

HOMESCHOOL GRADUATION PLANNER

Sixteen to Nine Months Before:

- Choose a date
- Choose a venue
- Decide on the mood of the event, formal or casual?
- Choose the colors to use.
- Does your graduate want to be involved with all these decisions?
- Set a budget (don't forget to include stamps for the announcements in your budget!)
- Have your senior measured for cap and gown.
- Order the cap and gown (you may also consider asking around if anyone has a cap and gown that may be borrowed)
- Make a guest list
- Decide what part your senior will have in the graduation ceremony, sing a song, make a speech, etc.
- You will want to have senior portraits done as early as possible. These may be included in a slide show, announcements, and ceremony program so you will want to have the hard copies available to be used for each of these purposes.
- Gather friends and family who are willing to help plan and organize this event. If you plan to have more than a very simple ceremony, you will be glad that you asked for the help! Assignments to helpers might include, setting up a slide show for during the ceremony, designing and having printed a program for the ceremony, someone to be in charge of the food prep and serving for the reception, someone to emcee the ceremony. (Trust me, you will probably not be able to speak through the emotions that will be welling up!)



Eight Months Before:

- Reserve hotel rooms for out-of-town guests.
- Hire a photographer and/or videographer

Seven to Six Months Before:

- Decide on and purchase announcements (or create them yourself) You will also want to order or create thank you notes at the same time.
- Begin addressing envelopes for announcements (having return address labels will greatly help to shorten the time this takes).
- Begin to work on a schedule of events for graduation day.
- Decide what you plan to do for a post ceremony reception. What theme will it have, if any? Make sure to order supplies and book a venue, if needed.
- Obtain a guest book.



Five to Four Months Before:

- If you plan to have a rehearsal then book that and a rehearsal dinner venue as well.
- Decide on the final order of the ceremony. If you are having a printed program made then you will want to make sure this information is given to the person who is putting that together for you. If you are putting it together yourself, get started on it at this time.
- You might want to consider writing a short biographical sketch for your graduate to include along with their formal senior portrait in the printed program. This should be no longer than 145-155 words in length and include the highlights of your homeschooler's education until now. Have they earned any awards? Do they have any special hobbies? Do they already have some college experience under their belt? What are their plans for the future? If you are Christians then you might even want to include your senior's favorite Bible verse.
- Will you be including a slide show in the ceremony? If so, gather all the pictures which will be used for this and get them to the person who will be setting this up for you. You will also want to tell them what song you would like the slide show set to. Again, if you are setting this up yourself, get started on it at this time. Are you wishing you'd delegated some of this out yet?
- Decide on the music that will be played during the ceremony, you might want to track down a copy of "Pomp and Circumstance". Is there a particular song that has special meaning for your graduate?
- Purchase a special gift for the graduate.
- If you plan to have some sort of display, sometimes called a "Memories" table, including your homeschooler's memorabilia, pictures, awards, etc you will want to begin to plan and set this up.



Two Months Before:

- Send out invitations
- Meet with the photographer and/or videographer. You may want to get a picture of your graduate in their cap and gown during this meeting.
- Write a "Challenge" to your graduate to be read during the ceremony right before you give them their diploma. Again, it might be good idea to plan to have someone other than the parents read this since the parents may be understandably emotional that day. This challenge can include memories, encouragement, advice and/or a challenge for the graduate's future.



- If your graduate plans to make a speech, have them begin working on it.
- Siblings may also want to make speeches, have them begin work on theirs also.

One Month Before:

- Graduate may want to get a haircut or new style. Getting this done a few weeks before the event will give it time to grow if they don't like it.
- Purchase a new dress or suit for the graduate.
- Keep track of RSVPs in a database.
- Obtain your graduate's diploma if you haven't already gotten it. A great place to get the diploma is LSHS. They have free templates with 4 styles to choose from.
- Order catering if the post ceremony reception will be catered. If not, then plan what foods to serve and purchase supplies or coordinate with the person to whom you've assigned this duty.

Week of the Graduation:

- Delegate small graduation day tasks
- Send a timeline to everyone who will be part of the ceremony
- Check in with the photographer and/or videographer. Make sure they have a list of any special shots you would like to have such as the moment dad hands the diploma to the graduate and then moment mom shifts the tassel over to the other side of the mortar board.
- If you are not having the reception catered, then prepare the food for it a day or so before or check in with the person who is doing this for you.

After the Graduation:

- Make sure to send out thank you notes to everyone who gave the graduate gifts. Don't forget to include notes to everyone who helped you with your graduation ceremony.
- Create a scrapbook or put all the photos from this wonderful season into an album.

