

# Dad ties another one on

## Websites offer good, but not great, Father's Day suggestions

Since Father's Day is by far the most important holiday, it seemed appropriate to write about a website devoted to it this week. Even though I didn't have a specific site in mind, I figured there are numerous sites dedicated to the subject of dads, and it wouldn't be too hard to find a good one.

After reviewing many, many sites I've come to the conclusion that the site I was looking for isn't out there. I'm not sure what



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InSites

I was expecting, I had just a vague notion of a very original site with poignant stories, clever ideas and maybe some interesting historical anecdotes. Maybe I was expecting too much.

To be fair, there are lots of sites devoted to Father's Day, and some of them are decent. A lot of them seem

to be closely linked with companies that sell watches, golf clubs, electronics, tools and, of course, ties.

Retailers seem determined to make every holiday a big, gift-giving affair. In fact, in the History section of [www.fathersday.org](http://www.fathersday.org), the site credits retailers with gaining the public's acceptance of the holiday. In the 1930s, the Associated Men's Wear Retailers group formed the National Father's Day Committee and the National Council for the Promotion of Father's Day. It took 50 years before their efforts paid off at the cash register, as it wasn't until the 1980s that the holiday started to generate significant revenue.

Many of the sites give the history of the holiday, though the details vary slightly from site to site:

*In 1909 Sonora Dodd asked her minister in Spokane, Washington, to give a sermon honoring fathers after listening to his Mother's Day sermon. Her*

### Five Father's Day sites

**[www.fathersday.org](http://www.fathersday.org):** A slickly designed site with links to some high-end retailers. There are lists of sales and coupons for some of the vendors. There's a history section, an activities section and a section with some touching stories of special Father's Days

**[www.theholidayspot.com/fathersday/](http://www.theholidayspot.com/fathersday/):** This site, adorned with stock photos of loving fathers, has tons of links to all things Father's Day related. Besides gifts, activities and history, there's a lot of downloadable content such as cards, poems, clip art, wallpaper, recipes and quotes.

**[www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/fathersday/](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/fathersday/):** This site is not very engaging visually, but it has a lot of easy-to-make projects for younger kids.

**[fathersday-2010.com/](http://fathersday-2010.com/):** A fairly polished site with a mix of direct links to retailers and activities, recipes, history, crafts, etc.

**[www.fathersdaycelebration.com/](http://www.fathersdaycelebration.com/):** This site has a lot of the same type of content as the other sites, but with a more global orientation. It's fun to read because it's obviously been translated into English from some other language with humorous results. For example:

*"If your dad is hep and love to carry a style statement a wonderful idea would be to gift him a pair of cool sunglasses. He might be possessing some already but he would welcome another one with a warm smile."*

*father was a Civil War veteran whose wife died while giving birth to their sixth child. He raised the children, including the surviving newborn, as a single dad. The minister agreed, but couldn't prepare a sermon in time for her father's birthday, which was June 5, so he gave it on June 19th. The idea slowly spread around the nation and the world. In 1966 President Lyndon Johnson announced that the third Sunday in June would be Father's Day. In 1972 President Nixon authorized it as an official American holiday. At least 52 countries celebrate the holiday, most of them in the months of May or June.*

A lot of the sites have suggestions of "original" ideas on how to spend the day that are very similar:

- Take Dad to a ballgame
- Take Dad golfing
- Take Dad on a picnic
- Take Dad out for ice cream
- Take Dad out for dinner
- Have a cookout with Dad
- Make Dad breakfast in bed

Of course there's nothing wrong with any of these suggestions, I would enjoy them all, but some of the sites hype them as if it's the first time anyone has ever thought of them.

I noticed a similar trend on the sites when it comes to gift ideas. The gifts are divided into two broad categories: links to online retailers where you can buy stereotypical "Dad" gifts, and suggestions for handmade gifts such as cards, picture frames, art projects, poems or letters telling him why he's special. For those who aren't too crafty, some sites offer virtual cards that can be e-mailed to Dad, or downloadable cards and pictures that can be printed and presented to Dad.

Again, there's nothing wrong with any of these suggestions, they're just not as original as the sites seem to think they are. As a father myself, I tend to treasure the handmade gifts from my kids more than anything they might buy.

Another common idea on the sites is for kids to do things they should be doing anyway:

- Wash the car
- Cut the grass
- Milk the cows
- Take out the garbage
- Do chores without being told

I don't want to be too hard on the Father's Day sites I visited. They all offered good suggestions on gifts and activities that most families could enjoy without spending a lot of money. I guess I just expected more for the most important holiday of the year.

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