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Thank a Teacher With Flowers in a Painted Vase



Before marriage and kids, I was a teacher in Africa. I lived in a village near the equator in the lush rain forest of the northern Ubangi region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Many years have passed since that time, so it came as a complete surprise that, while attending a conference in California, I should meet a man I recognized as my former student, Luyada. As I introduced myself to him in French, my husband, who was standing alongside me, commented, "I'm sure he doesn't know who you are." I translated my husband's comments to Luyada. With a big smile on his face he exclaimed: "Madame, you never forget a teacher. A teacher is a brick who builds who you are today." I couldn't help but feel honored. "I'm a brick!" I repeated over and over to myself. As the school year winds down, think of the individuals who have been bricks in your child's life. Show your appreciation with a few spring flowers arranged in a personalized vase crafted from a recycled mayonnaise or pasta-sauce jar. Remove the labels on the jars, scrub them sparkling clean, then grab acrylic paints or non-toxic permanent paint pens, ribbon, wire, beads or any-

Donna's Day Creative family fun
 by Donna Erickson

thing that catches your attention in your craft box, and you're ready to go!

Join your child in making several beautiful vases in no time flat. When complete, fill with flowers, branches and greens such as hosta leaves and herbs for fragrance from your garden, or purchase a bouquet at your grocery store or nearby florist.

Here are some ideas for transforming plain glass jars into works of art:

—Compose a jingle or rhyme about the person receiving the bouquet and write it on the jar with paint pens. Tie ribbon around the rim and thread a few small beads near the ends of the ribbon to dangle on the jar.

—Use acrylic paints to paint designs or images of your teachers' favorite things.

—Find a tall, narrow jar such as an olive-oil jar for a sleek and contemporary arrangement. Simply write a thank-you greeting directly on the bottle with paint pens, and then finish it off with copper wire twisted around the neck of the bottle several times. Arrange a curly willow branch and two or three flowers in the modern vase.

 Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

WOW BOB, A PLEASANT DINNER FOLLOWED BY COFFEE AND CHARMING CONVERSATION. IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY WE WERE IN COLLEGE MAKING FUN OF THIS LAME STUFF.

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