

FOCUS^{ON} THE FAMILY[®]

Summer Survival Kit

Your guide to making summer count



This summer, make every day count! This guide is filled with creative ideas, faith-building devotionals and activities to help your family thrive.

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Thriving Family® Summer Calendar

Make faith fun this summer! This special calendar features over 60 activities to help you impart spiritual truth to your kids.

Example Activities:

- Hide a cell phone somewhere in your home and then call its number. Ask your kids to follow the ring to find the phone. Discuss ways God tries to get our attention so we will follow where He leads (Psalm 85:8).
- Make “initial pancakes” for breakfast using a slightly thinner batter and a turkey baster to “draw” the letters. As you eat, talk about how our names are only a part of our identity. We are also known as children of God (Romans 9:26).
- After sunset, sit on a blanket outside and admire the night sky with your family. Using dark blue or black paper, white paint and toothpicks for brushes, copy the night sky. Explain that the God who placed the stars in the heavens also cares for our every need (Psalm 8:1-4).



Want more?

[Click here](#) or scan the code to get your own *Thriving Family* 2012 Summer Calendar.

Get Thriving Family!

Thriving Family is the one magazine that takes a “total family” approach to parenting, marriage and faith. Each bi-monthly issue is packed with inspiring articles, tips for your child’s age and stage, marriage insights, advice from the experts, fun family activities and more. Plus, it’s absolutely FREE! Get your subscription today at [ThrivingFamily.com](#).

Crafts and Activities

Simple, kid-friendly ideas for summer fun.

Outdoor Art

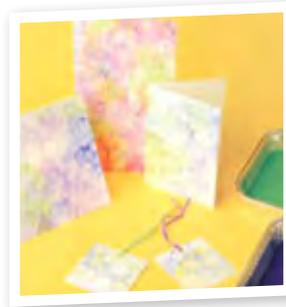
Keep mess to a minimum with this easy, colorful craft.

Gather

Old clothes
9-by-13-inch foil or metal pans
Water
Dishwashing liquid
Liquid washable tempera paint
Straws
Paper or cardstock

Go

1. Fill the pan with 1/2 inch of water.
2. Add 1 tablespoon dishwashing liquid and stir.
3. Add 8 tablespoons tempera paint and stir.
4. Repeat with different colors in other pans.
5. Place straw in paint and blow bubbles to cover entire pan with several inches of bubbles.
6. Place paper gently on top of bubbles and lift quickly. Do not let the paper touch the surface of the water. Use the same paper and repeat with other bubble paint colors to layer the paint patterns.
7. Experiment with different sizes of bubbles or add more paint for darker shades.
8. Let paper dry and make it into cards, gift tags or stationery.
9. Save it for next time! Bubble paint solutions can be stored in clean containers and used again!



Super Bubble Slime

Blow giant bubbles—or see how high it can bounce!

Gather

1/4 cup school gel glue
Food coloring
1/4 cup liquid laundry starch
Plastic zip bag or airtight container

Go

1. Pour school glue gel into a small bowl. Add one drop of food coloring and stir until blended.
2. Slowly pour the mixture into a bowl containing the liquid starch.
3. Let the mixture sit for five minutes. Remove it from the bowl, then slowly knead it with your hands until the glue absorbs almost all of the liquid starch. The more you knead your Super Bubble Slime, the firmer it will be come.
4. Wrap a blob of the Bubble Slime on the end of a straw and blow a large bubble. Or, wad it up and bounce it on a clean floor.
5. Store Super Bubble Slime in a plastic zip bag or airtight container.



Try even more crafts.

Click [here](#) or scan for more craft ideas from *Focus on the Family Clubhouse*® magazine.

Crafts and Activities

Simple, kid-friendly frozen treat to cool off with this summer.

Peachy Keen Smoothie

by Tasha from New Mexico

A delicious frozen treat to help kids cool off this summer.



Tip: Buy it local! Turn gathering your smoothie ingredients into a fun family outing, by visiting a local farmers' market. You'll get the freshest fruits while supporting the local economy. Remember, you can always adjust the recipe to take advantage of fruits that are available in your area.

Gather

- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1 or 2 fresh peaches
- 8 to 10 strawberries
- 1/2 banana
- 1 8-ounce can mandarin oranges
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup orange juice
- 2 to 3 scoops vanilla ice cream
- 12 ice cubes

Go

1. Put all the ingredients in a large blender (you may have to cut the recipe in half).
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Enjoy your smoothie in the sun with your family.
4. If you have extra, freeze your smoothie in an ice-cube tray to make a frozen treat.



Try another great recipe.

Click [here](#) or scan for more recipe ideas from *Focus on the Family Clubhouse*® magazine.

Family Reading Tips

This article comes courtesy of Shannon Hale and ThrivingFamily.com.

Students lose an average of one month of academic learning over the summer break, according to research from the RAND Corporation. To prevent this “summer slide,” make reading a part of your family’s summer fun.



Read together

My husband and I each choose one book in our kids’ favorite series and read alongside them. Reading from their area of interest gives us a glimpse into their world and leads to great discussions.

Make research fun

Going on vacation? Research your destination. Challenge the kids to find one fun fact about local history or animal life and gather information on possible places to explore.

Take advantage of library reading programs

Many libraries have fun incentives. Our library sponsors prize giveaways and social events for tweens.

Start a book club

Choose a popular title and invite your kids and their friends to read along. Organize a get-together close to summer’s end that includes food, fun and discussion.



Get more great tips.

[Click here](#) or scan for this article and other great tips from ThrivingFamily.com.

Kids' Reading List

Looking for great books for your kids? Check out our summer reading list! Each is Focus on the Family-approved for positive content and age-appropriateness.

Ages 0-4

Hermie and Friends

Join Hermie, Wormie and other small friends for big lessons about talking to God and living for Him. From Max Lucado.

Big Thoughts for Little Thinkers

Simple concepts and lessons make it easy for you to introduce your child to God and the basics of the Christian faith.

Listen, Live and Laugh Bible Stories

Help kids start strong with favorite Bible stories—Noah and the Ark, The Creation Story, Jonah and the Whale and more.

Ages 4-8

Adventures of Rowdy Raccoon

Rowdy is always getting into trouble—and learning important lessons about faith, friendship and character.

Day-by-Day Begin to Read Bible

Help your child start a daily quiet time with God. You'll both love the colorful illustrations and simple lessons.

Creepy Creatures and Bizarre Beasts from the Bible

From dinosaurs to talking donkeys, the Bible is full of surprises for your child to explore. Based on Luke 2:52.

The Imagination Station Series

With the help of Mr. Whittaker and the Imagination Station, cousins Patrick and Beth travel back in time to solve age-old mysteries.

Ages 8-12

Soul Surfer Series

The inspiring true story of teen surfer and shark attack survivor Bethany Hamilton.

Mandie Series

Growing up in the 1900s is full of mystery, adventure and friendship for 11-year-old Mandie. Just for girls.

William Wilberforce: The Freedom Fighter

Challenge your teen with the true story of a man whose beliefs were strong enough to challenge slavery.

Ages 13 and up

Facing Your Giants

Life's challenges are no big deal when God's on your side. From award-winning author Max Lucado.

Passages

Bible stories take an exciting, modern day twist in these mysteries from the creators of Adventures in Odyssey.

9 Things Teens Should Know

A just-for-teens guide to choosing friends, media discernment, dealing with emotions and more.

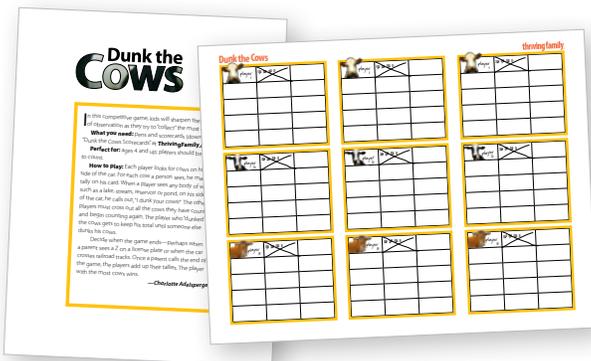


Find more great books.

[Click here](#) or scan for more of our top kids' book recommendations.

Road Trip Activities

You've heard of I Spy, but what about Dunk the Cows? Say goodbye to "are we there yet?" and hello to these fun family travel games from *Thriving Family!*



Dunk the Cows

Help kids laugh and sharpen their observation skills as they try to "collect" the most cows—and "dunk" their opponents!
Ages 4 and up.



[Click here](#) or scan to download.



Road Sign Bingo

Take bingo on the go with these colorful street sign score cards. Print as many as you'd like. *Ages 5 and up.*



[Click here](#) or scan to download.



The Can Game

This homemade board game is easy to assemble, safe for the car and perfect for road trips. *Ages 5 and up.*



[Click here](#) or scan to download.

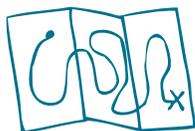
Road Trip Activities

Road trips are a great opportunity to explore new places, spend time with your family and leave the ordinary behind. Keep the kids laughing and entertained on long car rides with these creative travel activities.



Me Mail

Before you go, purchase plenty of postcard stamps. On each day of your trip, buy a postcard, write down what happened that day and mail it to yourself. By the time you get home, you'll have a trip full of memories to read!



Map the Route

To create a board game, mark your hometown and vacation destination on a map with two circles. (First ask Mom or Dad if it's OK.) Now draw a curvy path between the two circles. Divide the path into 35 spaces. Color in the spaces: 20 green, five red, five blue and five yellow (in random order).

To play, take turns rolling a die. Move your marker the number of spaces rolled. If you land on green: stay; red: go back to start; blue: receive an extra turn; yellow: lose a turn. The first player to reach your travel destination wins.



Alphabet Scoop

While riding in the car or waiting for a meal in a restaurant, draw a five-by-five tic-tac-toe grid. Ask a parent to randomly call out letters (excluding x, q and z). As letters are called, randomly fill in your grid. If a vowel is called, fill in two spaces with that letter. When your grid is full, see how many words you can find, searching forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.



Travel Puzzles

Make puzzles with your extra maps or postcards. Cut maps into interlocking pieces or cut postcards with wavy, zigzag cuts, etc. Time yourself putting them back together.



Get the Picture

Before your trip, have each person in the family create a list for another family member. Use a disposable (or digital) camera to capture photos of each item on your list: the cabin you stay at, a historic statue, the Iowa state sign. When you get home, share the pictures and relive the fun.



On a Roll

For this car game, you'll need two dice. Players take turns rolling, adding the two numbers together after each roll. The first player to reach 100 wins. If a player rolls doubles, he loses his points and must start over.



Get even more road trip ideas.

Scan the code or visit clubhousemagazine.com/extras/travel-fun

Drive-Time Devotions

Every road trip or quick trip in the car can be an opportunity to grow your child's faith. Check out these kid-friendly family devotionals from your friends at Adventures in Odyssey®—then play, talk and pray together.

You Are Made Unique: Personality and Abilities

Play: Observe the color and type of your vehicle (blue SUV, red van, yellow car.) When you see similar vehicles on the road, call out “eureka!” (“I found it!”)



Talk: Discuss the difference (age, wear, dents) among vehicles. Each has characteristics that make it unique. Like vehicles, no two people are exactly alike. Psalm 139:14 says we are “fearfully and wonderfully made.” Discuss some of the differences between people, emphasizing God’s unique design. Identify two unique personality traits or abilities for each family member.

Pray: Thank God for the ways He has made your family members unique.

You Can Bless Others

Play: Using the letters of each person’s name, give compliments that begin with each letter. For example, Sam could be s-sweet, a-awesome, m-marvelous.



Talk: Compliments are one way to bless others. Ephesians 4:29 says our words should build up others. When we are mad at someone, we sometimes say unkind things, but the Bible teaches us to bless people—even those who hurt us (Luke 6:28). Just as we thought of kind words to describe members of our family, we can find ways to build others up and bless them. Who would you like to bless through kind words?

Pray: Ask God to help you use your words to bless others by encouraging them.



Looking for more
Drive-Time Devotions?

[Click here](#) or scan to download
the complete guide!

Safe Summer Jobs

Do you have a little entrepreneur on your hands? Helping your teen save for camp or a special trip? Helping your kids with a summer job is an excellent way to encourage creativity and teach important lessons about money management and giving to others. Start with these “small-business” ideas that require little training and little to no start-up costs.

1. Watch younger children for a few hours

2. Organize a neighborhood yard sale and sell unwanted household goods

3. Care for neighbors' pets; walk or bathe dogs

4. Cut grass, for friends and neighbors

5. Tutor other students

6. Assist at a child's birthday party or help entertain party-goers

7. Set up tech gadgets for those less tech-savvy

8. Wash and vacuum cars

9. Sell items on Ebay® (with parent's permission and help!)



10. Make and sell handcrafted items or baked goods

11. Help clean or paint

12. Sell snacks for a profit at community events

13. Sell produce grown from a backyard garden

14. Design unique T-shirts or other crafts to sell at craft fairs



Tip: Make sure to double check any special permissions or permits for your community. As always, we encourage parents to be involved along the way for the safest and most fun experience.



Want to learn more?

[Click here](#) or scan for the complete article.

Just for Parents

Tips and encouragement to make this summer count.



Summer Survival Guide

Family expert and author Kathy Peel provides insight from her book *The Family Manager's Guide to Summer Survival* for parents looking to cure summertime boredom in their children.

[Click here](#) or scan to listen.

About Kathy

Kathy Peel is the founder and CEO of Family Manager Coaching. She is also a popular public speaker and the author of more than 20 books including *Desperate Households*, *Be Your Best* and *Discover Your Destiny*. Popularly known as “America’s Family Coach,” Kathy is often interviewed as an expert on home management, women’s health and numerous family-related topics. Her articles have appeared in many major newspapers and magazines.



Connect with Your Teen: Share a Summer Adventure

Make memories and strengthen your relationship with your teen by engaging in his or her favorite activities.

[Click here](#) or scan to read.



Seize the Summer: July

Get 31 creative activities to try with your family this July!

[Click here](#) or scan to download.

Date Night Tips

“Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: ‘What! You too? I thought I was the only one.’” —C.S. Lewis

Finding Common Interests and Hobbies

It's a common theme for many married couples—he likes to do “guy stuff” like playing sports, collecting baseball cards, or going hunting. She likes “girly stuff” like scrapbooking, sewing, or blogging about bargains. But when husbands and wives get too caught up in “doing their own thing,” they are missing out on critical opportunities to connect with one another.

Developing common interests and hobbies can decrease conflict in marriage and strengthen the idea that you and your spouse are a team. Having common hobbies can help couples deepen their sense of intimacy, connection, and especially friendship.

Tips for Cultivating Common Interests

- Don't knock it 'til you've tried it. Wives, there are plenty of women who enjoy films in which “stuff gets blowed up real good,” to coin a phrase used by Roger Ebert. And husbands, there are a ton of guys who appreciate films like *The Young Victoria*—although they probably wouldn't admit as much to their male friends.

- Consider what you're already doing. Your wife may enjoy your woodworking hobby. Your husband might like to try gardening with you. But have you ever asked them to participate?
- Start your own two-person reading group. Try reading the same book over the course of a week or two, and then come together on your date night to discuss what you've read.
- Serve together. Your areas of common interest shouldn't be confined to just entertainment and recreation. Perhaps there's a social issue that you both feel passionate about, such as feeding the hungry or advocating for pro-life causes. Look for volunteer opportunities in your area.



Get more date night advice.

[Click here](#) or scan for more tips—plus 5 steps to an unforgettable, memorable date night.