

## Solutions for the “I’m so bored!” Blues

If your child/children are anything like my son, the annoying phrase “I’m so bored!” is a regular statement made on an almost daily basis. With various school holidays always around the corner, I like to keep a list of ideas handy. I am not much of an advocate for Nintendo and Gameboy, so I tend to think beyond the ‘box.’ We much prefer activities that teach and promote critical thinking, while also offering lots of fun.

Here is the list of budget-minded (primarily) “Things to do on school breaks” that I have compiled so far. If you have any of your own ideas, be sure to send them to us so that we can add them to the list, giving you credit for the submission:

- Wake up and make breakfast together (my son loves crepes and bacon)
- Have a family read-a-thon
- Play board games or card games or work on puzzles together
- Visit a museum – art, historical, etc
- Plan a scavenger hunt at a local park, or around your home
- Plan a play-date with friends
- Go to the mall to play at the play-center, and later share and pretzel and drink at the food court
- Go to Starbucks and enjoy a cold vanilla frap (my son’s favorite)
- Go fishing (my favorite thing to do!). Every state has a different rule regarding the age limit for free fishing.
- Sign your child up for a basketball, flag football, baseball or soccer camp
- Sign your child up for art, music, or drawing lessons
- Collect pine cones and make peanut-butter bird feeders (visit <http://www.enchantedlearning.com> for an example)
- Plan a “date” with each of your children, rotating parents, allowing your child to choose the location (within reason, of course)
- Attend a symphony or musical or play (not so budget-minded!)
- Go to a cheap movie at a discount cinema
- Go on a bike ride and explore a new area
- Play basketball, football, or soccer at a local park or greenbelt
- Plant an herb garden together with things like parsley, basil and chives
- Visit a farm or petting zoo
- Buy a disposable camera and allow your child to take photos around your home, or during an outing to the park or farm, etc
- Visit various kid-friendly websites to find games and interactive activities (see my listing on this website – there are tons!)
- Get a bug catcher and go outside to explore and find bugs (we got one at Wal-Mart for about \$4. You can purchase higher-end ones at the Discovery Store)
- Tape record you and your kid/s singing silly songs (they will love playing them back later on!)
- Go to the library and check out books together, or use the computers there for no charge (of course, there may be a waiting list)

- Visit a local college to explore and explain to your child/ren the value of a good education
- Go swimming (there are lots of large local pools located at local Jr. Highs and other schools, many with water slides. Most of these pools charge about \$1-\$2 to get in)
- Have a “write your own story” day where each family member creates a book using household items, personally written and illustrated
- Volunteer at a local homeless shelter or a shelter for battered women or pregnant teens (some of these shelters are looking for volunteers to come in and teach a craft or trade)
- Start a diaper drive with friends, neighbors or church members (call your local crisis pregnancy center for ideas)
- Start up a canned food drive and donate items to a local shelter or food bank
- Go to garage sales (my son’s all-time favorite thing to do!)
- Have your own garage sale to get rid of the extra clutter
- Finger paint or have a “Craft Day”
- Build sand castles in a sandbox or sandlot
- Visit a local craft store to purchase sale items, good for creating homemade crafts
- Give your child a set amount of cash and go to the Dollar Store for a lesson in budget spending. Be sure to explain if each item has tax, and allow your child to figure out how much they can get with the money you have given them (or that they have retrieved from their piggy bank)
- Sort coins or noodles or buttons for a lesson in counting
- Put together a family collage of photos to hang on the wall
- Cut out a large star from poster board. Using your child’s name, title the star, “Katy is a STAR!” etc. Work with your child to decorate the star with photos and words that describe your child and what they like to do. Hang the star wherever you like
- Go to the zoo (one of the *not so budget-minded* ideas, unless you have a membership)
- Go to your local Science Center (again, not so budget-minded without a membership)
- Visit the batting cages at a local facility (another not so budget-minded idea)
- Plan a tea-party for your child and their friends
- Sit and relax while watching a movie together
- Have a slumber party night with your kids; complete with junk food, movies, and games
- Make homemade soap together (we get the glycerin at Michael’s Craft Store and small toys to put inside the molds at the Dollar Store – you can usually find a pack of small plastic toys with a count of 5-10. You can also find packs at Big Lots and Wal-Mart)
- Build a Lego-town with Legos
- Run through a sprinkler in the back or front yard
- Go roller-skating or roller-blading
- Have a sack-race in the backyard