

11 FUN HOLIDAY ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR KIDS



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Introduction

Kids can get restless during the year-end holiday season. They are out of school for an extended period of time, and full of pent-up energy and excitement for the days ahead. You are spending most of your time planning parties and shopping, and sometimes run out of original ideas for keeping your kids busy and happy. The following 11 holiday activity ideas for children fit in nicely over the long school break. They also help you create memorable moments that can last a lifetime.

1 - Plan a donation run

This time of year it is important to remember that not everyone is as fortunate as you are. That also means this is the perfect occasion for teaching your children some wonderful life lessons. Explain to them that some children will not get any gifts for Christmas. If you do not recognize Christmas, remind your kids that some families don't have enough food to eat.

Selfless giving feels so good. Especially when you know you are really helping someone who needs it. Speak with your church pastor, Goodwill, Salvation Army or other charitable organizations. They will be able to arrange for you to help out needy families in the area.

Organize this with your friends, neighbors and coworkers. Have each family purchase inexpensive toys, games and other gifts. Pick up canned goods and other nonperishable food items as well. Take everything back home and spend the day wrapping presents and boxing up food.

Then load your children into the family vehicle and make a donation run that will spread lots of love and good cheer during the holidays.



2 - Build a snowman (snow not required)

Christmas and other year-end holidays are often accompanied by cold weather. That might mean snow where you live. There is nothing that says "winter" like building a snowman. Kids love it, it gets them up and active and out of the house.

What should you do if you don't get snow where you live?

Head down to your local craft store and buy some styrofoam balls. They are inexpensive, and great for making holiday decorations and ornaments. And when you purchase several different sizes, your children can build all the snowmen they want without you breaking the bank.

Or make [Snow Ice Cream](#)

3 - Make a date ... with your kids!

This is a very hectic time of year. Parties, shopping, planning and madness seem to be the theme. Sometimes the holidays whip right by, and you feel like you didn't spend any quality time with your children. Plan ahead and that won't happen.

Plan for a "date" with each one of your children individually. Spend a few hours or an entire day devoted to whatever that child wants to do. It's just you (or both parents) and that one child. You may be surprised at the wonderful connection you make with each of your children when it is just you and them creating one-on-one holiday memories.



4 - Holiday alphabet game

This requires thinking power. It can work with very young children, old children and even adults. Whether your family practices the Buddhist celebration of Bodhi Day (December 8), Christian Christmas (December 25) the 8 day Jewish tradition of Hanukkah during December or some other year-end holiday, the alphabet game is perfect.



Here is what you do. Give each player a sheet of paper with the letters A through Z written on the left side in a vertical column. The idea is to write one holiday themed word that is related to each letter in some way.

Creativity comes into play when words are listed which don't seem to relate to the holiday in question. As long as your children can explain the connection, the word counts. After a preset amount of time, the child or team with the most words wins.

5 - Download some holiday apps

Your kids spend a lot of time on their phones. When they are not texting away, they are on their tablet and/or computer. You probably want to limit the amount of electronic playtime during this family-oriented season. Curbing phone and computer use is a good idea all year round as well.

Since your kids are inevitably going to be glued to an electronic monitor, why not help decide what they are viewing? There are some great holiday apps you won't mind your child spending time with. Check out the following holiday themed applications:

- **Dora's Christmas Carol Adventure HD** – This is a great interactive companion that teaches preschoolers valuable lessons. There are fun holiday surprises throughout.

- **PopOut! The Night Before Christmas** - Here you and your children can enjoy the timeless Christmas classic in an electronic format. Your children can interact as the story is read. By swiping and tapping they experience the electronic pop-up version of this wonderful Christmas book.
- **A Charlie Brown Christmas** - One Christmas tradition in many countries around the world is getting the family together to watch the Charlie Brown Christmas episode every year. This is another interactive storybook, complete with voices from the original cast and descriptive illustrations.
- **Hanukkah: The Festival of Lights StoryChimes** - This interactive storybook teaches the meaning behind the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah. This application works for younger and older kids as well. Included is a memory match game.

6 - Play holiday word finder

This is such a simple but fun game you will be playing it all year long. It only requires paper, pens or pencils and some brainpower. It works with young and old alike, and sometimes you are surprised at the answers you get. Here's what you do.

Write down a list of common Christmas, Hanukkah or other holiday season words and phrases. The longer the better. Christmas is one of the obvious words you might use. Reindeer, snow and gift giving are other ideas. The mission is to find as many smaller words inside those words in a certain amount of time.

You can purchase an inexpensive timer or simply use the alarm application on your phone. For instance, you can find the words 'poi', 'in', 'set' and 'inset' in the holiday word Poinsettia. Everyone playing should start at the same time, receiving one point for each word they find. Play to a predetermined score.



7 - Act out your favorite holiday show

You and your kids no doubt have specific movies you watch every holiday season. Why not act out scenes from those movies and TV shows and create your own holiday tradition? Listed below are a few of the most popular Christmas themed and year-end holiday shows of all time.

- Frosty The Snowman
- The Little Drummer Boy
- It's a Wonderful Life
- A Charlie Brown Christmas
- Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer
- Olive the Other Reindeer
- Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas
- A Christmas Story

8 - Have a Christmas gift wrap contest

Kids love to compete. That's one of the reasons they are playing with their friends all of the time. Host a friendly competition with a Christmas gift wrapping contest. You will need several boxes, many pairs of scissors, lots of wrapping paper, ribbon and tape.

You and your kids should use boxes approximately the same size. At the starting signal, everyone begins wrapping some gift at the same time. Whoever finishes first (with an acceptable finished product) wins a predetermined prize. At the end everyone should be treated with holiday cooking and beverages, or a night out at your kids' favorite restaurant.



9 - Play holiday themed Charades

Charades is a fun game for kids and adults alike. It also sparks creativity, mental functioning and motor skill development in children. With everyone else sitting, a player stands up to start the game. He or she chooses something they think everyone will be familiar with.

They then pantomime the chosen word or phrase, while everyone else frantically shouts out possible answers. The first person to guess the word or phrase correctly gets one point. You can play this game with a Christmas or other year-end holiday theme and create some hilarious memories.

10 - Make silly holiday photos

Every season you take photos of the family to share with your loved ones. Why not make this year's holiday picture snapping session fun and memorable? This is a lot of fun for kids and adults. Head down to the craft store and stock up.

Spend some time with your kids making ridiculous, comical backdrops and props. Dress accordingly, in holiday themed clothing. Wear antlers, Santa hats and appropriate costumes. See who can create the silliest pictures and you might turn this creative photo session into an annual tradition.



11 - Play two truths and a lie

This is probably best with older kids. Each person takes turn relating three stories or memories. Two of them are true, and one is a lie. You can put a holiday twist on this popular party game any number of ways.

Tell everyone to name their three most hated Christmas gifts. One would be false and 2 would be true. You can also do the same with best or worst holiday vacations or trips. If anyone can spot the fib they get a point, and you play to an agreed-upon score.

Look at the list of ideas above.

Some of these holiday activities are based on tradition. Others definitely require "outside the box" thinking. The lesson here? Keeping your kids active and engaged during the holidays sometimes requires nothing more than remembering what worked last year. In other cases, you have to think creatively. Use the activity ideas listed above as guidelines that help you create your own special holiday memories.

