



Positive Parenting
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Marilyn Sharpe

BUT, I'M BORED!

Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice
Philippians 4:4

It's that time of the summer again. August. VBS has already happened. The kids have been to camp. Grandpa and Grandma already came and took the kids out for a fabulous outing. Sports are done. Family vacation is packed away for another year. The novelty of working in the garden or going to the library has worn off. Friends are out of town. And now you hear the line every parent dreads: "But, I'm bored!" It's a whine. It grates on parents nerves even thinking about it.

Parents are tempted to use those unhelpful retorts:

- What about that bike or toy or swing set or game you just had to have?
- You have a season pass for the pool that you've only used twice!
- You've had friends over four times this week.
- If you're really bored, I can give you something to do ... like laundry, dusting, mowing the lawn, or cooking dinner.
- There are no boring situations, only boring people.

No. Not helpful at all.

So, what is really going on?

Two things we can do as adults who love these kids: 1. understand boredom and 2. find things that ignite their imagination, engage them, and invite them to rejoice and love their lives!

What is boredom anyway? Explain to your child that the feeling of boredom is simply a signal that they are done doing whatever they have been doing and they are getting ready to do something different that they will relish and enjoy.

Are you done being the unappreciated cruise director? Is every suggestion you offer met with, "But that is boring, too!" Most parents' ideas are not met with an enthusiastic, "That's a great idea!" So, let kids rediscover the things they love to do. And here are some ways to do just that:

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

1. Invite each family member to create a list of things they love to do. For your youngest children who do not yet write, you be the scribe and make the list or take a picture of your child doing that activity. Post the list on the fridge or bulletin board. When you hear the whine of boredom, refer that child to the list they created. Let them choose from their ideas what they'd like to do next.

2. Have a family meeting dedicated to building a list of what your family would like to do together before summer ends. (These are not the “tasks,” like mastering multiplication tables or weeding the flower garden, but the things that interest everyone in your family.) Create an August calendar and put at least one thing on each week.
3. Get a copy of a newspaper or magazine that highlights upcoming events and opportunities in your area. Pick out a few your family has never done. Decide which one(s) you will do this month.
4. Ask everyone to name one thing that your family did once or used to do that they would like to do before school starts or the snow flies. Add it to your calendar.
5. Create a Family Fun Jar. Put all of your loose change into it. After two weeks, decide what you can do using just the money in the jar ... and go do it!
6. Ask your kids and other adults you admire to help develop a list of freebies - fun, novel, surprising ... and FREE things to be done in your area. Remember outdoor music and movies. How about library story hours or checking out books, books on CD, or movies from the library? The libraries in my area have free admission tickets available for museums and other amazing opportunities. Look in the paper or online to find the days and times that museums offer free admission. Don't overlook the parks and playgrounds. Pack up whatever you were going to eat and make it a picnic. Go swimming or wading. Visit a pet store, just to look, and make it a family project to find out more about the animals and fish and birds you see. Make a tent inside on a rainy day with a sheet and card table. Have a backward day, when clothes are worn backwards, meals are eaten backwards (dinner for breakfast or dessert first), walk backward around the block, and say “Good morning” as you tuck your kids into bed.
7. Discover the resource Doing Good Together. Family service is a spiritual practice, guaranteed to banish boredom, as you live your faith together and make a difference in the lives of others. For family volunteer service opportunities, go to the archive of past newsletters and subscribe to the monthly e-news at <http://www.doinggoodtogether.org/index.php/learn-and-reflect/newsletters/> If you have five minutes or five hours, an infant or a teen, there are ideas for you to make a difference in God's world.
8. Have a family party, celebrating all of the things you have done this summer that are not boring! Let your kids know how resourceful they have been. Tell them how much you love being family with them and how interesting life with them really is! Rejoice!