



Just to make the ordinary, extraordinary, I designate selected Fridays as Friday Fun Day. The events for that day are usually kept a secret and only revealed to them as the day unfolds. I give the kids some hints as to what to pack in their backpacks. Things we have done before or will do this year....a play date at a park with friends.....a day full of running errandsa trip to a museum. One particular Friday last year that stands out in my mind was the day we attended a birthday party, visited some garage sales, walked through our downtown together and then went to a petting zoo. The car must be equipped with snacks, CDs to sing along with, books on tape or games like auto bingo, etc. Half the fun is the excitement and the growing anticipation as Friday approaches each week, as they kids wonder and try to figure out what fun things we going to do that day.

Kathryn

I am planning a tea-party for some girls ages 6-12 in our church. I think it will be a fun way to practice our cooking, housecleaning, and hosting skills. All of us are very excited about this one!

Megan (age 15)

One of the events that I planned for my youth, that could be adapted to parents, is a movie night outside. Set up a projector and have it shine against the house and enjoy a movie and the great outdoors (also a great way to get to know neighbors by inviting them)

Jenn

When my children were little and it was a hot summer day, I made sure they were all occupied with something in the house. Then I took a box of popsicles I had purchased from the store, used a hole punch to puncture the wrapping, tied a string to the popsicle wrapping and then hung them from the tree branches of our front yard tree.

I then went into the house and announced, "The popsicle tree is blooming! The popsicle tree is blooming!" They ran outside and saw our tree covered with hanging popsicles! They ran and got their little neighborhood friends and everyone sat outside enjoying popsicles.

To this day, that is the one summer memory they will almost always bring up! It's inexpensive, easy and a fun surprise!

Rita

Although I do not have any younger siblings, I do have some sweet younger neighbors. And each summer I like to prepare a few "fun days" for my little friends. We play planned games in the sprinkler outside or go to our neighborhood pool. Afterwards I'll have a special snack prepared and we might watch a movie, play some indoor games, or make a craft that I've set out for them. And sometimes I'll plan themes for the special day. For example, one day I'll plan a "camp" theme and we'll have bandanas and go on a hike. There are endless possibilities when you have a group of kids waiting to have fun! And believe me, they do have FUN! And it's a wonderful way to bless them.

Jessina

My summer activity is below, written in a letter to the other moms in my small group:

Hey Ladies,

Hope this Friday finds you well and anticipating time with you hubby this weekend.

At our last Ladies event we talked about doing something fun with our kiddos this summer. We don't have all the details yet but we will be going through the fruits of the spirit over the summer. A new fruit each week. My thought is kinda like vacation bible school.... ie corresponding crafts, games, stories, ticket and prizes (like chuck e cheese). Each of us would sign up for 1 week, plan all the stories and events for that time. I was thinking the host would also plan lunch, nothing fancy- frozen pizza, nuggets, maybe apple or grapes and a fun snack or dessert.

I was also thinking about purchasing prizes for them to trade their tickets in for and we would have our prize box each week. My thought was to spend 10 per child for the 9 week course. Let me know if you think this is okay or if you have any problems with that. I will probably hit up the Dollar Store or Oriental Trading. I will also have a chart for the memory verse and that I will bring to each meeting and they can get tickets for that as well. As far as tickets go- I'd love to be on the look out for evidences of grace in our children, specifically that have to do with the different fruits of the spirit we are learning about. If you observe these of another child does and hand over a ticket. I really want our kiddos to be pointing these out to- so a ticket for the child who points it out and a ticket for the child who exhibited the "fruit". Let me know if you think this will work or if this is a good idea.

Looking forward to this time with you all, what a special way to invest in each other and our children together ~ For His Glory may our times of craziness be filled with grace, sprinkled with love many seeds planted deep in the hearts of our children! Eternal Investments! Thanks Ladies, Kriscinda

Friday June 27th- Love-
July 11th- Joy-
July 18th- Peace
July 25th- Patience-
Aug 1st- Kindness-
Aug 8th- Goodness
Aug 15th- Faithfulness
Aug 22nd- Gentleness
Aug 28th- Self- Control- Kriscinda

Memory Verse:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” Galatians 5: 22-24

Time Frame

10:00 until 12:00 For those of us with napping lil ones =)

Tentative Schedule of Events

10-10:15 -Arrive and Greet

10:15 -Sing together- There is a song we will do that teaches us the verse and pray- ask for prayer request and spend a brief time to pray

10:30 - Story, craft, game- whatever you have planned

11:20 - Lunch & Wrap Up

12:00 - Head Home

Kriscinda

Bagels for birds-spread bagels with peanut butter and birdseed, with a string, tie the bagels to a tree near one of your windows.

One side balloon volleyball-the object of the game is to get the players to the other side of the net and back as many times as possible, each player volleys the ball to another player and then goes under the net. The last player to touch the balloon puts it over the net, then runs under himself.

Cloud Watching–Lay on your backs and look up at the clouds on a day when they are making interesting formation. Give everyone 30 seconds to decide what the cloud looks like

Honor your child day--they get to select the main meal, and gets to go shopping or something they like to do.... Let the table centerpiece be some of their favorite things. When they sit down, pin a homemade gold star with glitter ion it for them. After the meal, sit them on a chair in the middle of the room for a "press conference" The rest of the family takes turns asking them questions. Discuss how their name was chosen and what it means, , show home videos! Share your spiritual commitment made that day to raise them in a Godly home. Make a flower and put their name in the center and on the petals, put words such as loving, helpful, etc. Glue it together and tape on their bedroom wall. Play a special game that the child chooses, Pray scripture over them. Say a special prayer and say goodnite!

Get Wet – For once stay out in the rain. Pick a warm day when it's raining hard, but there's no thunder or lightning. Wear a bathing suit, if it's warm enough. Make leaf boats and sail them in the gutters.

Paper Cup Water Fight – everyone gets a paper cup. everyone gets access to a water supply. Everyone tries to soak everyone else. Or if you don't object to having toy guns around, use them!

4th of July Pin the Star on the Flag Game – Tack a large flag to the outside porch, Over the stars paste a square of dark blue cloth. Give each person a paper star and blindfold them, turn them around and pin the star in its proper place.

Care Package – One thing we love to do...is when we know that friends are going on vacation and have a lot of little ones, we make a car care package. We wrap up all kinds of things to be opened 1 item an hour as they drive. This has been such a blast for the giver and the reciever. Some of the things we have used are...silly putty, color book and crayons, army men, polly pockets, travel games, licorice, life savers, candy of any kind, craft kits, journal, match box cars, playdo, hair stuff, games, the possibilities are endless!

And here are some fun things my husband and I did as kids....

Walking barefoot across the hot streets on the way to the pool

messing around in the creek

Crawfish hunting

exploring in the woods

hiking and camping at a lake

playing kickball

kick the can

starlight/moonlight

eating freezepops

setting up jump ramps for our bikes

throwing rocks

nightcrawler hunting

lemonade stand

playing in the rain filled street gutters

making wax candles with crayons

looking through catalogs and wishing for all the stuff we could have.

jump rope

tug of war

kite flying

board games

pick flowers together

weed the flower bed

swing together

blow bubbles bubble gum blowing contests

watch star trek together

play croquet

wrestling together

Tammy

This activity is especially fun for older toddler/early elementary school kids. It's a wonderful way to get them active outside AND recognizing the beauty of God's creation in all its forms. Here's what you'll need:

- * a large hula-hoop
- * a notebook or paper of some kind for each child
- * colored pencils

Go to a local park and throw the hula-hoop. The kids have to run to it and draw as many things as they find INSIDE the hula-hoop. When they're done, throw it again! The kiddos have a BLAST discovering new things in each circle. And it provides a perfect opportunity to talk about the glory of God in the diversity of His creation.

"Declare...his marvelous works" takes on a whole new meaning with younger children when they actually start noticing the world around them. :o)

Michelle

This summer I've organized a regular time of fellowship for the ladies and kids of our small church. This would also work well for a large care group (possibly 2-3), a Bible study group, or even a neighborhood that has lots of kids.

Each Thursday we are going to meet at someone's home (alternating between a few) from 10:30 to 1:00pm. Everyone brings their own lunch and towel if there is a swimming pool. The kids have a blast playing together and look forward to a set aside time each week to get together. And the grown-ups get a chance to visit and relax.

Christina

Come the start of the good weather we pitch our large family tent which has 3 bedrooms and a rather large living area. This is a big day for our kids when this tent goes up as they know it's the commencement of having friends over for meals, loads of fun in the garden and the occasional sleep over. This year we are hoping to widen our ministry to the young people in the church by having them over for pizza and BBQ nights with some fellowship incorporated.

Our kids basically play in the tent all day which helps things in the house:-) It's like having a holiday home in the garden! We also have 2 smaller tents which have been up as the weather is quite good here. On the one hand it sounds so simple and even so silly, but our kids just love tents. They fill them with cushions, books, and snacks and makes for hours of good fun playing simply together (that can be read as without the input of electronic devices which most kids seem to need these days!!).

Anyway with regard to this activity we pray for good weather as our weather here is somewhat undependable!

Elaine

One of my favorite summer activities is what my husband and I call the "Summer Book-Reading Contest". It was inspired by our love for the summer reading contests sponsored by our local libraries growing up, where you could rack up prizes for reading books (which we loved to do anyway!). Every year, we welcome the arrival of summer by picking an official start date for our contest. Then we start reading, and keep reading throughout the summer! We keep

track of all the books we read in our special “Summer Book–Reading Contest” notebook. At the end of the summer the winner gets a special prize (usually another book!) and bragging rights for the coming year. It’s a friendly, light–hearted competition which encourages us to read, and we both look forward to it every summer. I especially love looking at lists from past years and remembering all the books we’ve read and good times we’ve had–from reading on the beach during our honeymoon to reading my first Jane Austen novel while on vacation. This year we have a new competitor too; our son, who was born in September, has an official 2008 page in our record book!

Jill

We have a group of moms & kids getting together every Wednesday for a different activity. One of our activities will be renting a giant waterslide for the day and splitting the cost (\$13 pp).

My family also has a membership to the local zoo. It was \$75 for the year for the four of us and we get special discounts on food, rentals and other zoos in our state. They also offer special member only events during the year. One trip pays for itself – so it's something to look into!

Nicki

Here are some common summer activities for our family of 6:

Picnic lunches in our yard, laying out on blankets

Water balloon fights

Pirate wars: sword fights and treasure hunts

Sea creature studies: get books at the library then go to the beach and aquarium to learn, touch, and play with the sea creatures.

Summer building project: this year we are going to have the boys help daddy build a fence

Staying outside: take a bag of children's books and setting outside with my kids to read, keeps my heart focused on them and engages me and keeps my mind off my chores, that can wait.

Drive in movies

Going on a cricket hunt, we have read the very quiet cricket by eric carl and then tip toe thru our forest searching and listening for cricket s in the evening, this also works for fireflies.

Hunting for bugs, worms, turtles, etc.

Making footprints and handprints in dirt, sand, paint

Making a piñata and going to the store and each kid picks out wrapped candy, you fill your paper mache piñata and you invite friends over for a bbq dinner and kids whack the piñata! The kids have looked forward and celebrated this each year!

Family foot races, three legged races, outside games like croquet, boche, badmitten, soccer, with prizes from the dollar store

Trisha

I have some VERY simple summer ideas, having grown up back in the dark ages (I'm now 51!). And I have had so much fun using these ideas with my eight children over the years (now ages 26 down to 7).

One of the first is one my grandma (Jennie Marie Hubbartt Riley, if you remember from the grandmother tributes in May) had ready for us when we went to visit her for a week each summer. She would save a few empty plastic bottles that had held dishwashing liquid. On hot summer days, she would fill those with water, and we would take them out to the sidewalk. The water would squirt out of the opening well enough to "write" or draw pictures on the sidewalk. We got pretty good at it! No clean-up required – the water evaporates quickly, erasing your work. And if we were barefoot, we found it safer to stand in the grass beside the hot pavement, rather than on it.

Another simple idea our kids loved was an old-fashioned tire swing. Just make sure you have a sturdy rope!

We enjoy croquet as a family, as well as badminton. Those games are fun and not too competitive. And a few years ago we invested in a hammock for the backyard, putting it under a couple of shady trees – what a great place to read a couple of books after lunch, and get a child sleepy enough for a nap.

How about catching fireflies (we always called them lightning bugs) in jars with holes punched in the lids? How special it is for a child to go to sleep with those glowing off and on in a jar beside the bed!

Friends of ours gave a party last year with old-fashioned games like egg toss, three-legged races, tug-of-war, and gunny sack races. Lots of fun and laughter for the whole family! Then each family brought a dessert to share, and an auction was held of donated items to provide money for a mission trip.

My very favorite has been the years that we decided to put on our own family "fair". County and state fairs can be places with some pretty icky things any more, not to mention the immodest dress on many of those attending that you would rather avoid. So we made our own fair for the backyard. We included a pie eating contest (I can send the recipe for the easy chocolate pies we used); a baking contest (you can only use 7 ingredients in our contest, and at least one of those ingredients has to be chosen from a list we make up – like raisins, cinnamon, cherries, etc.); and everyone has to make up at least one game or contest for everyone else to do. We have had races to sit on balloons, BB gun target shooting contests, dropping clothespins into bottles, dropping coins into jars in the bottom of a large bucket of water, tractor "pulls" using matchbox tractors, and many more creative and unusual contests. Try a dress-up the animals contest! (Animals required for that one.) We wind up the fair with a water-balloon fight. (Requires a hot day!)

Susie

I have two toddlers, but when they get a bit older, I want to take a summer and plan activities for every letter of the alphabet. Not all

have to be big, but all have to be documented with a photo which will be made into a book for the kids to review the fun they have had over the years.

You can either make a photobook on www.shutterfly.com or just put the pictures in a scrapbook of your own with a big letter A, B, C, etc. on the page. A good way to learn your alphabet and have fun making memories.

Jessica

When I taught elementary school, we explored the subject of "bubbleology" (the study of bubbles). You can check out books from the library, find ideas on the internet, etc. It's a great activity that could be done at home or church (outside of course). Basically, you learn about surface tension (why bubbles are round), how to make bubble solution that results in longer lasting bubbles, and experiment with different "wands." The children especially love making HUGE bubbles. Two book titles to check out: *The Unbelievable Bubble Book* by John Cassidy and *Bubbleology: A Hands-On Science Kit* by Mike Dammer. It's fun and educational!

Holly

4th of July bike parade. My husband used to do this growing up in Gaithersburg, MD. Get all the kids together in the neighborhood to decorate their bikes/wagons/toy cars, etc. and let the community know about it.

Backyard camping. This one has proven perfect for me since I have a newborn in the house. Set up tents/sleeping bags. Let the kids pack their bags and pick out food for the campfire (a little portable fire pit). Songs and dinner out under the stars. The great thing about it? If everything fails (especially with little ones or moms who are unaccustomed to sleeping outside) you can ditch the whole plan and be in the comfort of your house in minutes. Plus, you have a nice hot shower and GOOD coffee in the morning. For us, the baby

sleeps inside and we have the monitor on to let us know if he wakes up.

Snow Cones in the park. I am trying to teach my 4 year olds about sharing the Gospel and serving others. So, recently we bought a sno cone machine (\$12 @ Wal Mart) and decided we could take it to one of our local busy parks on the weekend and hand out free sno cones to the other kids with some of our "Jesus loves you" stickers, and a couple of cases of bottled water that we would tape Bible verses to.

A Night Out for Mom and Dad too. Living in AZ things slow way down in the summer, especially tourism. And so, on some of those 100+ degree forecasts, the local hotels/resorts run amazing deals on their rooms. I decided to surprise my husband with a night out at one of them. The kids and I checked in early and played at their great pool during the day, then Grandma came and picked them up for the evening. When my husband got off of work he joined me for a romantic evening together, and Grandma dropped the kids back off for more fun at the pool until checkout!

Kelly

Making family "team" T-shirts together (for example, I would love for us to make some t-shirts this summer that have our family "motto" on the front and 'TEAM _____' on the back); Set up a big sheet in your backyard and host a neighborhood movie night on your lawn (showing a family-friendly movie, of course); make a backyard water obstacle course

Gina

One of our summer traditions is to pick strawberries from a local farm. We also really love to make fresh strawberry jam from our berries! It might sound intimidating, but actually it's super easy. We make freezer jam, which does not require jelly jars, cooking, or anything tricky. The recipe has 3 ingredients: sugar, strawberries, and sure-jell. The kids love to help make the jam, as well as give some away as gifts. They also look forward to having jam toast for

breakfast throughout the summer! (We also use some of the berries to make strawberry shortcake, one of our favorites)!

I love it because the whole family participates (Dad comes along for the berry picking part), and it's a great memory to pass on to my kids. Also, the jam we make has less sugar than store-bought varieties, so it's better for them. If you aren't near a strawberry farm, I know you can make many kinds of fruit jam (blueberry, peach, apricot, grape, etc.). You can even just buy some fruit from the grocery, but there is something really great about picking a fresh, warm strawberry off the plant and eating it. In the words of my two-year-old, "Yum-O!"

Taylor

Sometime toward the middle or end of June, we host an end-of-the-year school program. We homeschool our two children. The program gives them a chance to share a little of what they've learned throughout the year with people who care about them. They read selections from their Bibles; they recite something they've memorized. They may do a dramatization from some favorite period of history that we studied. They read some of their written compositions and put their artwork and projects on display. We prepare by focusing on presentation skills and the kids get to choose some of their favorite things from the year to share. We try to have a little audience participation too to keep everyone involved. We invite their aunts and uncles and grandparents. It's been very enjoyable for all of us.

We like to play lots of games in the summer. Last year we taught our 7 and 9 year olds how to play "Rook" and "Risk" and "Take Off" as well as other games. They get a lot of practice in math and geography without even realizing it.

Last summer we had a "Weird Award Contest." We had five extra family members living with us and we've always wondered who was the weirdest (in a good way). We set up rules and when we thought someone did or said something weird, people would vote. (For instance, when my sister tried to stuff a banana up an elephant's trunk instead of its mouth, we voted for her.) At the end of the summer, we had weird prizes.

Doreen

Fox Tail Tag – As a kid I loved to play this game in the local park, where there was lots of room. In a big circle, choose some one to be it, that person who is it, goes to the middle of the area that is chosen, with the fox tail (or “fling sock”). All of the other players scatter, and then a game of tag is played, with the person who is it trying to tag the players by throwing or swinging the fox tail to touch them. To make a fox tail that won't end up hurting anyone you can purchase one at any department store, or, make one with a really long sock, or long fabric pouch, and putting a soft but heavy weight on the end and knotting it in place.

Mary

One of my all time favorites for the littler crowd – buckets of water and paint brushes!

My kids loved this activity from age 1 up. They love "painting" the sidewalk, the steps the garage doors, and it often becomes a race to get done before the sun dries it up! It is also very fun to write in chalk first, and then brush it away. Pick up your brushes at the dollar store and keep some ice cream buckets ready – it is even great on the go – parks, at the lake, or grandma's house. Simple to pack and no mess to clean up!

Liz

Bamming – Since my son likes to "bam" we practiced nailing...with fruit loops. Then we tried bamming other things – like nuts, dried beans, pasta, jelly beans, cookies and bread. This was definitely more fun than just plain nails.

Julie



With the temps in the 90's and only getting hotter – we're staying cool with frozen paint.

For this project I used about 1:1 ratio of washable tempera paint diluted with water. And also experimented with water + food coloring. Both worked great. If you choose to use the food coloring, make sure to paint in a place where stains don't matter.

Cover your diluted paint with foil, poke nifty toothpicks into each compartment and freeze. I froze a couple of "just water" to play with on the patio.

You can use either a fancy–schmancy ice cube tray or plain Jane. You'll have better results if you fill'er up. You don't want a skimpy paint cube to melt off your toothpick. No big deal if you're skimpy – just means you'll eventually paint with your paws instead of the pick.

Julie



A few summers ago, my kids and I started what we call "Quilt Time". We have a special quilt we pull out each summer, load it in the car once a week, grab our library books, and head out to a shady tree somewhere. We bring drinks and any other thing to make us comfortable. At times, I have structured it as follows so we all benefit:

Mom reads something from the Bible

Mom reads a bit from a chapter book that interests everyone

"On your own" reading- usually we divide this up into 15 minute increments so that the younger kids get read to, and we each have time to read on our own. It may look as follows:

15 minutes - 11 year old reads to the 4 and 2 year old, mom and 8 year old read alone

15 minutes - the 8 year old reads to them, mom and 11 year old read aloud

If everyone is still settled, we may take a run of mom reading to the younger two and the older reading on their own; or if we are near a park, the youngsters can go play. But with this format, the older two get the "reading aloud" practice as well.

I also have encouraged them off and on to keep journals of what they are reading. That way, they can look back at it as a memory.

Nicole
