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## Fun Activities for Families

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Dear Friends,

If February is a month in which you find your enthusiasm waning because the hustle and bustle of the holidays are behind you and the freshness of spring has yet to arrive, then we have something special to suggest for you and your family. Instead of spending time in the doldrums, plan some fun activities for your high schoolers to participate in during the rest of the semester and well into summer. Be sure to include your high schoolers in the planning--that's part of the fun!

We've collected a number of entertaining ideas for events and activities other homeschool families have tried. You may want to plan a similar activity, or use these to jumpstart your own imagination. Some of these ideas will be targeted mainly to teens, others to the whole family, and still others to the seniors looking forward to graduation--of course, any and all can be adapted to your personal preferences.

Due to your own personal convictions, some activities we've listed may not be suitable for your family, but our desire is to pitch a number of ideas to you and then leave it up to you as to which events/activities would add some excitement and fun to your child's high school years. Since we are always looking for additional new ideas, feel free to contact us and let us know of an event you have organized that we might want to include in our list of activities for future reference.

### JUST FOR TEENS

If you haven't noticed, teens love hanging out with their friends and doing things together, but many times it's difficult for one home to accommodate large numbers of teens. Check out gyms at local high schools and colleges to possibly use for sports, exercise, or a party. Some universities may even offer physical education classes for homeschoolers on a regular basis. An example of this is [Salisbury University](#) in Maryland. If no such program is available in your area, you might suggest a similar plan to a college near you.

Teens also love to party! Progressive dinners allow teens to both host their friends and be a guest at others' homes all in one night! Or how about a mystery tour or night, scavenger hunts, or a secret desire party (play the role of what you always wanted to be).

Even academics take on a new light when combined with field trips with other teens. This may also include some overnight trips to historical sites. Check out this [website](#) for [ideas](#).

### JUST FOR MOMS

We moms also need to plan some fun so we'll stay young at heart and benefit from the medicine of laughter. Why not a pajama party and watch a funny movie together? And you thought that was just for young girls. If it's possible, consider going on a one day or a weekend retreat with other moms to a "ladies type of place." Even the drive in the car can be filled with fun. Or a mom's night out at a restaurant or a crafts fair or concert. The ideas can be endless! Taking time to rejuvenate yourself by laughing and spending time in fellowship with other homeschool moms (while resisting the urge to talk "homeschool business") will lighten your load and refresh you for your homeschooling tasks.

## **MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS/FATHERS & DAUGHTERS**

The high school years are special times to spend with your daughters. A mother/daughter tea or a father/daughter square dance can be opportunities to have your daughters to yourself and engage in conversation which might not happen during the busy days and full evenings of your daily schedules.

## **FATHERS & SONS**

Dads, remember the rough and tumble of those early years with your sons? Well, your teen sons need you and your time even more now as they are charting their courses in life. Camping and backpacking are great ways to not only teach about God's creation, but also to enjoy learning survival skills in the wilds! It's amazing what you'll learn from your teen while sitting outside in the dark around a camp fire. Then there's hiking, sports (dads and sons participating on the same team), or even a computer game competition night. Dads, consider attending and taking your sons to a Promise Keepers conference near you. These will be memories he'll carry into his own family.

## **FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY**

We all know that homeschooling is a family affair, so here are some ideas to include everyone from the littlest tykes all the way to grandma and grandpa if they are up for it! For 11 years now, one family has planned a "Year-End Splash" at a local recreation park for homeschooling families. The recreation park includes miniature golf courses, waterslides, and an arcade. Everyone brings a picnic lunch so there is very little coordinating necessary except to decide on a date and then advertise the event. If you consider a date in late May or early June prior to the public schools being on summer vacation, then local establishments may be open to your homeschooling families being given the entire park to enjoy and maybe even at a reduced price. (We thank Vera for sharing this idea.)

A road rally is a memorable family event--not only is the rally itself enjoyable, but the planning process can be just as much fun! A road rally is simply a well-thought-out route in which participants, divided into teams, use clues to drive to various locations and perform and record pre-arranged tasks. For example, a stop on the route might include a local drugstore where everyone tries on a cheap pair of sunglasses and the clerk takes a picture of the group before it heads off to the next location. Or, a stop may include an ice cream store where everyone samples a different flavor of ice cream and then writes a 4-line poem describing the flavor in scrumptious details. (Safety is the main concern, of course, so each team appoints a responsible driver who agrees to maintain at all times all rules of the road. Speed is not a factor--only having fun!)

For those who are a tad more conservative (!), you may want to look into a local walking club and enjoy the benefits of both exercise and fresh air with your family. Plan out a walking route, strap on the sneakers, and head out to enjoy God's creation together. If you would like to participate in more structured types of walks, check out the [American Volkssport Association](#) website. The association organizes six-mile walks in many locations throughout the country selecting trails for walkability, scenic interest, historical significance, and natural beauty. Youth and adults who walk together can even earn special certificates.

Other ideas include participating in a [Habitat for Humanity](#) work day as a family during the summer, or planning a family costume party in the fall where a theme costume is required for all members of each family--the Cooke family all came dressed as chefs one year!).

## **SPECIAL EVENTS FOR GRADUATING SENIORS**

Organize events for your homeschool senior that are memorable and special. For example, many homeschool support groups and state organizations now offer graduation ceremonies in a variety of formats from ones including all of the pomp and circumstance of traditional ceremonies, to others that are very personal and family-oriented. Whatever direction you want to go, take time to recognize your teen's graduation. Ideas include creating a slide show of picture highlights from your teen's life complete with musical background (it's amazing what can be done on a personal computer), or presenting him with a journal of your memories and prayers for his life. Or, plan a senior trip for your teen--either a surprise trip or ask for his input when considering locations.

The traditional senior prom can be replaced by a Spring Formal that includes family and friends of all ages dressed in evening

attire. Cater a dinner or have the dads be chauffeurs to a fancy restaurant. Entertainment can include a short lesson to teach everyone proper traditional English country steps before dancing the night away. Our friend Sandy has organized a spring formal for years and she suggests taking lots of pictures and surprising each participant with a CD of the evening's highlights. Come to think of it, "homecoming" dances take on a whole new meaning when homeschool families include dads, moms, and extended family members in the festivities!

Others have gone before you in coordinating these types of activities, so you don't need to start from scratch:

- [Prom nights](#)
- [English Country Dances](#)

We hope these ideas inspire you to step away from the books for a moment, and to plan one or two simple yet important occasions. These are special but fleeting years--and who knows? With the Lord's gift of creativity and organization, one of these suggested activities may become the highlight of your teen's high school years. It will be time well spent, and the memories you make will be cherished by all.

Next month we will take a look at the military as a viable option for homeschool graduates.

Until then praying you take time to laugh and enjoy your teen's company,

Becky and Diane



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