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Cut Costume Clutter: DIY This Halloween

Marin Rose



According to the National Retail Federation, a record two-thirds of Americans will buy Halloween costumes this year. That's millions of dollars spent on pret-a-porter "Frozen" and "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle" outfits and the like, all for a minor holiday that's really meant as an excuse for fun and creativity. And parents know that all those store-bought costumes pile up year after year, creating yet another category of clutter.

It's rare that I encourage do-it-yourself projects. I'm usually in favor of taking the path of least resistance, which often involves purchasing, rather than making from scratch, needed items. When it comes to Halloween costumes, however, I don't see the fun in spending 60 bucks on a chintzy, head-to-toe ensemble that will render your

child indistinguishable from all the other trick-or-treaters in Elsa and Anna costumes.

"DIY-ing" a costume for your child this year needn't be time-consuming or stressful. Starting with jeans and a white t-shirt, or black turtleneck and pants, you can build any number of looks simply by accessorizing with scarves, makeup and other things you have at home – and perhaps an inexpensive prop or two from the store.

From these basics, create pirates, witches, flamenco dancers, rock stars, spiders, cowgirls, ninjas and more. It's very affordable to achieve a wide variety of looks this way and it's a great opportunity to be creative with your kids. Plus, you know your kids will be warm and comfortable for trick-or-treating, so you're not stuck carrying plastic high heels in one arm and your four-year-old, who's wearing your coat, in the other.

Using clever items to evoke the mood of the character your child wants to portray – rather than purchasing an all-out carbon copy – is also a great way to control costume clutter. Rather than closets full of dresses, masks and plastic shoes, you'll be able to store all your props in a single bin.

I recommend keeping that bin in a play area where the kids can use their imagination to play dress-up throughout the year. It's amazing how many ways young children can make-believe with small accessories, compared with elaborate, imagination-stifling costumes.

One of my best Halloween memories is from fifth grade or so, when my mom and I spray-painted a pair of old school shoes and dipped them in red glitter. With my hair in two braids and a basket in my arm, I felt the very incarnation of Dorothy as we trekked through our neighborhood that night.

Another year, I wore all black, an eye-liner spider web on my cheek and a pointy witch hat. A pair of devil horns and some shadowy powder turned my little brother into the cutest devil you've ever seen. We had such fun as a family in those days and I encourage you not to miss out on that experience this year.

Questions for Marin? Inquire at info@libraorganizing.com for a response in next month's column.



Marin Rose owns *Libra Organizing*, an Augusta-based organizing, home staging and move assistance business. Marin serves clients throughout the CSRA, as well as in her hometown of Washington, D.C., New York and beyond. For more information, including notices of free seminars and community events, or to hire Marin to speak at your event or organization, visit libraorganizing.com.