One of my constituents thought I should promote our "Book Bundles" - an idea I actually borrowed from the public library in Delaware, Ohio. We bundle 5-8 books on different topics (ex: dinosaurs, scary stories, transportation, winter, etc.), wrap them with cord or ribbon and a colorful tag. We have been doing this for about ten years. The last several years, we have bundled our Christmas books and tied them with brightly colored ribbons and bows, kind of like packages. They literally go out as fast as we can bundle them! This is a great way to market books and make some of those hidden treasures more visible.

Betsy Adams
Program Coordinator
Stow-Munroe Falls Public Library

We have very limited display space at our library, so most of our displays are related to current topics, such as holidays and programs. Part of our picture book shelving is set in a large U, with triangle-shaped shelves at the two bottom corners. I try to keep picture books on one side, and corresponding J non-fiction on the other side. Using Microsoft Word, I make borders related to the topic and sticky-tack them to the shelves, just for some color.

We also have a large interior window, and that's where we'll put our ALA Award winning books display starting next week. I'll place a hold on each book that wins an award, scan the cover, and post it on the window so everyone can see the books but the books themselves are available for the patrons.

Due to our limited facilities, we don't do anything real creative, but we do try to keep things colorful.

Kathy Drugan
Youth Services Assistant
Geauga County Public Library

We have several large bulletin boards that change at least monthly. One has had a pair of paper coyotes on it for most of a year. The board changes around them to celebrate seasons and holidays or to promote programs. They began December with a sequoia cactus decorated with sparkly red flowers. In late December they had snowflakes and "Think Snow," followed later by a paper snowman with red felt hat, pompom face, and gold coat buttons. The end of January, the snowman was replaced with a groundhog in a paper mound. February was a busy month, with hearts and candy for Valentine’s Day and later a game board to promote several programs. The coyotes change scarves with some displays, wearing red, white, and blue stripes for patriotic holidays. Sometimes they wear paper hats, green for St. Patrick’s Day, stripes for Dr. Seuss’s birthday. They went fishing with twig poles when I went on vacation in the fall. Some of the displays are a bit time-consuming, like the Zorro and fancy princess masks they wore for Halloween, and the fifty tissue paper poppies for Veteran’s Day. Most are done with shapes and letters from the die-cut machine and go up quickly. Building around the coyotes has eliminated the need to think up entire displays every few weeks, and has children and adult patrons checking the coyote board to see what the pair is up to now. There are plans for musical instruments and art supplies during the summer, then they may have to wave goodbye and allow another character to celebrate the seasons of the library.
We have a small display case on the entry wall to the children’s area. During the summer we use this case as an “I Spy” activity. I overstuff the case with items relating to the summer theme. Each week we put up a new sign with the title, Can You Find... then list things to look for in the case. Last summer a list included, 3 pink butterflies, 2 Cooties, the shell shed by a cicada, 4 VW bugs, a ladybug bracelet, a photo of Japanese Beetles, an ant from Antz, 2 animals who eat bugs, and a spider on a pumpkin. Once or twice we have a contest involving counting something there are many of, offering a small prize for those with an accurate count. Last year the contest was to count spider rings. It typically takes a lot of work to find the items to put into the case. I make a trip through Goodwill once a month beginning in February or March, stop at garage sales that seem to have toys, and ask my children, library staff and friends to share. Since the budget is personal, I have a spending limit of $10. It always takes a couple of hours to put the “I Spy” display together, but then it is a passive activity and entertaining display case for the summer. It attracts children and adults alike, giving all something to talk about each time they pass, and giving library staff an additional opportunity to interact with our patrons.

Susan Hall
Youth Services Associate
Xenia Community Library, Greene County Public Library

**********

We like to hang things from the ceiling over the displays: red foil hearts in different sizes for Valentine’s, snowflakes for winter, and I go to goodsearch.com (like Google but you pick a charity that will get a penny each time you search) and look at their images. I find book characters (like Spongebob, Clifford) and print off enlarged, color copies and hang a whole bunch of them in different poses over the display. (copyright issue???)

We also use a basket (like a large, uncolored Easter basket) to hold about 25 books. And on the table we have either a plastic tablecloth from a party store/Wal-Mart or we buy fabric (about 9 feet) to put over the table and put the display on it. You can get different colors, textures, even patterns (sport theme, jungle them, winter theme). We really like the shiny gold or silver or magenta!

Erin Hunt
Children's Librarian
West Carrollton Branch/Dayton Metro Library

**********

Here are a few ideas that have worked well for me over the years:

I buy fabric on sale/clearance that might tie in with a display. A yard will work, but a yard and a half is even better. I'm lucky enough to have a JoAnn's near me that often has '50% off clearance fabrics' sales. You can spread the fabric out on a flat surface, or turn over a sturdy box to add a little height, and then drape the fabric over it. Right after a holiday is a good time to check the stores for bargains. You can use "theme" fabrics or solid colors. We have stars & stripes patterned fabric that we use for 4th of July, elections, any "America" displays, lots of Halloween patterned fabric, etc., but we also have solid green
cloth that we use for St. Patrick's Day, Earth Day, gardening, and other displays. I have to admit, though, that I have a weakness for sparkly fabrics.

I often pick up interesting objects at garage sales and dollar or discount stores that fit with themes we regularly use in our displays: cooking/food, Black History Month, National Craft Month, holidays, and so on. For a "delicious children's books" display, I brought in an old enamelware stock pot and stuck a rolling pin, whisk and ladle in it, and I had a vintage apron trailing out of it. I put out picture books that included recipes, as well as some kids cookbooks and "literary" cookbooks (American Girls, Little House, Roald Dahl, Secret Garden). Or if you really like the tiered effect, you can turn a few pots upside down and put the books on top of them. For our "back to school" display, we made a sign that looked like a chalkboard, and we taped wooden rulers and die-cut apples to the wall behind the display. And not long ago I picked up a cheap "vintage" lunchbox replica at Big Lots for a few bucks, which I plan to use in the display next year. Summer is a great time to pick up a few inexpensive props for displays: bug nets, leis, silk flowers, plastic bugs, beach pails, giant plastic magnifying glasses, and too many other items to name. If you get an object that's large enough, you can stick some of the books inside it (like those big black plastic cauldrons). We tend to go whole hog for our summer reading club displays, and I included a couple photos from our medieval-themed program a few years ago. And yes, the fabric in the photos was bought on clearance right after Halloween. And it's sparkly!

Jean Ann Kirwin
Children's Librarian
Toledo-Lucas County Public Library

**********

You might find the book, Merchandising Made Simple: Using Standards and Dynamite Displays to Boost Circulation by Jenny LaPerriere, helpful. It is full of great ideas and photos (although it would be better if the photos were in color).

Teresa Rhodes
Marketing and Outreach Coordinator
Salem Public Library
We aren't doing anything fancy, but one of our main display areas is the very first thing patrons see when they enter the children's area. We can't keep these shelves filled. We have an 8 1/2 x 11 poster to outline a theme for the display (which is probably NOT read) and just keep filling the space, sometimes several times a day. I think having the books face out and in a 'WOW' spot really help. Just choose books that are colorful and things the kids would want to check out, not necessarily what you might choose to check out. Attached are two pictures right after we filled them (again).

Cindy Romick
Children's Services Manager
Findlay-Hancock County Public Library