

Special Report - Fantastic Summer Fun for Less

Tips and Ideas on How to Have a Fantastic Summer Fun for Less



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INTRODUCTION

Summer time is the perfect time to get together as a family. The kids are out of school and parents have more time to take some much-needed days away from work. So, why is it that summers leave kids wanting more? Many say that they are bored and end up sitting on the couch in front of the television.

You may be exasperated as well. Keeping kids entertained is not easy. They want to do something new all the time.

On top of all that, money may be tight. In such a changing economy, many families may forgo a family vacation in order to save money for bills or other expenses. While they don't want to do that to their kids (especially if vacations are an annual ritual), they may feel that there is no other choice.

Summer is time for fun and we are here to show you how. Even if money is tight or there are limited funds to be devoted to the task, you can put on your best creative cap and find a way for the family to spend time together laughing and creating new memories.

Who said that summer vacation meant leaving on a long road trip or an airplane ride? We have ideas that will interest your kids - including teens - in their hometown or state. It will take some motivation, teamwork and ingenuity but if you are up to the challenge, then keep reading.

In this report you will discover:

- * Free activity ideas for kids and teens (indoor and outdoor)
- * Low-cost activity ideas for kids and teens
- * Family activities, and
- * Resources to discover more fun in your area

FREE ACTIVITY IDEAS

Who says that fun has to cost? Here are some free activity ideas that the entire family can enjoy.

Indoor Activities

* Camping in – If you are squeamish about bugs or it is too hot outside, how about camping indoors? Move the furniture against the walls and clear a space in the center of the room. Everyone can bring out their sleeping bags, wear their best pajamas and sleep under the ceiling fan instead of the stars.

This is a great way to get younger kids used to the idea of camping out. If it can fit, erect a small tent. Sit around and tell ghost stories, eat popcorn and thoroughly enjoy each other's company.

* Family game night – This is fun not only for smaller kids but parents and teenagers as well. You can hold your game night once a week. Allow different family members a chance to choose the game for that night. Smaller kids who are not old enough to play can watch and cheer everyone else on as they play to win. Board games like Monopoly, Clue, Sorry and Life never go out of style.

For techno-savvy kids, upgrade to interactive virtual reality video games on the Wii or Xbox system. Trivia games like "Scene It?" also provide a new challenge for parents and teens. Don't neglect card games. Spades, Old Maid (for the younger set), Memory and poker can provide hours of family excitement on a summer night.

* Hold a cooking contest – Kids love to learn new things. If you get them in the kitchen they may surprise you. Give them a chance to put their culinary skills to the test. You can recreate your favorite cooking show. Set down the ground rules; choose a family member to be the judge and may the best cook win!

* Create crafts – Crafting has grown far beyond pipe cleaners, construction paper, glitter and glue. Invest in crafting kits at your local Michaels or A.C. Moore store. Create stunning jewelry; make lanyards (just like in summer camp); crochet or knit a scarf; paint stained glass. All of these ideas can appeal to both kids and teens and provide hours of fun, especially on a rainy day.

* Have a cinema day – Each person chooses a movie that they like. They can introduce the feature to the group and then everyone sits back to watch. An alternative idea is to showcase home movies. Reminisce over old times and have a few laughs.

* Work on a family project – Do you want to redecorate the living room or a bedroom? Spend the day painting, rearranging furniture, hanging pictures and other accents to create a unique room. If you've ever watched home makeover shows then you know this can be accomplished on a shoestring budget.

* Become a part of a book club – Check the local listings for those in your area. You may already have a copy of the book that they are reading. If there are none that interest you, start your own group.

* Host a sleepover – All you have to do is provide the space and a little food. Ask the kids to bring their own sleeping bags and a movie or two. Set up in the living room just like for your indoor camping adventure.

* Karaoke night – Who can sing in your family? Even if no one can carry a tune, see who can do it best by hosting a karaoke night. Get up and sing and dance to your favorite songs. Hold a contest. See who can dress in the most original outfit and impress the rest of the group.

* Create science experiments – Who says that science is just for school? You can find simple experiments explained on the internet. For example, what happens when you add baking soda to water inside of a balloon? Try it and find out. Kids love to play mad scientist. Clear a place for your experiments where it doesn't matter if you make a mess.

* Try your hand at cell phone applications – All it takes is one app to put you on the map. Do you like computers? Teens and young kids who are tech savvy can teach themselves to create an app. Brainstorm ideas and see what you can come up with.

Outdoor Activities

You may want to leave the house at some point to get some fresh air. You still don't have to spend money to have fun with the family or your friends.

* Plant a garden – This is a family activity that will pay off in more ways than one. Kids learn how to till the soil and plant crops. When the harvest comes in, they can head to the backyard instead of the grocery store for fresh fruits and veggies.

* Hold a yard sale – This is a great way to get kids to clean up their rooms and also make a little money. It costs nothing to host it but your time. Many people love to hit the various sales on Saturday morning searching for unusual finds. They may discover what they are looking for in your yard.

* Build a tree house – Got a tree in your yard that is just sitting there? Create a clubhouse or a place to get away from the house even if you don't want to go far. It will probably take the efforts of the entire family to get this done. Take turns using the tree house as a retreat.

* Play backyard games – When was the last time everyone got up from the television and played a good old-fashioned game of kickball or volleyball or tag? Do it on the next sunny summer day. Divide into teams. If you don't have enough people, invite a few of your kids' friends over.

* Have a cookout – In the summer, spend time together eating outdoors. A cookout can become an ordinary ritual at the end of the day. Whenever you want a break from the house, throw a few burgers and steaks on the grill.

* Turn on the sprinklers – When it gets hot, you don't need a pool to cool off. Kids can blow off steam and have fun by running through the water sprays. Put on the bathing suits and have a blast. If you have water guns, use those too.

* See a parade – Any excuse will do to host a parade. In the summer, the biggest holiday is July 4th. Head downtown for a community parade, fireworks and other free outdoor activities.

* Go hiking – This can be done around town or in nearby mountain landscapes if you have them. Gather your gear and head out as a family to explore the great outdoors. Take pictures to commemorate your trip.

* Join a sports team – Did your child or teen play sports in school? The summer may be the perfect time to play for a community league for fun. Meet new people and enjoy the challenge of baseball, softball, basketball or touch football without all the pressure of a school team.

* Catch fireflies – They are also called lightning bugs. Once upon a time, kids used to go out at dusk and catch them in Mason jars. See if your kids are interested in running around the yard in search of these bioluminescent creatures.

* Hold a family picnic in the park – Prepare a big lunch. Bring blankets and while the day away relaxing on the grass. Play Frisbee, blow bubbles and fly kites if the wind is right.

* Create art with sidewalk chalk – Kids can have the entire sidewalk as their canvas. You can join them too. Draw hopscotch squares and use a stone to play the game.

LOW-COST ACTIVITY IDEAS

Indoor Activities

* Create a scrapbook – Do you have a lot of family photos lying around? Pull them together and create memory books. You can purchase scrapbook pages and embellishments for less at dollar stores and party shops.

* Create your own ice cream for dessert – Invest in an old-fashioned ice cream maker, rock salt, sugar and other natural ingredients. Let each person create their favorite ice cream flavor.

Outdoor Activities

- * Play a few rounds of miniature golf – Even those who don't enjoy regular golf games can find that they have fun with the challenge of a mini golf course. The entire family can participate, from the youngest to the oldest.

- * Head to the zoo – Even older kids may enjoy seeing different kinds of animals. Don't miss the petting zoo where you can actually touch and feed the animals.

- * Start a business with friends – Teens can enjoy the fresh air and make a few bucks with a business venture. Lawn cutting immediately springs to mind but there are also other services that you can perform in the community. Find out what is lacking and fill that niche.

- * Take a class – Do you have a hobby that you have always had an interest in but never quite found the time to pursue? Summer may be the perfect moment to seek out that painting class, bird watching, dance class or writing workshop. Teens and adolescents may like the idea of learning a new skill. Check out the local community college for class listings.

- * Visit a science museum – Kids can get hands-on experience with the exhibits. Also, many science museums hold special activity days throughout the summer showcasing special exhibits. Allow your kids to participate if they want to.

- * Head to the local pool – You don't have to own a pool to enjoy one. Visit the public pool with the kids or get a day pass to the YMCA. If your kids or you haven't learned to swim, summer time is a great opportunity to take lessons.

- * Take a turn at the park – Large city parks have a variety of activities for families in the summer time. Take your rollerblades and bikes and get a bit of exercise. For a small fee, you can ride in paddle boats and enjoy the lake. Young kids may want to spend time at the playground. To save money, bring snacks and drinks.

- * Go bowling – Divide into teams and see who has the better skill. Bowling is a fun activity that can be enjoyed by the entire family. Bowling alleys also feature classic stand-up arcade games. After you bowl, challenge each other to a foosball match or a game of Ms. Pac-Man.

- * Hit the matinee – It is a great way to see a new anticipated movie without paying full price. Bring your own popcorn with you in snack bags to save money.

- * Visit the carnival – When the fair comes to town, see what it is all about. Usually the first or last night is Kid's Night and they can get in for free depending on age. Eat first so you don't spend a lot on food but do enjoy a cotton candy, funnel cake or a candy apple.

* Take a road trip to a nearby beach – If the closest beach is two hours away, then you are in perfect distance for a day trip. Grab the bathing suits, towels, umbrellas and sunscreen and hit the ocean. This is getting away without spending a lot of money or going too far.

* Visit nearby tourist attractions – An example is Asheville, North Carolina, where people from all over come to visit the Biltmore Mansion. It is the largest private residence in the United States. Turned into a museum, groups can take tours through many of its over 200 rooms and experience how the rich lived before income tax was instituted.

FINDING ACTIVITIES IN YOUR AREA

Local Papers

If you are unfamiliar with what summer activities are available where you live, try the newspaper. In the Life section, local events both free and low cost are often showcased as upcoming events.

The News Station

Another resource is the local news station. They often do public service announcements on upcoming events that are free and open to the public. After the story airs, more information can be found on the station's website.

Social Networking Sites

Do you have friends on Facebook, Twitter or MySpace? They may post when events are happening in their area. If you live nearby or want to plan a little trip, you can RSVP and participate.

Local Library

Libraries are more fun than they used to be. Kids and teens can participate in community activities like reading time, Halloween parties, round table discussions and peer groups. Most if not all are free to participate.

CONCLUSION

Fun comes in many forms. And, it doesn't have to cost a lot of money to take advantage of it. Use the ideas in this report to help you create a summer full of fun activities and trips for you and your family.

Come up with some of your own, inspired by the ones you have read here. All it takes is one spark to get the ball rolling.