

WHY I STARTED YEARBOOKING

I thought it might be helpful to all of you who use this template to know my approach to memory-keeping, and how a template like this fits into my overall plan. This is what works for me, so maybe it will make sense for you, too! (Especially if you're a busy mom of young kids like me!)

I always had good intentions of being a "scrapbooker." I used to find time to make pages by hand, which I enjoyed, but I never felt as if I was being very thorough at preserving my family memories with a few pretty pages here and there. Then I found Heritage Makers and went digital! I thought that would solve my problem because I wouldn't have to deal with the supplies and storage. I could still be a "scrapbooker," just a digital one. I was still sporadically making pretty pages, as well as some books, but I still felt like I was only scratching the surface of all that I wanted to preserve.

What I finally realized wasn't working for me was the way I was organizing my memories. Being thorough and creative are important to me, so I was attempting to create a masterpiece to document every event of our lives. With each child, the number of events, and guilt I felt for not keeping up, multiplied.

It was like I could hear Dr. Phil whispering in my ear, "How's that workin' for ya?" I knew that this approach wasn't working for me, but I didn't want to let it go. Since I love being creative, I was hesitant to try something new...something so "simple" in design. But, I wasn't achieving my ultimate goal. This method was showing how creative I could be, but it wasn't thoroughly documenting my family photos and stories.

Realizing what was more important, I decided to try something new. I loved Jill Means' "Family Year-End Photo Album" template the moment I saw it and got to work on my 2009 Family Yearbook. When I realized how easy and thorough it was to include photos from various events all on one layout, because they all happened during the same month, the light bulb finally turned on. I found myself documenting more memories in a few hours than I had in the past twelve years. Honestly.

The best word I can use to describe how finishing that book made me feel is "peaceful." It seems like something happens every single day that I want my kids to remember. And I have always had mommy-guilt that I wasn't documenting enough of their little lives. So truly, creating that book has helped me rest easy knowing that those photos and stories will never be forgotten. Getting it all out of my head and into their hands has brought me great peace. And knowing that I FINALLY have a system in place to keep it going is even better.

WHAT IS YEARBOOKING?

I describe it as a simplified and achievable system of memory-keeping that emphasizes your photos and stories. It relieves you of the guilt, stress and creative pressure you may feel when trying to create your own pages. While simple, it is surprisingly thorough, beautiful and meaningful. The following is a chart to compare yearbooking with three other types of memory-keeping: Handmade Scrapbooking, Digital Scrapbooking, and Putting Prints in Album Sleeves.

Yearbooking	Scrapbooking		Prints in Album Sleeves
Unify random events (time-saving & thorough)	A page for EVERY event (time-consuming & spotty)		No pages or layouts, just photos in sleeves
Easy for anyone to do	Requires talent & creativity		Easy for anyone to do
Streamlined, lightweight	Handmade-Bulky	Digital-somewhat bulky	Bulky
Economical, beautiful product for the money	Expensive (\$5+/pg, album & page protectors)		Inexpensive, but usually lacking originality
Easy to add typed journaling; the template has text in pre-formatted font, size and color	Easy to journal by hand; can be tricky to add typed journaling depending on your skill level		Easy to journal by hand, but you have very limited space
No leaving the house	Handmade-lots of trips to craft store and photo lab	Digital-No leaving the house	Lots of trips to photo lab
Definitive start/end points (helps you set a goal)	No definitive start/end points (feel overwhelmed)		No definitive start/end points (feel overwhelmed)
Easy to keep up	Hard to keep up		Easy to keep up, as long as you make frequent orders of your prints
Heirloom Assurance (like a free insurance policy to replace your books in case of loss, fire, damage, etc.)	Irreplaceable unless re-created	Heirloom Assurance	Irreplaceable unless re-created
Reproducible	Handmade-Only reproducible by hand	Digital-reproducible but assembly required	Only reproducible by hand
Online - can work online anytime	Handmade-Must have supplies with you	Digital- can work online anytime	Must have supplies with you

The unique feature about yearbooking is that you can unify photos and journaling together under a generic theme, like "January." Since everything occurred during the same month, season or however you choose to organize them, they make sense together in one layout in a yearbook. This saves TIME and allows you to document MORE!

A yearbook highlights photos and stories from ALL KINDS of events that occur during one calendar year - just like your high school yearbook did. It doesn't matter if it's a family/group event (holiday, vacation) or specific to one person (birthday, sports season). It can be an important occasion (milestone anniversary) or just a cute everyday moment (child cuddling with the family dog) - there's a logical place for every kind of photo in a yearbook!

A yearbook still allows you the freedom to insert additional pages between the months when you want to feature a single event more in-depth, such as a vacation, holiday, party or sports season.



For example: My October layout features my "everyday" photos, incl. a school field trip, niece's birthday, trip to the dinosaur museum, and Halloween. In October, we also took a trip to California when I took LOTS of photos, so that trip has 6 pages dedicated to it. I could have made a separate book entirely about that trip, but in this case I chose to just include it in the yearbook.



I love about the yearbooking method is that it is for EVERYONE. I think there's a misconception that you have to be creative to do something really great with your photos. All that you need to create a yearbook are desire and commitment, and that applies whether you are creative or not.

For those like me who enjoy being creative, there is no reason that you can't still create other things in addition to the yearbook. I consider my yearbook the "backbone" of my memory-keeping. It's hard to predict these days when I'll have extra time to get creative but occasionally I do. But now I feel more freedom to branch out and get creative because I don't feel guilty that my everyday memories aren't documented. Having my yearbook up to date gives me that same feeling of having a clean house. When the everyday cleaning is done, I feel freedom to paint a wall or clean the attic...something that shouldn't come before my basic everyday routine. My yearbook is my dishes and laundry...the priority that I keep up with. And when extra time allows, I can take on a special project without guilt.

I have now made yearbooking my primary method of memory-keeping. But I also still do some digital scrapbooking. This includes 12x12 scrapbook pages for my kids' individual albums. Since I usually just highlight their birthdays, school stuff etc. in my yearbook, I like to make scrapbook pages for birthday parties, sports seasons, and school achievements more in-depth. I also consider the special projects I make with Heritage Makers, like theme storybooks, greeting cards, etc. to be part of my digital scrapbooking method.

Here are some examples of when I expanded my memory-keeping into other creative projects with Heritage Makers. These events were worthy of having their own book or poster, so instead of having their own pages in the yearbook, I just highlighted them with a photo or two. Also notice that all of these projects were created to share with other people outside of my immediate family.

11"x8.5" Book
Gift for my in-laws

8"x8" Book
Little League Team Book
Each family ordered one!

24"x18" Poster
Guys' Fishing Trip to Mexico
Father's Day gift for my husband
The other wives ordered one
for their husbands, too!

6"x9" Softcover Book
Kindergarten Yearbook
Each family ordered one!

5"x5" Book
BBQ Rib Cook-Off
A fun gift for our good friends!

Finally, the last thing I want to share regarding how yearbooking has helped me is that taking photos is a lot more fun now because they aren't a trigger for stress anymore. I've always enjoyed taking photos, but the quantity began to overwhelm me. Sometimes I wouldn't even take photos because they just kept piling up with no solution in sight. And I was unclear of what I really wanted to take photos of. I love capturing the silly, everyday shots of my kids but would avoid snapping them because I would say, "What will I ever do with that photo?" Now that I have a destination for all my photos, I take photos with pleasure and freedom.

The next section is a tutorial for using my template called "A Year in the Life." I hope you find both the tutorial and my template helpful as you begin yearbooking!

GETTING STARTED

The Basics You Need to Know

My "A Year in the Life" template has been designed to make it very easy for ANYONE to use, regardless of your skill level in using the Studio system! However, there are some basic tasks that you need to have a solid grasp on before you begin.

How to Upload your Photos

How to Organize your Photos in your HM Account

How to Duplicate, Remove, and Change the Order of Pages using "Manage Pages"

For Photos:

(1) Lock/Unlock Tool

(2) Click and Drag (moving photos around on the page)

(3) Photo Swap Technique

(4) Adjust Tool (ex: the top of someone's head is chopped off so you'd need to adjust what part of the photo is visible)

(5) X and Y positioning

For Text:

(1) Edit Text

(2) Resize a Text Box

(3) Change point size, especially for titles

-Optional Advanced Tasks: Playing with Line Spacing, Letter Spacing, and Margin

For Backgrounds, Artwork & Color Schemes:

If you are a beginner, I recommend leaving all the backgrounds, artwork and color scheme AS IS. (With the exception of the "Soccer" and "Celebrate" themes as those are intended to be easy to match to the colors of your sport/team or special occasion.)

Some of the accents, such as the December poinsettia, are designed with many layers of small pieces and would be very difficult to move or change. But if you want to customize, then you should be very comfortable with:

-Fill Color Tool (Eye dropper for color matching)

-Transparency Tool

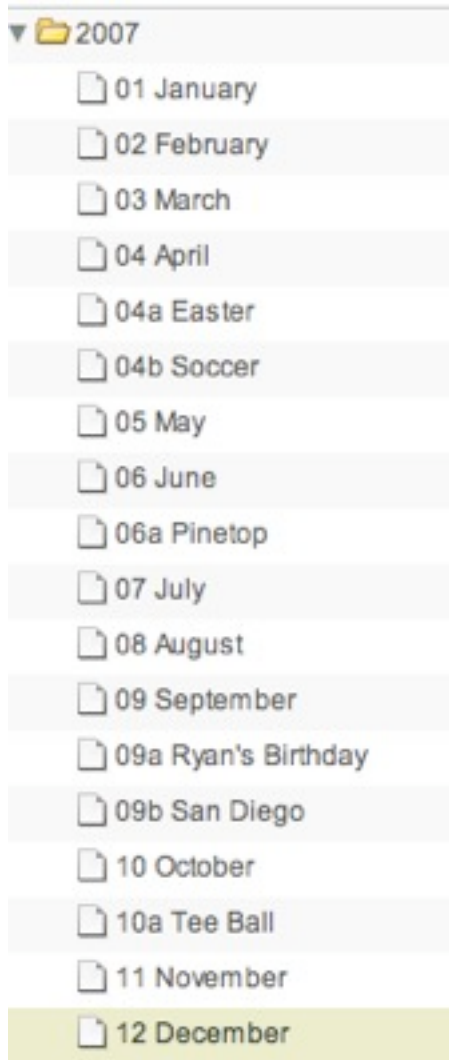
-Copy/Paste

-Paste Format

-Changing Border Color (of some text boxes)

-Changing Text Color

Organizing and Uploading Your Photos



I recommend doing things in this order. We'll use January 2007 as an example:

(1) This step will be different for everyone depending on if you have a PC or Mac and what photo management program you use. But the concept is the same: You'll want to isolate and edit your favorites before you upload. However you go about it, your goal is to get your favorites separated from the duds. Most programs have a "flag" or "tag" feature (may be called something else). As you scroll through your January photos, flag or tag your favorite photos. Go ahead and flag ALL your favorite January photos. Even if you don't use them all in your yearbook, you may eventually want to use them in a different project. This step is SO HELPFUL because when you upload to HM, you won't want to upload all the bad photos. And it's much easier to pick your favorites in your photo management program than on the HM upload screen. Also, you should edit your favorites for red eye, brightness and color balance as you cannot do those tasks in HM Studio.

(2) In your HM account, create a folder for the year (like 2007). Then create an album in the 2007 folder for January. I like for each 2-page layout to have its own album, and all the albums to be listed in order of how they will appear in the book. Make sure to add 01, 02 etc. before the months, or they will be alphabetized and out of order. I add an "a" or "b" for special layouts, like "06a Pinetop" for example. To the left you can see how I organized my photos to make this book.

(3) When you are ready to upload, you will need to know how to locate the folder or album that has all your tagged & edited favorites from January. When you find it, you can quickly select them all and upload.

You ask...What if I don't have photos for every month?

It's okay if you don't have a layout for every month. If you're missing photos from a month, just skip it. REMEMBER WHO YOUR AUDIENCE IS - your family...not an editor or professional publisher so don't get bogged down with it being perfect.

Consider using other headings like Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall, Family, Friends, Holidays, Vacations etc. or other generic titles that will unify a group of photos if you don't have enough photos for each month.

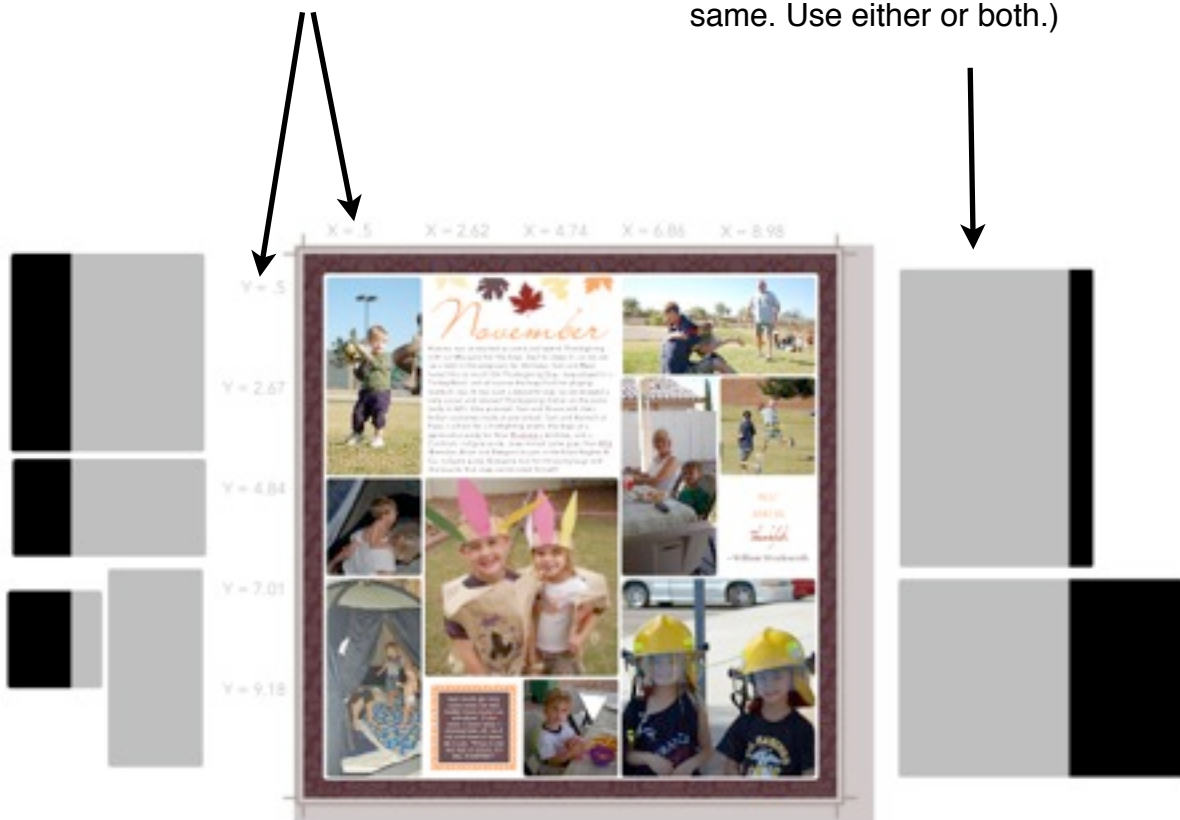
WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT THIS TEMPLATE

I designed this template because I take a lot of photos, and I like to use as many as I can in my layouts. I also take a lot of vertical photos, and I wanted a template that would accommodate them. But you may have different needs than I do when it comes to the size, quantity and layout of your photos. So I came up with an easy system that is intended to be flexible and make it easy for you to customize each page. Essentially, I want the template to work around your photos, instead of you having to work around the template.

When working in Studio, you will find helpful tools surrounding the page:

(1) Position Guides - You will know exactly where to place your photos using the X and Y position guides that are shown on every page.

(2) Placeholders - The black shapes act as photo placeholders and are pre-set to the exact size and format needed for each page. (My family photos act as placeholders just the same. Use either or both.)



Understanding the Grid Layout

There are endless possibilities for how to lay out your photos in a grid-style layout. For example, a 1x2 photo can be replaced with (2) 1x1 photos. Or a 2x3 photo can be replaced with a 2x2 and a 2x1 photo. If you have a lot of photos, then use smaller sizes. If you have fewer photos, use bigger sizes. You can copy and paste a photo or a placeholder as many times as you want to if you need more in that size.

Some pages are based on a 5 x 5 grid.



Some pages are based on a 4 x 4 grid.



Starting Your First Layout

I recommend duplicating each page in a layout before you begin customizing it. This way you won't lose the original design in case you want to refer to something or start over. Use the "Manage Pages" tool to do that. You can move all the duplicates to the end of the book so they don't interrupt the flow of the pages you're working on. Just remember to delete them all before publishing!

Tips for Placing Your Photos

Use the template exactly as is, customize a little or change it all. It's up to you.

Pick your favorite photo and place that one first in the largest placeholder you'll use on that page.

Place large photos off center when possible.

Visually it looks better to stagger photos so that it breaks up the straight white lines.

The method I use for placing photos is to roughly place them and keep moving them around and adjusting the layout before I place them exactly where they should be. I also click Preview to see how the pages look side by side. When I'm pleased with it, I use the X and Y position guides to place the photos in their exact positions. (See the Layout tab in the Tool Box.) Once the X and Y coordinates in the Tool Box match up with the guides on

Tips for Journaling

-Decide what "voice" you will write in, and stick with it consistently. In my family yearbooks, I write in the first person, which means I refer to myself as "I" or "me" instead of "Kelly" or "Mom." Since I am the one creating the book, I think it's more personal this way and my family will read it and think, "That sounds like something Mom would write." But I do not refer to anyone as "you" because the audience includes several members of my family. I refer to everyone by their first names, or what my kids call them. (Apart from the yearbook, I often do journaling for an individual person on a layout that is just about the person. In that case I write it like a letter to that person, referring to myself as "I" and to that person as "you.")

-In the main text box, I give a little information on what's going on in the photos. To transition from one thought to the next, sometimes I just put a ~ between sentences. I even write about things that aren't pictured in the photos. That's one reason why I love the yearbook so much - it gives me a place to record things I don't have photos of. My September journaling is a good example of that.

-The text size may seem small on your screen, so to see what it will look like in your printed book all you have to do is ZOOM IN to 100% (or as close to 100 as it will let you.) The slider tool looks like this and is at the top of the screen. Watch the number as you slide it and stop around 100.



Tips for Journaling with Captions

In some cases the caption applies to a photo or group of photos near it. For example (March): this caption applies to these two photos.



In other cases, I just put a cute quote from one of my kids or something else interesting about them from around that time. It may not relate to any of the photos at all. For example (March and June):



I used several of these scalloped circles throughout the template. You can get creative with them! They are made from 3 layers, and only the top layer needs to be customized:

(1) Scalloped Circle with Fill Color



(2) Circle with Fill Color and White Border



(3) Text Box or art with fill color

SPRING
HAS
SPRUNG

I used them in various ways: for a simple phrase, like "SRPING HAS SPRUNG" (pink), for more journaling (blue), or for artwork when I couldn't think of anything else to write (brown).



STEP BY STEP EXAMPLE

How to Customize a 2-page Layout

The "Celebrate" layout with balloons is perfect for any kind of party. I will walk you through how to change it from a 2-year old's birthday party to a 40th wedding anniversary party.

Step 1: I choose my main photo, which is horizontal. →

Sometimes a horizontal or vertical photo can be placed in a square. But in this case, the guys on each side will be cut off if I place it in the big square that's already on the page.



Step 2: I moved a group of 4 photos off to the side to make room for the 3x2 placeholder.

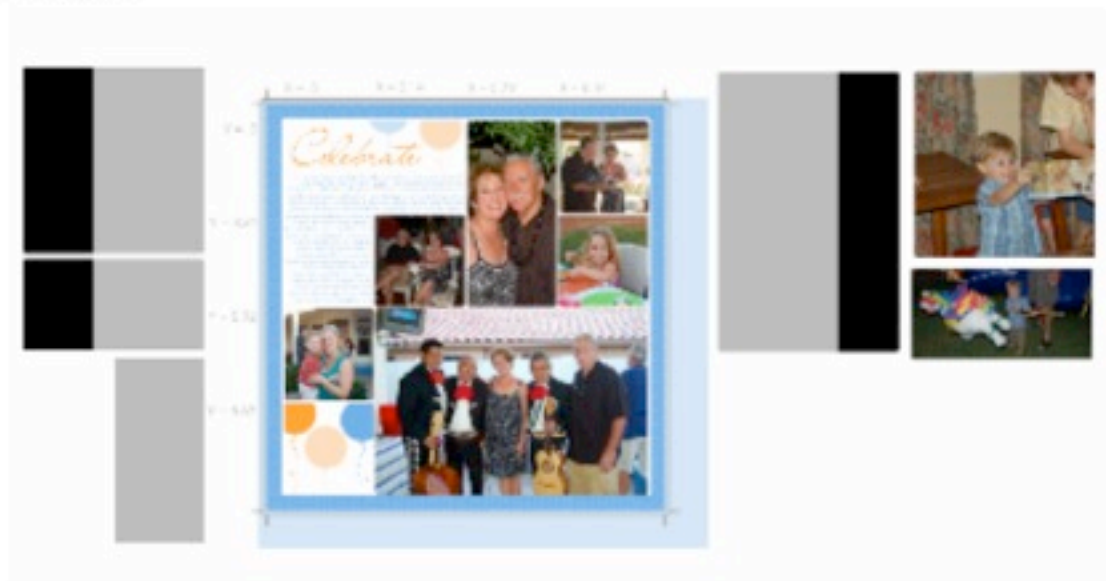


Step 3: I repositioned some of the photos and the 1x1 placeholder to make a layout that I like.



Step 4: I locked all the photos in place. This is for two reasons: One is so that nothing gets moved out of place. The other is so that the "Photo Swap" tool will work in the next step. To lock everything in one easy step, simply go to the Edit Menu, then Lock > Lock All On Page.

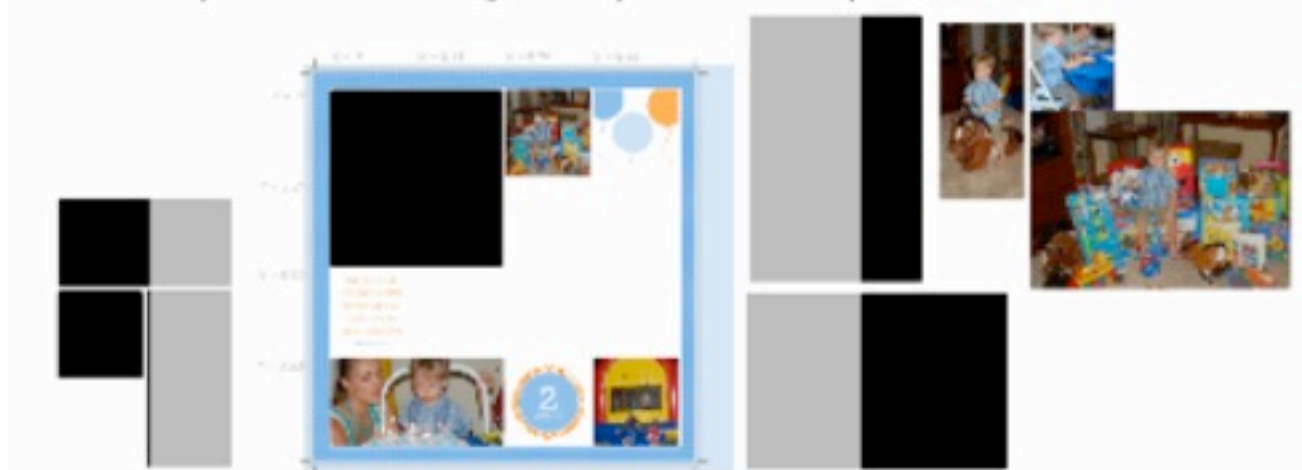
Step 5: I replaced the template photos and placeholders with the NEW photos using the Photo Swap technique. Then I used the "Adjust" tool to get the exact part of each photo to the right position and magnification.



Step 6: Next I will decide on the layout for the right-side page. This has a dominant horizontal photo. I want to put a square photo on this page.



Step 7: I moved 3 photos off to the right, and placed the 2x2 placeholder where I want it.



Step 8: I re-positioned some of the placeholders to make a layout that will work for my photos.



Step 9: I locked all the placeholders, and then used the photo swap technique to place my photos on the page.

Step 10: I want to customize the colors to match the new photos better. The first step is to select a new background color. I clicked on the outer edge to make sure I selected just the solid layer (and not the white png overlay that gives it the circle pattern.) Then using the Fill Color tool, I selected the turquoise from my son's striped shirt.



When you change the background color, the pattern (in this case a pattern of conjoining circles) will not change. So no matter what background COLOR you choose, the pattern will just become a lighter shade of your new color.

Step 11: I played with colors of all the accents until I was happy with how the overall layout looked. I used a turquoise, sunny yellow and orange-red color scheme. There are varying shades of the balloons, which can be played with using the Transparency tool.

BEFORE



AFTER

