



tips for youth workers

JULY 2020

MAKING SCREENLESS CONNECTIONS

Welcome to July and month 5 of isolation and social distancing. It's exciting that we are slowly able to go out more, gather with more people and be out in the fresh air. Many of us are tired of screens. We're zoomed out, done with e-learning, and lack energy and interest at the thought of connecting with others (even family) through our computers. We wanted to give you a few ideas that you could use or share with families to help them make screenless connections this summer:

FAMILY CAMP from home!

We're all sad that our kids won't have the opportunity to go to camp this summer, but why not encourage our families to experience camp together? The THQ Children and Youth Dept has put together five evenings of camp experiences for families to have together. Camp activities include: an indoor (*or outdoor*) camp-out night, campfire night, wide game (*or board game*) night, talent night, and craft night. The activities are simple to organize and host. Each camp activity has a devotional and snack idea included. You can find "Family Camp from home!" on www.CANBDAYouth.com under Remote Resources "Ready @ Home".

GET MOVING!

"Get Moving" is an opportunity to get together with kids from your corps/church to move and enjoy being outdoors together. Using a team from your corps, invite families to sign up their kids for a time of exercise and connecting with you. Here's how it can work: Using a team of two or more (masked) volunteers go to the home of a family who has signed up, invite the kids outside to the driveway, sidewalk or a nearby park if there is one. Spend ½ an hour doing simple social distanced exercises with the kids – giving them a chance to stretch, run and enjoy being outdoors making connections with you. Then over freezies, share a quick three-minute devotional, return the kids to their parents and then head to the next family's home. (Be sure to invest in disinfecting wipes to wipe down any equipment you may use.)

CRAFT NIGHT

Simple crafts are a great way to spend time together. Ahead of time have families sign up for a simple craft night. Prepare craft bags for each child who will be participating. Going out in teams of two have children join you outside on the driveway or sidewalk. Distribute a craft bag to each child in the family. Invite them to sit (socially distanced) on the ground with you while you work on your craft. Spend time chatting while you craft and share a short devotional with the kids. If the craft is simple enough, try to visit more than one family during the evening. One idea is painting rocks: each bag includes a rock, paint brush, plastic cup to hold water and a small paper plate for paint. Bring a large bottle of water with you to supply each paper cup with paint brush cleaning water, bring along acrylic paints to share on the individual paper plates, and bring along a garbage bag to gather up

paper plates and cups when you are finished. Another idea is friendship bracelets: provide all the supplies a child would need in a small baggie.

CAR RALLY

Organize and invite families to be a part of a car rally scavenger hunt. There are lots of options on how you might organize this event. One way you could do this is by dropping off a small package of sidewalk chalk and a listing of addresses to those families who sign up to participate. On the day of the Rally participating families draw art and messages of encouragement on the sidewalk in front of their home, then families drive by (walk or bicycle by) and enjoy each other's artwork. You might also want to have families create riddles for their guests to figure out or draw an obstacle course to work their way through when they visit.

LAWN VISITS/STORY TIME

There's nothing like an at home visit from you. Set up times with families to connect with their children with a social distanced visit on the lawn or porch area. While visiting with the kids spend some time chatting about their week, what they've been doing and then read a story with them. Try to choose a story that meets the needs and ages of the children in each family. Choose a Bible story or a story with a biblical morale to it. Feel free to use the story as a launching point into a short devotional thought and be sure to spend a few moments praying for any prayer requests they may share with you.

SOCIAL DISTANCED CAMPFIRE

If you have access to a campfire pit, invite your teens to sign up for a campfire visit. Be sure that each seat around the fire pit is 6 feet apart which would be a limit of about 5 of you if you want to really feel the warmth of the fire (Be sure to follow provincial guidelines on gatherings!). Spend time enjoying each other's company. Put s'mores packages together ahead of time so that they young people can enjoy a sweet treat while visiting with you. Be sure to include a devotional and prayer time before your evening is over. (Remember that as much as we love campfire songs – we can't sing together at this time.)

FAMILY OLYMPICS

This summer would have been the Olympics (a fact many of us have forgotten). Why not challenge your families to put together their own Family Olympics? There are many sports that could be used to create a competition that will include all family members, such as: hockey, synchronized dance or kiddie pool swimming, gymnastics, table tennis, archery, cheer leading, soccer, leap frog, food eating, track and field, will it float, tree climbing, shot put, marathon and nerf gun wars. You might want to take any of these "sports" and add a unique twist to them. Encourage the families to use their imaginations as they compete against each other or challenge another family to some friendly competition. Remind families to begin their Olympics with a pass the torch relay around their house. (If families want to, they could capture their Olympics on screen and share them to your corps' social media.)