

Inexpensive Activities and Events for Families *by Heather Grocott*

Looking for fun ways to spend time with your family that won't break the bank? Here are a few tips and tricks to help you have fun with your family!

- ◆ **STAY AT HOME!** If at all possible, have a family night at home. This simple step will help reduce the amount of money you would have spent on gas.

Fun activities for home include:

- Clean the "junk drawer" with your kids → gather old greeting cards, straws, ribbon, tissue paper, stickers, newspapers, etc. Create new greeting cards for friends and family using odds and ends from the junk drawer!
- Scrapbook → get all of your family photos that are lying around the house together and have a family scrapbooking night. Encourage your kids to create their own individual scrapbooks.
- Family Game Night → Gather all of your board games, and have a family game night. Make homemade healthy snacks to accompany the fun!
- Have a story hour → Allow everyone in the household to tell their favorite story. It could be an old childhood memory, or a creative story you make up!

- ◆ **TURN OFF THE TV!**

- Unless you plan to have a family movie night, try to keep the TV off. Having the TV on often distracts families from spending quality time with one another. Instead, encourage your children to be physically active. Go outside and play a game of flag football or soccer. This is a great way to capture family memories through photographs. A day at the park is also a nice way to spend time with the family and exercise! Pack a healthy snack or lunch to avoid spending money on food!

- ◆ **Other event options for the family:**

- Visit your public library. Public libraries often sponsor fun, free events during the week and on weekends for children of all ages.
- Check out local museums or art galleries. Many cities and towns usually have one or the other, and admission is generally low cost or free. This is an excellent way to expose the whole family to art and local culture.
- Contact your local high school. Often times, high schools put on musical productions, concerts, or other events at a very low cost. It is also fun to attend local high school sporting events – kids love it!
- Volunteer with your family! Spend a day on the weekend serving your local community at a food bank, soup kitchen, church, elderly home, etc. It is also nice to spend time with your family by participating in charity or fundraising events such as spaghetti dinners or walk a thons.