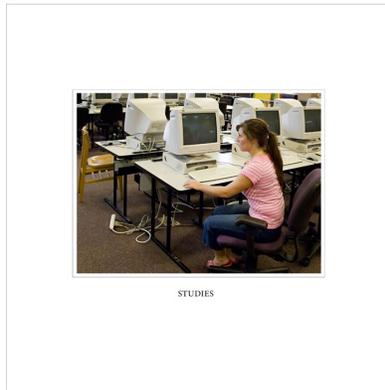
I do recommend asking the teen for permission and assistance, including opinions about the layouts and the style he or she wants. You want them to love the book. And that in turn will make it easier for you.

As I mentioned in the last video, I created a senior yearbook for a friend named Kari. In our last video, I chose the design, next we'll take a look at the pages I created to give you some ideas for what you can do.

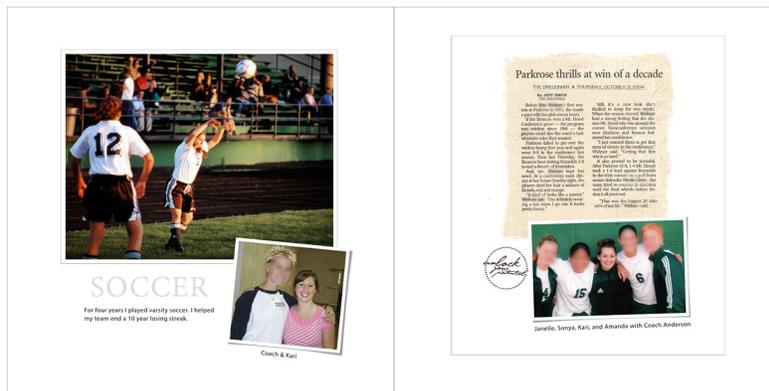
- My title page, above, features a very personal vignette of the recipient.
- Following the title page I started with photos of the school, which you can see on the previous page. Remember that the school may or may not be standing 10, 20, 30, or 50 years from now, so get photos of it now. When I made my mother's history book, we went to her high school, which is still in operation, and I was able to get a photo of it. But one of my husband's schools was torn down. So all that to say, get photos now—you'll be glad you did.
- Is your teen involved in extra curricular activities? Kari was involved in a couple of choirs. I've blurred out the faces of a number of photos in this album, since I don't have permission from the students to display their photos, but you can see Kari in the front.
- Kari was also involved in the school play, *The Sound of Music*. She played a lead role as Liesl.



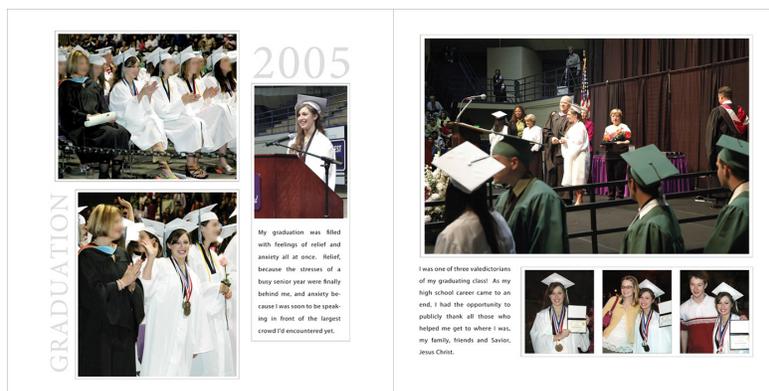
- Studies—can you get a photo of your teen studying? I took this photo of Kari in her computer lab at school ten years ago, so you can see that it's already pretty dated!



- Is your child involved in sports? Kari played soccer all four years of high school and helped her team end a ten year losing streak, so that was pretty exciting, and the newspaper wrote about it. If you have any newspaper or school newsletter articles, you can scan them to include in your album.



- Then, of course, there's graduation. You won't want to miss at least one spread about that. Kari was one of three valedictorians, so she actually gave a speech at her graduation.



All of this is wonderful, but there's still something missing.

- What is life like at home?
- What does your teen do after school, or maybe even before school?
- What about friends and activities?

This is where your book can shine.

- Show pictures of your teen's home. Kari had lived in this home all her life, but someday, someone else other than her parents will own this home, and she'll be glad to have some photos of it.



HOME SWEET HOME

From the day I came home from the hospital, I lived in this house. My room, a constant disaster, was filled with memories of years gone by. It was within the walls of my home that I learned to love and be loved, to forgive and forget, to laugh and cry. It's where I learned to be myself, and that being myself was more than enough!



12345 NE Anywhere, Portland, OR 97000

- Does your teen have a pet? Kari had a sweet dog, and she also had a pet snake—a big one, which I'm not going to show here, not being a fan of snakes myself!

CHURCH WORSHIP TEAM



- Is your teen part of a faith community. Kari was very involved in her church worship team.

FIRST JOB



My first real job was at the end of my senior year. I worked at Sacred Grounds Espresso as a barista. This job was special to me as it helped get the business started, came up with marketing ideas and served many of the special drinks that became best sellers in the shop.

- Does your teen have a job? This page commemorates Kari's first job at a coffee shop.

- What about your teen's room? Kari's room looked like this most of the time. It's good to get a record of it!



MY ROOM



- Does your teen have any special interests? Kari loved to try out different kinds of makeup, and she loved shoes.



Although it looked like pure chaos, I could really find anything I needed in that disaster of a room. It was not until I cleaned it that I had those feeling things. One thing I often did in that messy room was experiment with makeup. I loved makeup and spent hours playing around with different looks, some of which stuck and others that were quickly washed off and forgotten.

- She also loved fashion. Years from now it's going to be very interesting for her and her descendants to see what people wore in the early part of this century!



FASHION



Maybe even more than makeup... I love clothes! I love the many forms of style. From sporty to professional, I wear them all.

- And finally, don't forget senior photos. You can put a lot more photos in your book than the school is going to put in their book. I included three pages of senior photos. On the last page I put a quote and credits for the album maker, which was me.



SENIOR PORTRAITS



So I hope that gives you some good ideas of what you can feature for your teen. Every teen will have a unique spin, so look for it and make sure you capture it in their senior yearbook!



Lesson 04-03: Teen Gift Books

Do you have a teen in your life?

There are some activities and phases of life that are reserved just for our teenage years, and that's what I want to focus on in this video.

Think of all the things that happen when you're a teenager: you become an adult, you learn to drive, you get to vote, you have your first date, and much more.

Many of the same gift books you might make for an adult will work for teens, so don't forget to check out the section on gift books for adults for additional ideas, but in this section on teens we'll focus mostly on topics specific to teens.

- I already discussed the idea of creating a School Yearbook, or a Senior yearbook.
- How about a gift book chronicling a teen's first vehicle or learning to drive, but especially the first car that a teen actually owns.

My husband, Charlie, has reminisced about his 1960 Ford short bed pickup, that was metallic Root Beer brown with a white top on the cab and a white tarp on the pickup bed. These photos we found are close, but not the same, and they're not high resolution.

To his knowledge, unless we find a lost photo in an old box of his parent's stuff that we're still sorting through, he has NO photos of his pickup. His comment was, "I would LOVE to have a book about my pickup!"

- Another idea is to do a Time Capsule, or a snapshot of a teen's life as it is right now, including what's popular in the culture that your teen likes. So this might include things like his daily routine, his bedroom, his chores, the TV shows he likes to watch, etc. You might title it "This is You!" and include the date.
- For years I've taken photos of my kids on their birthday, and, especially when they were growing up, I would journal about them and what they were interested in at the time. So that's a similar idea to a time capsule.
- Another great idea for a teen gift book is to simply celebrate who they are by making a book about them called YOU are Amazing, or Amazing _____ and then put their name in, e.g. Amazing Allison!, or Amazing Caleb! During a time when teens are questioning their own value, you can tell them how terrific they are!
- Create a book about one day in the life of High School. Ask your teen to take photos of their school. Favorite Teachers. Places they hang out. Cafeteria. Library. Gym. It'll be a fun documentary of their high school.
- Create a gift album all about your teen's friends and their activities.

When my daughter Allison was in college, I made a 6x6 gift book for her and her circle of friends. We put up a piece of paper on the wall in her dorm section with each girl's name on the paper. They all wrote descriptive phrases about each other that I included in the book. I took a photo of each girl and featured one girl per spread in my book.

You don't have to get fancy with this—it can simply be a book of your teen and his or her friends and maybe a few comments on what they like to do when they hang out.

- I talked some about fashion in my last video, but I wanted to mention it here as well because it includes more than just the clothes. You can feature handbags and headbands and makeup and even nail polish.
- You can feature guys as well—whether he’s dressed up for a date or wearing ordinary clothes. Does he have a favorite T-shirt? Sports clothing, church clothing, etc.
- For some teens, sports is a big deal. In a complete yearbook it’s hard to give much space to any one topic, but with a dedicated sports gift book you can include the best photos of the season and various players that are meaningful to your teen. Maybe your teen was involved in cheerleading. With books like these, it’s likely that other team members will want a copy. Just be sure that you follow a designer’s terms of use if you use elements or paper from a kit.
- Not every teen is attracted to sports. Instead they may gravitate toward music or some other activity. In high school both Charlie and I gravitated to music instead of sports. I have a few photos of my high school singing group that I played the piano for, but how I would love to have a book of photos from different events where we sang!
- School events, such as prom, plays put on by drama groups, or school plays, make a good topic for a book.
- You can record movies of the day and music teens listen to. When Jaws first came out, Charlie went to see it in the theater seven times. I went to see Sound of Music and Fiddler on the Roof more than once. Think about what defines a teen’s current obsession, and include it in a book about them.
- Make a book of your teen with photos from their growing up years, one year per spread ending with their 18th year. Keep it simple—one to four pictures per page—and it will come together very quickly.
- Special trip: Many teens go on special trips such as mission trips or school trips. Charlie spent a semester studying in Australia. He took quite a few pictures of his time there—enough to make a good gift book.
- The questionnaire: Each year around their birthday ask the teen a list of questions and put it in a book.

Questions:

- What is your favorite restaurant/fast food place?
- What is your favorite thing to wear?
- What is your favorite object, such as a game or computer?
- Your favorite book?
- Who are your friends?
- What are you collecting?
- What music do you listen to?
- What movie do you like the best?
- Any question that reveals a piece of the teen’s life would work well.

Insert photos from the past year, and you have a great snapshot of a teen’s life over the year!

The teen years are such a time of transition. Capture some of that excitement and momentum for the teens in your life, because they may not think to capture it themselves.