

SUMMER

Family Activity Packet

MORE THAN FUN IN THE SUN: BUILDING A FAMILY CULTURE

Summertime offers an excellent opportunity for families to connect. Meaningful and memorable family activities are not just clever ways to entertain your children — they are opportunities to create a positive, collaborative, and joyful family culture.

Set aside time for a family brainstorming session, and make a list of possible summer activities. You can use the ideas from this packet as a starting point, or you can look to friends or online resources. For some families, simple plans work best; for other families, big adventures build memories. Be creative and try new things, but be realistic considering what works for your family.

FAMILY FUN “PRO TIPS”

- **PLAN AHEAD:** Sometimes looking forward to an event is as exciting as actually doing it.
- **FRIENDING:** Spending time with peers is important for children, but family outings are not always ideal for bringing friends along. Consider these dynamics carefully as you plan.
- **NEW NORMAL:** Break out of familiar ruts by trying something new each week. Try a new restaurant, park, library, podcast, activity, or even grocery store. Explore KC with fresh eyes.
- **MEMBERSHIPS:** Try rotating memberships (Zoo, Science City, etc.) annually. Taking a year “off” of a family favorite will make “on” years more enjoyable (and easier on your budget!).

CLOSE TO HOME: SUMMER IN YOUR HOME AND NEIGHBORHOOD

- **INDIAN CREEK TRAIL:** You are probably already aware that this 26-mile trail weaves through most of Johnson county. Find new ways to use this resource with your family. Parents might run together with teens, with younger siblings on bikes or scooters, or with littles in strollers. Explore nature along the trail; make interesting stops; count bunny sightings or flower varieties.
- **GEOCACHING:** first, get the app. Second, enjoy the excitement of finding geocached treasure!
- **GAME NIGHT:** Sometimes the classics are the best. Share a game that you played as a child.
- **CRAFTS:** Craft ideas can be simple, quick, and inexpensive ... or elaborate and involved! For older kids, venture beyond glue and paper. Make slime, jewelry, bath bombs, complicated origami, or a canvas painting. Checkout online tutorials or library books to gather ideas and information.

Kansas City Metro:

“ON THE HOUSE”: WHERE TO SPEND FAMILY TIME (NOT CASH)

- **FAMILY FUNDAYS:** Bundle simple activities to create bigger family adventures. Be mindful of your ages and stages; balance activities. For younger children, a quiet morning at the Nelson-Atkins might be followed with a picnic lunch at Loose Park and time to play at the splash pad.
- **LEA MCKEIGHAN (SOUTH):** located in Lee’s Summit, this “ropes park” is one of the most unique parks in the KC metro area. It offers extensive rope climbing structures, a zip line, bungee cord swings, musical instruments, and shade canopies. This park will be of interest to a variety of ages. Stop by the Miller J. Fields Splash Park (just a 2 mile drive) to cool off afterwards. Tip: try packing a lunch to enjoy at the picnic area of the splash park. For younger kids, the newly renovated Lea McKeighan North combines lower rope structures and a splash pad in 1 location.
- **BEYOND BOOKS:** Check local libraries for events, classes, and offerings; you will find everything from 3-D printer labs to puppet shows. Tip: check out activity books for easy fun around home (i.e. origami, baking, crafting, sewing, gardening, or various “how to” books).
- **FAVORITE PARKS:** Antioch Park | Black Bob Park | Jacob Loose Park (rose gardens) | Penguin Park | Franklin Park | Swope Park | Roe Park | Valley Park | John Anderson Splash Park
- **FREE FOOD:** Seeking out free treats may sound like a trivial endeavor, but children (especially grade school aged) seem to love the adventure! June 7th (National Donut Day): check Lamar’s for 1 free glazed donut per guest. July 9th (Cow Appreciation Day): dress like a cow to receive 1 free meal per guest at Chick-Fil-A. July 11th (7/11): free Slurpees at 7-Eleven.
- **CROWN TO MARKET:** Park and start your morning at Crown Center. Walk the sky bridge to Union Station. Catch a cable car to the City Market. Grab farm-fresh produce or interesting spices; try the beignets (a kid-crowd pleasing favorite!). Stop by Central Library on the cable car return.
- **MORE FREE FUN:** Kaleidoscope | Moon Marble Company | The Money Museum | Lakeside Nature Center | Gorman Conservation Center | Deanna Rose (free after 2pm, M-Th) | Nelson-Atkins Art Museum | The Plaza Art Fair | Union Station | OP Farmer’s Market | Ernie Miller Nature Center | Kauffman Memorial Garden | Frontier Army Museum | Sprint Family Fun Days

STAYCATION SPLURGES: FOR SOMETHING EXTRA

Breakout KC | Blackbob Bay | Kansas City Zoo | Worlds/Oceans of Fun | Mesner Puppet Theater | Jaegerz Laser Tag | Paradise Park | Negro Leagues Baseball Museum | Mahaffie Farm | Go Ape | Kansas City T-Bones Baseball Game | The Coterie Theater | Royal’s Baseball Game | Prairie Star Ranch | Bury the Hatchet | Pinstripes | Family Bowling | Great Wolf Lodge | The Arboretum | Powell Gardens | 5k Fun Run (check KC Running for events calendar) | Sea Life Aquarium | LEGO Land | A Movie Theater Matinée | and last but never least ... KC Barbeque (try a new-to-you spot)

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FAMILY FAITH BUILDING IDEAS

- **FAITH AND FUN:** Pair faith-building with fun or recreational activities. Positive attitudes toward religion and practice of faith are often formed early in life. If your family decides to wake up early for morning Mass, consider stopping for a donut or small treat after.
- **PRAIRIE STAR RANCH:** Did you know that there is much more to Prairie Star Ranch than Camp Tekakwitha? Attend PSR Family Day, tent-camp with your family, rent a cabin, or spend a day hiking around the grounds. Check the Prairie Star webpage for availability and options.
- **FACE TO FACE:** Attend Face to Face with your family or spend time in the Eucharistic Adoration Chapel. For younger children, Eucharistic Adoration will probably need to be brief. Consider your child's particular disposition and capabilities. Be firm with your expectations for behavior without being overly forceful. Present Eucharistic Adoration as a privilege, not a chore.
- **CHURCH HOPPING:** Visit historic Catholic churches as parts of larger family adventures, or swap your usual weekend Mass routine. Experiencing the rich history and architectural grandeur of historic churches helps illuminate the mystery and beauty of our faith. Occasionally celebrating Mass with other Catholic communities helps children appreciate the universality of Catholicism.
- **HISTORIC CATHOLIC CHURCHES:** Our Lady of Perpetual Help | The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception | St. Peter's Cathedral | St. Vincent De Paul | Holy Rosary | Our Lady of Sorrows
- **SUMMER MASS:** Find an "extra" Mass time that works well for your summer schedule. Look beyond your own parish for times that accommodate your schedule.
- **ONLINE RESOURCES:** Check catholic webpages and podcasts for other faith enrichment ideas. Here are a few favorites: Catholic Icing, The Messy Family Project, The Catholic Podcast, Catholic Sprouts, Formed, and School of Faith daily Devotions (audio downloads available).

PARENT-CHILD "DATES"

Find time to spend time with your children one on one. Dedicated parent/child time does not need to involve elaborate activities or extensive amounts of time. Take one child with you on a trip to the grocery store, or take one child out for ice cream or coffee. Challenge yourself to ask questions and give affirmations rather than direction. Give your child time and space to express thoughts that the busyness of daily life might crowd out. Listen attentively; what can you learn about your child?

Going the Extra Mile:

PILGRIMAGE DESTINATIONS (THAT DO NOT REQUIRE AIRFARE!)

- **ST. PHILIPPINE DUCHESNE MEMORIAL PARK:** (Centerville, Kansas): If you are willing to drive one hour, you can walk where a canonized saint has walked and worked! Besides learning about how St. Philippine Duchesne served the Potawatomi Indians during their forced "Trail of Death" march in the 1800s, you will learn about an event in U.S. history that should never be forgotten.
- **THE BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF PERPETUAL ADORATION:** (Clyde Missouri): This beautiful pilgrimage destination is just a 2-hour drive from home. The Clyde Monastery chapel and grounds are filled with compelling statues, all nestled in an idyllic country setting. On site, you will find a room of over 500 relics. As a bonus, visit Conception Abbey, only a few miles away from Clyde.
- **VACATION PILGRIMAGE:** You can turn any family vacation into a mini-pilgrimage by visiting shrines, touring religious sites, or attending Mass at historic churches or Basilicas. Rather than simply "fitting Mass in," make Mass a meaningful priority and choose your location with care. Find the perfect Mass for your family adventure at masstimes.org.

DAY TRIP DESTINATIONS BEYOND KC METRO

- **WESTON:** This historic Kansas community is a 50 minute drive from Overland Park. Attractions include Green Dirt Farm and Creamery, O'Malley's Pub, and Pirtle Winery. Celebrate Mass or participate in a self-guided tour at Holy Trinity, a breathtaking and historic Catholic church that is over 100 years old.
- **MIAMI COUNTY:** This Kansas community offers a great escape from city life with only a 30 minute drive. The Louisburg Cider Mill is a favorite local attraction (check their events calendar before planning your trip). Families also enjoy the Cedar Cove Feline Sanctuary (devoted to endangered large cats).
- **INDEPENDENCE, MO:** Visit the home of 33rd President Harry S. Truman, or tour his Presidential Library. Children will love old-fashioned phosphates from Clinton's Soda Fountain or a picnic lunch at Waterfall Park. St. Mary's Catholic Church, which was founded in 1823, is the perfect blend of historic grandeur and cozy-quaintness. An additional 30 minute drive will take you to Missouri Town 1855, where families can explore a living history museum, which includes a functioning blacksmith shop, a mercantile, and an old fashioned church.

PUT YOURSELF IN "TIMEOUT"

For parents with children in the home, summer can offer its own set of challenges. Give yourself permission to take "timeouts." Nurture meaningful friendships, find ways to prioritize your own spiritual growth, or plan a date with your spouse. You will ultimately be a more effective (and happier!) parent if you consider your own needs too. A few ideas: go on a coffee date with a friend; attend early morning Mass or Eucharistic Adoration by yourself; go for evening walks; spend time on enjoyable hobbies (i.e. gardening, baking, golfing, exercise — whatever fills you with life!)