

Family Fun Night

Plan family programs that include a combination of a few or several of the following: books, storytelling, poetry or rhythm, music, props, visuals, games, and audience interaction. This, of course, is an ideal, and not every program is going to have every one of those areas, but when planning, explore the possibilities.

Be creative and have fun! Rob Reid has a rainbow of great books available with program plans that use many of these types of activities. You could do them just as he has written them up or with very little editing to make it your own. Check out the following ALA titles by Rob Reid: *Cool Story Programs for the School-Age Crowd*. *Something Funny Happened at the Library*. *Family Storytime: Twenty-four Creative Programs for All Ages*.

Laundry Night!

- Read a book. Find favorite titles that have clothes, laundry, dressing up, etc to stretch the theme, such as: Mo Willems, *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*. Hyperion Books for Children, 2009. Bill Harley, *Dirty Joe the Pirate, a True Story*. HarperCollins Publishers, c2008. *Emperor's New Clothes*, or one of the Robert Munsch clothing books.
- Share a poem (consider inviting folks from the audience to read the poems) from *Dirty Laundry Pile: Poems In Different Voices*. HarperCollins, c2001.
- Play a Game: Laundry Relay Race
 1. Gather a miscellaneous, clean, clothing articles (socks, mittens, belt, jewelry, vest, bandana, old glasses (with no lenses), silly hats, tie, clean cloth diaper, etc.
 2. Sort the items into several large brown paper bags; an even number of items in each bag, one bag per team.
 3. All team members sit together in a line or in a small circle.
 4. Teams do not have to have the same number of people, as long as you have the same number of items in each bag (with at least enough items so that each member of the team will get one thing. You may have more items than team members.)
 5. Teams should pick someone to start the game, holding the bag.
 6. Put on some instrumental, jazzy music. Ring a bell to start the game.
 7. At the sound of the bell, the first player must reach in the bag and put on the item they pull from the bag. It doesn't matter how they put it on - socks can go on hands, a hat on a foot, necklace around an ankle, belt around the head, etc.
 8. The player cannot pass the bag to the next player until they have put on the article they pulled from the bag.
 9. The bag gets passed from one team member to the next with each player taking a turn putting on an item from the bag.
 10. When the bag is empty, the team goes to the "Laundry Room" and takes the items off and puts them in the laundry. The "Laundry Room" can be a corner of the room with several laundry baskets lined up (two or three baskets or enough for each team if you have the baskets and the space.)
 11. The winning team is the one that has all of the items from their bag worn by the team members and then placed in the laundry basket first.
 12. If you have enough space, you could string up laundry lines and make teams race their basket over to hang their laundry on the line.

Get more ideas from "Outrageous Hats & Sensible Shoes" and "Watch Gonna Wear?" from Rob Reid's book *Family Storytime*, ALA 1999.

Pass The Box

This is really fun! You can fit it to match almost any program theme. Choose a really great book that you want to read out loud. Gift wrap it, but keep wrapping it with different layers of colorful cloth or gift wrap. Play some music while passing the present around, when the music stops, the guest left holding the package unwraps the first layer. The music starts again and the box is passed. Every time the music stops, that player removes another layer until someone finally unwraps the book. Read the book! If they are able, have the player who unwrapped it, read the title and author.

Four Corners

This is great with all ages and almost any number of participants. Put up a large poster or picture of some animal, based on the theme of the program, or the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4. One person is "it" and closes their eyes or is blind-folded. I ring a bell while the rest of the group goes to one of the 4 corners (4 designated spots) of the room. When they are in place, I tell the person who is it. "It" calls one of the four animals or a number 1 to 4 and all participants who were standing in that corner sit down. Continue until there are 6 or 8 left, then you tell them there must be only 2 in each corner or when 4 left - one in each corner. The last person left - gets to be "it". Play again. Warn the group when you are going to play the last time.



Be Creative Option: At the beginning of your program, put up four large poster boards with the numbers 1, 2, 3 & 4 in large open designs or a line drawing of four different animals. Have groups of children color and decorate the posters as they arrive. Hang up the four boards. Continue with your program and when you are ready to play *Four Corners*, you will have four creative, colorful boards to put in the corners!

Make Your Own Game Boards!

Provide family groups with posterboard, stickers, markers, etc. Invite them to make their own game board and then play it! Show samples. Also, get ideas from: Williams, Carol Lynch. *24 Games You Can Play On A Checkerboard*. Gibbs Smith, Publisher, 2007.

- Think of a theme for your game. Will it be one where you are a performer and must travel the world to sing, dance, and paint? Or will you be trapped in the library and must deal with the book characters that keep showing up to help or hinder you? Maybe you are traveling on safari through a jungle! Use your imagination when deciding. Use ideas from existing games you like. Set out a path or road for the markers to travel along. Draw pictures to go on your game. Add spaces that take you to other spaces, forward or back, or triple your next roll.
- Consider if you want the game to be competitive or cooperative.
- Make the board and add *start* and *finish* places. Make markers for each family member. Use colors and patterns for an interesting appearance.
- For young players, instead of standard dice, you can make dice which correspond to colors of the game spaces, or make cards that show which color to move to (like in CandyLand), or make cards or dice with pictures of animals for a Jungle Gameboard.
- Have Fun!

Scavenger Hunt

We hold this Family Fun Night event when the library is closed. Make clue cards. Be as extravagant and poetic or as simple as you wish. Clues lead the team from one part of the library to another, searching for their next clue. Each family team that registers for the event should get their own set of color-coded clue cards. Have families check in. Choose if you are going to have the families gather as a group for a storytelling or big group game or just for instructions for the scavenger hunt. Keep it simple and short. We started at 6p.m. and folks were happy to play the game and be on their way home for bed by 7p.m.

Instructions should include that adults are responsible for supervising their children at all times. They must stay together as a family. Hand out color or picture-coded clues in plastic or small paper bags or envelopes. We do not run this as a race, but we do start the teams all at one time. Everyone wins when they complete the scavenger hunt. One clue leads them to their next clue - they should be careful that they are using their own set of clues and that they do not move clues they find that belong to other teams. Their final clue leads them to the circulation desk where they can check out any books they want that they found while they were on their scavenger hunt. If you like giving away prizes, that is when they receive a prize bag that the entire family shares. Prizes can be simple - pencils, stickers, game ideas, printed out word search or other word games, bookmarks, or you could have a treasure box of prizes from which they choose one thing. Have them enter their check-out receipt, with their family name and phone number written on it, into a Random Drawing for a big prize. Announce when the drawing will be held. Winners need not be present to win, so if families finish before other groups, they could leave.

The first year when we played this game, a few families finished really fast! So I gave them clues to find a magnifying glass that was hidden somewhere in the library. It just so happened that I had a picture of Sherlock Holmes with a magnifying glass hanging above my office door. If they didn't find it with my first clue, they came back for another clue until they found it. I had small plastic magnifying glasses left over from some other event so gave one to each family as they finished. I don't think they would have needed a prize, just a hardy "Well done, Sherlock!" would have sufficed. We played Pink Panther music in the background.

Library Materials Treasure Hunt!

This game works as a tour of the library. Folks who use the library a lot will finish the game quickly and folks who don't know the library very well, will learn a lot about it.

1. Choose several pictures of animals from clipart and save them onto a document.
2. Copy each image into a new document and enlarge each picture to 8.5 x 11 or larger.
3. Laminate each page or put each one into a sleeve protector.
4. Choose several locations in your library to display the pictures. Add a number or letter to each picture.
5. Create a handout with a small image of each picture and a brief description of the kind of library materials patrons will find by that animal. As patrons walk around the library to find the pictures, they mark off on their sheet or bookmark that they found it. Young children can make a checkmark, older children should be encouraged to write in the number or letter that was on the picture they found. Encourage them to not race, but to take time to play the game and get to know these areas of the library.

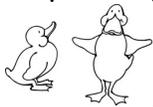
6. Create Library Treasure Hunts based on the ages of the people you think will be playing the game. For family night, consider parents, preschool and young school-age children.
7. When families complete the Treasure Hunt, they can be encouraged to read or play games together until the rest of the families gather for the next portion of your Family Fun Night event. Or do it at the end of the event so families can leave when they have completed the Library Treasure Hunt.

Creation Stations!

Set up various stations around your room or in various parts of the library. Have adult or qualified teen volunteers manning the stations. Leave yourself free to roam and check on all areas as the program progresses. Stations can include games, crafts, facepainting, a treat station, perhaps you have a teen group that can put on a puppet show. Then send the families out to move around the stations. Encourage them to move to a different station and come back to it later if there is a long line. They will get their ticket stamped for each game they play. When they are done playing all of the games, they should turn their ticket in (wherever you decide). Choose if you want to give away bookmarks and handstamps or prizes. Their ticket could be entry into a Drawing. Announce *when* and where you will do the drawing!

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Play each game one time. Get your ticket stamped at each station.



_____ Station #1: Duck Pond



_____ Station #2: Four Corners



_____ Station #3: Relay



_____ Station #4: Creative Craft

When you have completed each activity, turn your ticket in at the front desk to enter the Random Drawing for a chance to win _____. The drawing will be held at _____ p.m. tonight, in the Story Room. If you get done early, look at the great books on display and pick some to check out and then take to the Children's Room to read, or do the word search game.

Much Ado About... Summer Reading Program 2009

Ideas gathered or created by

Gerri Ceci Cupery (gccwriter@yahoo.com) and

Karen Wendt (wendtworks@ameritech.net)