

Hello, Friends!

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Taking a Family Picture

Okay, this is the year you promised yourself that you will have a professional family picture taken. Now, you are going to make this happen.

Don't think that that you have to spend hundreds of dollars on this project. If you have a small budget, and you don't have a lot of extra money, just schedule an appointment with JC Penney's photo studio or a similar site. You'll have a better chance at getting a time that works for your schedule in September or October, rather than hurrying to do this, two weeks before Christmas, right?

If you have a little more money at your disposal and are celebrating a big occasion, such as your 10th or 25th wedding anniversary (as I celebrated last fall,) then you may want to use a professional photographer. Ask friends or neighbors for recommendations if you don't know who to choose.

Planning your outfit

Who knew you had to plan your coordinating outfit, but if you are going to spend several hundred dollars for a portrait session, then you want everyone looking their best, right? Last year, when I was planning our family picture, I ordered matching shirts for the two handsome men in my life, my husband and son.

Then, my daughter and I wanted to be in matching colors, so this took a good deal more shopping. It also took a little luck to find tops that worked for both of us. Of course, my guys were pretty easy because they just put on what I bought for them, but my daughter and I needed multiple attempts to try on several styles of tops, before we could select the one we both agreed to.

What look do you want?

Do you want your family photo to have a casual look? A more polished look, maybe somewhat more formal? Photographers will sometimes suggest long sleeves and clothing that is more conservative versus something that is more trending. Trendy clothes can more quickly look outdated in a few years.

Makeup

Ladies may need to go a little heavier on the makeup to make it show up better in the picture. Ask your photographer for some hints about this as well, as professionals are always full of ideas and experience.

Frames

Where are you going to locate these pictures? We have a black and white wall in our living room, so I like our pictures to match and look as though they belong together.

If you are creating a family wall, you don't have to have all photos the same size. In fact, multiple sizes actually look better together, so all don't have to be only 5x7 or 8x10 sizes. In fact, it's kind of nice when you have different photos in multiple frame sizes. It adds character and interest to your display area.

Location

Are you taking your photo indoors or outdoors? Do you want to capture the season, perhaps in your living room or backyard? Would you like to feature fall colors outdoors? It's wise to schedule two dates so you have a backup photo session if needed. If you live in Michigan, you know how the weather changes, so a second date might be especially helpful. Ask the photographer for his or her favorite places for photos. Town parks or historic buildings are favorite choices for many family photos. If you have time and are not familiar with the sites recommended, try to go and visit that location.

Pinterest — and one final idea

Sometimes if you have a special idea or want to do something a little unique, visit pinterest.com for more ideas, looking for "family photos" or similar topics. Communicate that concept with your photographer and see if this is something he or she feels comfortable doing.

One more thing: have everyone agree to take at least one "crazy family" picture — with massive smiles or frowns, or everyone standing backwards or having everybody yelling, fighting or acting a little unusual. (Your kids will have plenty of opinions on how to do this!) That photo may end up being the one you remember from this photo session, and it might be the one everyone talks about for years.

And return the favor — if you are really happy with your final photo project, consider sharing it on pinterest.com yourself, to give good ideas to others.

Remember, when these photos are being snapped for longtime memories — tell everyone to "Say CHEESE and SMILE!"

Your local professional organizer,

Betty Huotari

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