50 FUN ACTIVITIES FOR SINGLE MOMS

(Plus 10 Things for Mom's to Do Without Kids)

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The Life of a Single Mom: Life Hacks

So, what are some ways to have FUN with your kids without breaking the bank?

1. CRAFT TIME: There are so many fun kid crafts on YouTube. Make it fun by calling it something fun and put it into a jingle (like when you sing "clean up, clean up"). Have a certain box for crafts supplies that the kids know about. Come up with a different project each week but keep it very simple and affordable. You can do science tricks from drawing to popsicle stick art to creating an animal mask. Dollar stores are my heroes for craft supplies. The key is it something you do each week as family time so they can look forward to it.

2. SNACK TIME: Pop some popcorn and let your kids add extra sweets to it like chocolate chips or coconut or savory like cheese or ranch powder. There are several videos of creative popcorn recipes on YouTube. Also, you can type in creative kids' foods, and there are all kinds of fun recipes you can get your kids to make or put together.

3. COMMUNITY CALENDAR: Look up what is going on that is free in your neighborhood or town and go.

4. SING-ALONG. Grab a hairbrush, a large spoon, a comb and sing to your favorite Christian songs or nursery rhymes. Take two paper plates, put some dried beans inside, tape them together, and become a tambourine. Take that discarded oatmeal box and some Chinese chopsticks leftover from take-out, and you have a homemade drum.

5. EVERYONE LOVES BUBBLE: Bubbles will save lives. LOL. Having bubbles in the car while you are in traffic or waiting in a long line can instantly create fun. If you have little ones, you might need to invest in containers that don't spill. You can have a contest of: Who can blow a bubble and have it land back on their wand? How many bubbles can you blow at one time? How many bubbles can you run and jump on after they land?

6. EXERCISE, WHEW!: Each week or even every day, teach kids that exercise could be fun. Have them get a towel (maybe they can purchase one with a cartoon character on it), place it on the floor, put on your favorite song or video, and teach them how to stretch, run in place, spin their arms, sit-ups, and more, etc.

7. INDOOR SANDBOX: Mix 4 cups of rice with 3 tablespoons of alcohol, a few drops of food coloring, mix and leave to dry overnight. Option to create more than one color. Each child can be challenged to build something with their sand.

8. WATER FOUNTAIN: Visit a local water fountain where kids can run through the fountain. Plan by bringing extra clothes and some towels. Make it more fun if you jump in there with them. An option is to use a garden hose and hang it up, so they have to walk through it or get an old fashion sprinkler. Another option is to buy a few shower curtains from the dollar store and place them on the ground outside. Add some baby oil and water and start slip-sliding away.

9. DRESS UP: Depending on kids' ages, have them come up with a costume using only toilet paper. You can assign a theme. Option: After Halloween, purchase costumes on sale and start your own dress-up trunk.

10. RELAY RACE: Use a straw to blow a feather or pencil across a table. Throw ping-pong balls to land in a cup. Move a cookie down your face to your mouth without using your hands. These are just a few "Minutes to Win It" games. Check out YouTube for hundreds of ideas you can do at home.

11. MINI GOLF: Can't afford to take the kids to your local mini-golf? Then set up your own course using cups and bowls and rocks and toys. Use yardsticks from Lowes as clubs. Use ping bong balls or tennis balls as options versus golf-balls.

12. FREE FOOD: Looking up where kids eat for free on particular days of the week at various restaurants and go. Make it more fun by dressing up in nice clothes or funny clothes (different colors). Plan on asking your waitress's name and how you can pray for her. Make it something teachable for your kids.

13. HAVE A PICNIC INDOORS: Make sandwiches, put chips in a Ziplock, buy some fried chicken, put drinks in a thermos, etc., and then put a tablecloth on the floor of the living room like you are outside and having a picnic. Option: Have a picnic on your porch or backyard.

14. ROAD TRIP: Come up with a list of places not too far away your kids want to see/go to. Then put them on paper, put them in a jar, and each kid gets to pull one out once a month. Add some creativity by bringing crafts to do in the car on the way, have a scavenger hunt once you get there, bring a picnic lunch, and learn something about the place you are visiting, etc.

15. COOKING: Got kids who hate veggies? Give each kid a flat piece of pizza dough to start with. Then give them a cup of tomato sauce and have them spread it out using a spoon. Then, add some cheese and pre-cut veggies, fruit, and meat. Have a contest for the best face design using food from each food group. Then bake and enjoy. An option is to make your own taco, decorate your own cupcake or cookies, or make an ice cream sundae. Another option is to cook some small bread loaves or cookies and have your kids deliver to neighbors. Great teaching opportunity, and you might make a new friend of your neighbor.

16. WATER BALLON FIGHT: Prefill the balloons and distribute them evenly among your kids. Invite friends to play. You can have a contest of who can throw the farthest or who can catch it without breaking it.

17. CLEAN UP: Regular household chores might not be so much fun, but here are some ideas to make them fun. Put on some socks, spray them with Windex or furniture spray, and have your kids slide on the floor to clean it. Sure, it won't really clean the whole floor, but what fun. Put socks on your hands and bend down to wipe the floor. An option is to have a game where you separate your clothes to wash them. See if the kids can name the colors of the clothes and which pile they go into.

18. YARDWORK: If everyone helps to rake up the leaves, we all jump into them later. Have a contest on who can pull the most weeds (and weigh them using bathroom scales) or pick up the most pine combs. An option is to dip the pine combs in peanut butter and birdseed and hang out for the birds.

19. HUG/KISS JAR: Whenever your kids say something good, polite, go to bed when asked, etc., let them take out a hug or kiss candy to eat. An option is the hug or kiss is represented by shapes or objects that mean a real hug or kiss from mom. The point is to create a system of rewards for good behavior. But the opposite too…when they are bad, say something bad, you take one out.

20. CRAZY JAR: Come up with a list of crazy things to do and write them on paper (have kids help with the ideas) and pull one idea out each day—before or after school and/or before bed. You can have categories for things you can do right then and/or things you would do together as a family or things outside the house.

Quick fun things would be:
- Do a jumping jack while singing Happy Birthday
- Starting dancing to and Sing Baby Shark
- Make a fish face
- Touch your toes 5 times, etc.—the point is they can be done at the moment at any second.

The next level would be things you do together:
- Do a craft together
- Dancing to your favorite songs
- Watching their favorite TV show or movie, making popcorn
- Making their favorite dessert
- Read a story

Things outside the house:
- Go for a walk
- Go to a playground
- Visit a friend or relative
- Visit a friend who has a puppy or babysit the puppy
- Go to dollar or thrift store or eat pizza out, etc.

21. CREATE A FUN SCHEDULE: Use magnets or Velcro to attach graphics that mean different things like washing clothes, say their prayers, homework, or brushing their teeth. Involve your kids in moving the graphics over when they have completed a

task. Celebrate when they complete a list of things they needed to do. Rewards could be fun things to do like in previous examples or extra time on the phone or watching their favorite TV show.

22. ANIMAL, ANIMAL?: Using make-up from the dollar or party store, face paint on each other to look like different animals. Then take pictures or videos of acting out that animal.

23. WAYS TO SAVE: Get three small plastic containers with lids of different colors from the dollar store. Cut a slit on the top so that coins and paper bills can go through. Have the kids help you draw or write on the outside these words. Save for Later, Spend Now, Give to Jesus (or similar). Then, when they do chores and/or get an allowance, when grandparents or anyone gives them money, teach them, in a fun way, what to do with the money. Please make sure the containers are clear so they can see the money go in. Then, they can empty the "give to Jesus" container on Sunday to give at church. Then, with the "spend now" container, they can spend as much as they want when they want to have fun. It's a great teaching moment to have them save some of the money for later. And then the last is to save for something like a road trip or something special they want.

24. PRAYER FUN: It can sometimes be hard to get kids to pray, especially when the parent isn't so great at it either (or exhausted at the end of the day). A fun and easy solution is to go to your nearest dollar store and purchase a cardboard display board. Then cut it in half, horizontally for your kids. Write on the left side in big letters "Prayers to God," they write at the top in the middle section, "God is Moving," and on the right side, "God Has Answered." Then taking stickie notes of different colors, decide what color could represent areas of prayer needs. For example, red might equal family, blue equal friends, green equals money, and so forth. Then, write a prayer need on each stickie (teaching the kids to help, suggestion needs) and stick it on the board in the corresponding section. Then each night before bed, you update your prayer board.

This is a fun way to get kids involved in prayer and learn how we need to go to God with our prayer needs, be aware of when God is moving in those needs and when he has answered them—even if God says no for now. I like to also collect the stickies on the right side and look back at them to remind myself (and your kids) how God takes care of you.

Note: You can do one too that is as full size as the parent. You can also do this together each night. When you are done praying, fold it up and store it. An option is just to use a poster board and put it on the wall in any house.

Note: Single mom Ashely Gould suggested the laundry room; you can pray while you fold clothes.

25. EXPERT FRIEND: Invite someone from church or in your community, your job over (and invite other kids too) to demonstrate their skill. For example, have a doctor nurse come and bring a stethoscope, thermometer, a tongue depressor and talk about it. Or ask someone to come and show the kids how to plant a seed to grow into a plant. Or take a road trip to a local farm or animal shelter to learn about the animals. Maybe a trip to a fire station or a factory. The point is to learn but also have fun.

Note: Call your local police station and/or fire station and see about having them come out for a neighbors party where they let kids climb in the police car or climb through a pretend firehouse.

26. BACKWARDS DAY: Everyone gets to dress up and put their clothes on backward. Do some videos and make it silly. An option is to wear opposite shoes one day or different colored socks day.

27. THRIFT DAY: Give each child $1-$5 and have them look for the crazies thing to buy at a thrift store and/or a garage sale. Make it a fun competition. An option is if they don't purchase anything, just make it fun by having them find crazy things. You can set up parameters like the most colorful shirt to find or something they don't know what it does, the ugliest picture, etc. Another option is to search for something to give a homeless person, like a blanket or coat. Another option is to do the game where you run your hand and the clothes and stop and pull that top, that pant, that shoe, that hat, and you have to dress up.

28. HELP SOMEONE: A great way to teach kids about serving is by example. Find out a need in your church or neighbor, whether it's an older person who needs some yard work done, someone to go to the grocery store, a visit to a nursing home, etc., and fulfill it. Another idea is to give your kids $5 each and have them come up with a way to help someone with the money. What would they do? Where would they go? An option would be to purchase water bottles and stand in a park and give them away, telling folks, "God Bless You."

29. DIRT DIGGING: Find a place in your yard to dig up the soil. Have the kids help with spoons or their hands or buy a trowel from a dollar store. Then you can look for worms, rollie polis and collect them. Then get a magnifying glass and look at them?

What do you see? An option is to buy some large containers and fill them with dirt. You can either buy some worms and put them in the dirt for the kids to find later or use the containers to plant something.

30. CREATE A SKIT: Give the kids a theme, and using anything in the house (including your personal clothes), and have them act it out.

31. LIBRARY DAY: If you still have a library, visit and allow each child to get their own library card and/or book. If there isn't a library, create your own in your home, complete with designing their own library cards that teach them how to check out the books. This teaches them the importance of reading and being responsible.

32. VIRTUAL TRIPS: Today, there are numerous online resources to take virtual trips to places worldwide, seeing animals in their habitat, and even riding a roller coaster.

33. OBSTACLE COURSE: Set up your and obstacle course in your home using chairs, sheets, road cones (dollar store), and whatever other objects. Get some poster board and draw arrows. Then, set a timer on your phone and see how fast they can get through the course. You can add a station where they have to put a puzzle together or put on mittens and a hat, eat a cookie, etc.

34. TALK AND TEA: Go to the thrift store and let them pick out a teacup and saucer or mug and a fun hat. Then make some tea, small sandwiches, and cookies and invite everyone to the party. Tell them to bring their favorite toy to join you and/or a book to read.

35. CHILDHOOD MOVIE: Watch your favorite childhood movie and tell your kids why you loved it so much. Take turns sharing something a favorite memory.

36. ROCKS IT OUT: Gather rocks or buy some from the dollar store and paint them. Put them around plants or trees outside. You can have a theme or write words that say, Jesus, God Bless You, etc.

37. BRUSHES AND SIDEWALKS: Buy some paintbrushes from the dollar store (different sizes) and a cup of water, go outside and paint with water on the sidewalk, and then watch the water evaporate. Note: Take pictures before they evaporate.

38. PLAY OUTDOOR GAMES: Join your kids in playing hide and seek (indoors or outdoors), Red Rover, Hopscotch, hula hoop, Mother May I, etc. Another idea is to collect lighting bugs in a jar.

39. SCAVENGER HUNT: Give them a list of things they might see in your home (or pictures) and take a photo. Option: print or draw/write some things they might see in nature on a sheet of paper—for example, squirrel, white car, traffic light, bluebird, snail, tree, etc. And then let them cross them off when they see them.

40. STOP AND DRAW: Buy a notepad from a dollar store, and when they see something, they have to draw it or write what they saw. Note: Take pictures and look at them later.

41. **SELFIES:** Take a moment each morning or night, inside or outside, to take a selfie with your kids. Encourage your kids to make silly, happy, sad, etc., faces having fun.

42. FAVORITE: Bring their favorite toy to movie night and talk about why it's your favorite.

43. RECYCLE: Save milk jugs, toilet paper rolls, paper towel rolls, plastic containers, etc., for a few weeks. Then, bring them out with your craft container and let them make whatever they want.

44. INDOOR CAMPING: Make forts and tents inside using chairs, tables, blankets, etc. Have a picnic, use a flashlight and make hand animals, read a story. If you plan on sleeping in the tent, be sure you are joining them.

45. T-SHIRT DESIGN: Use old T-shirts or go to the dollar store or discount store and buy white ones. Using old makeup or washable markers, draw and have fun.

46. SCIENCE PROJECT: There are tons of fun and creative science experiments on YouTube for you to try with your kids. Take it up a notch and try and connect the experiment to the Bible. For example, fill a bowl with water, add some pepper and salt to represent the fish, shells, sand in the ocean, then dot your finger with kitchen soap and then touch the middle of the water. The pepper will move way, sort of like the red sea splitting.

47. TESTIMONIAL: Write your own story of how Jesus came into your life. Allow your kids to have input. You can add photos, your kid's handprints, etc. Then, print them out on 8.5x11 sheets of paper and give them out to people. You can including your contact information if you want to. No one can deny who Jesus is to you and how he has helped you in your life. This is an easy way to share your faith without even having to talk. It's also a way your kids can see you share your faith.

48. IDENTITY: Take a large piece of paper, post-board size and have each kid draw a picture of themselves. And mom, you can join in as well. Then, have each kid draw to a body part and write a word that describes them. For example, they point to their eyes and write, "I have pretty eyes," or they point to their feet and write, "I am a good runner." An option is also to write things they don't like about themselves or hear others say. The point of this is to learn more about what you believe about yourself and the truth by God.

49. BOOTCAMP: Set up an obstacle course in the backyard, including having a food fight using mustard, ketchup, and chocolate syrup. An option would include overnight or evening camping smores using a controlled fire like a candle and telling fun stories.

Note: Idea courtesy of single mom, Anna English

50. VISION BOARD: Get a piece of poster board or tri-fold display from the dollar store and create a vision board for your family. It could be about you as individuals, what you like about yourself, and/or things you want to improve. It could be about changes for your family? It could be places you want to go one day or things you want to do. The point is to get the whole family involved in making it and then make it come true.

Note: Idea courtesy single mom, Janetra Vaughn

10 FUN THINGS YOU CAN DO WHEN YOUR KIDS ARE AT THEIR DADS/RELATIVES

1. Read a whole book, magazine, or surf/read on your phone as long as you want.
2. Eat food that you love, but your kids might dislike. Dress up, meet some friends and eat at a restaurant that doesn't have a drive-through window.
3. Take a long bath with bubbles, get a real massage, get a Mani or Pedi, and/or your eyebrows waxed.
4. Instead of texting friends or relatives, call them on the phone or facetime and have a long conversation.
5. Take a road trip, go on a long hike, sit in the rocking chairs at Cracker Barrell and do nothing.
6. Watch chick-flicks all night in your pj's with your favorite snacks.
7. Shop without any interruptions versus fighting to get the Froot Loops away from your kids.
8. Go to bed early, or sleep in; keep your pj's on all day.
9. Spend time with your parents, alone.
10. Deep clean your home (well, maybe not).

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