

101 Ways to Have Fun This Summer

Hal & Melanie Young





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How to Use This Resource

When we were children, summers were full of long and lazy days when we had to entertain ourselves. These days most children are so over-programmed it's ridiculous. They go to this camp and that one, moms run them to classes and clubs. But, kids aren't any happier than we were and often they have less imagination, creativity, and initiative. It takes time develop those things! You have to have time to be bored. When we were kids we made our own fun and it really was fun! Here are some of the things we used to do that you can suggest to your children when they say, "I'm bored!" Perhaps you could challenge them to choose one thing to do each day or challenge them to do two things from each page this summer.

Find our resources at RaisingRealMen.com and CraftsmanCrate.com and our podcast at HalandMelanie.com/radio.

We hope you'll have a wonderfully creative, productive, and memorable summer!

Your friends,
Hal & Melanie

The Legal Stuff

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www.RaisingRealMen.com/summerfun.



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1. **Go outside.** Turn off the devices and get moving. You'll feel better, have more fun and be more imaginative!

2. **Somersaults.** The secret to somersaults is to tuck your chin. Listen, tuck your chin right down on your chest. Now, close your mouth. Roll, baby, roll! It's easy and fun and hard to hurt yourself if you just tuck your head down.

3. **Sprinkler fun.** Put on old clothes or swimsuits, set up a sprinkler and run over and through it!

4. **Popsicles.** If you must, make them yourself, but every child ought to try those old-fashioned straight-line cheapo ones called ice pops. They're just fun.

5. **Play Pretend.** We used to climb in the old bass boat under my grandfather's carport and pretend we were customs agents, explorers, fishermen, ferry operators, wildlife agents, and more.

6. **Bike-riding.** If you can't afford bikes, check out yard sales, craigslist, and thrift stores.

7. **Build forts in the hedges.** Keep some old sheets on hand for this kind of thing. I remember how much fun it was to find a tree or hedge that had a secret open place on the inside. Take some treats in there and have a picnic or rubberband guns and have a war!

8. **Climb a tree.** The world looks different from up there. Take a book in your back pocket and you can really go on an adventure.

9. **Build a treehouse.** You can do a lot with scrap lumber, a hammer, and some long nails.

10. **Have an imaginary battle.** Be the Secret Service and hunt down a ring of counterfeiters. Pretend you're George Washington and fight the Redcoats.



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11. *Pick berries.* Some of our earliest memories are picking strawberries or blueberries and popping them straight into our mouths. Of course, pick some to take home! Use them to make cobbler, pie, or ice cream.

12. *Draw your own comic book.* Make yourself and your siblings the heroes.

13. *Make rubberband guns.* Or, order some rubberband machine guns and have an epic battle. www.RaisingRealMen.com/gear

14. *Go swimming.* Or, learn to swim. Every single member of your family should learn how to swim. It's a safety issue. If they're too young, they need to wear a life jacket around water. Here's a podcast of ours that may help.

15. *Go fishing.* All you need is a rod of bamboo, a worm, a hook, some fishing line, and a piece of cork for a bobber.

16. *Make a movie.* Friends of Hal's mom invite all the cousins over in the summer and they make an epic movie. Once they bought two old satellite dishes and put them together to make a flying saucer.

17. *Dig a hole.* Use it to drive your construction trucks in. Make up a story about how it got there.

18. *Make real lemonade.* All you need: lemons or lemon juice, sugar, and water. Heat one cup of sugar and one cup of water until the sugar dissolves. Add one cup of lemon juice two or three cups of water and ice until it tastes good to you. To make it even more appealing, add lemon slices to the pitcher and glasses.

19. *Make a town out of a pile of dirt for your tiny cars.* If it's raining, use blankets inside to make mountains. Or, ask your parents for an old sheet and draw a town complete with roads, parking lots, and buildings.

20. *Design a house.* Use rows of pinestraw to lay out the walls. This is fun to do when you are raking the yard.



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21. Build a model railroad. Your parents or grandparents might have some supplies in the attic.

22. Shelter. Build a shelter out of umbrellas or tarps and sit outside while it's raining. You can put a rock in the corner of a tarp and tie a string around it outside the tarp, then use the string to hang the tarp from trees or fences. (Cheaper alternative, but won't last - plastic tablecloths from the dollar store.) This is really a lot of fun!

23. Eat watermelon. This is especially wonderful served on a dock while you stand in the Lake. No worries about the juice! Do you like it with salt or without? Try it both ways.

24. Build a catapult. You could use popsicle sticks, sticks and twigs, or scrap lumber. Bind it together with string, rubberbands, or wire.

25. Build a dinosaur out of paper mache'. Then write a script and make a movie about him. We once saw a dinosaur eight feet tall some kids had made for a movie.

26. Learn the constellations. How many can you identify? Get a blanket and lie out under the stars with a star map.

27. Camp in the backyard. Set up a tent and pretend you are in the wilderness. Yard sales are a great place to find tents.

28. Grow something. Tomatoes or bell peppers are easy, especially if you get some plants that have already been started.

29. Sleep under the stars in a hammock or sleeping bag. Enjoy the early morning bird songs.

30. Wash the car. Put on a swim suit and really get into it. Bonus points if you detail the inside of the car, getting it totally clean. Actually, you may want to do that before you get all wet, then wash the outside to cool off!



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31. Wax the car. Warn Dad so he doesn't faint or something.

32. Teach the dog to fetch. Some treats for rewards will make this go faster, but most dogs will fetch for praise or even for fun!

33. Make paper airplanes. Compete to see whose flies the highest and the farthest.

34. Run races. Handicap the older kids by having them carry something – or someone!

35. Have swimming races. Sometimes we'll race in innertubes – very fun and funny. Or race using different swimming strokes.

36. Play board games. Ask your parents what they liked to play when they were young. Or go to www.RaisingRealMen.com/boardgames for our favorites. Or make up new rules for an old board game.

37. Make homemade ice cream. Try this: 3 cups cream, 3 cups half and half, 3 cups sugar, 3 mashed bananas, and the juice of 3 oranges and 3 lemons. Amazingly refreshing! Strictly follow the proportions of ice and salt on the salt box! If you get good at making ice cream, people will love it!

38. Invent a board game. Base it on a book or an activity or a historical time period you love. Make your own dice or ask your parents if you can have some out of an old game. Or make a spinner.

39. Repaint your own bed room. Or the laundry room. Or a shed. Or anything your parents will let you paint.

40. Learn a new craft. Ask your grandparents to teach you something they know how to do. Or get help: Our subscription box, Craftsman Crate, has taught our kids and many others tons of new artisanal craft skills!

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41. **Build a boat.** This is not as hard as it sounds. We've built four boats from skiffs to canoes. Learn how here: RaisingRealMen.com/product/canoe

42. **Make up a crazy story about something in your yard.** Maybe that mud puddle is really a giant footprint!

43. **Gather lightning bugs.** Catch them and put them in jar so you can watch them for a while. Let them go after an hour or so, so they can make more lightning bugs to light up your evenings. They light up to attract mates.

44. **Shoot off fireworks or firecrackers.** Of course, this isn't legal everywhere. Obey the law. Only kids old enough to do this safely should try this one. Younger kids can do poppers and string fire-crackers.

45. **Finger paint.** Dissolve 1 cup cornstarch and 1 tablespoon salt in 2 cups water. Cook until translucent. Add 1/2 cup cold water and food coloring. Add more water if necessary to make a spreadable paste. Store in fridge. Shiny paper works best.

46. **Play hide and go seek.** The seeker counts to 100 while everyone else hides, then they try to find them. The first one found is the next seeker. The last one found is the winner of that round.

47. **Eat lunch outside.** This can be as simple as carrying your sandwich out on the porch or you can lay out a sheet or blanket and have a picnic. For advanced adventurers, you could grill, cook on a campstove. or cook over a fire (Build it safely, with permission, and put it out when you are done).

48. **Learn to grill.** Start with hotdogs, work up to hamburgers, level up to chicken and steak, then master smoking meats.

49. **Build a dam across a stream or ditch.** Be sure to take it down when you're done.

50. **Learn more about God.** Read your Bible. Read a great book like Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis. Learn some hymns or songs. Ask your parents and grandparents about how they became Christians.



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51. Put up a tire swing. You'll need an old tire and a sturdy rope. You can buy rope at any hardware or homeowner store. If you can't find a family member with an old tire hanging around, you can buy one affordably at a used tire shop.

52. Go rock hunting. Learn to identify the rocks you find. You'll need a penny, a steel blade, and a piece of broken unglazed ceramic tile to make your observations. a magnifying glass is useful, too.

53. Go wildflower hunting. The PlantNet app can help you identify plants you are unfamiliar with - or just want to know better! Notice the complexity and beauty God has built into things we consider weeds.

54. Start an insect collection. You'll need a container to capture them in. A butterfly net helps, too. Place them in a plastic bag or container in the fridge to kill them without squashing them. Use straight pins to attach them to a board for display.

55. Hatch a brood of chickens. Your cooperative extension agent will often provide the incubators and the eggs, and take the baby chickens back when you're done.

56. Build a shed. This can be as simple as making a lean-to out of dead branches or as complex as a small barn.

57. Listen to a great audiobook while you fold clothes and make your mama happy. Find great audiobook books at our site - www.RaisingRealMen.com/product-category/audiobooks.

58. Pretend your house is a spaceship or Noah's ark. This works best in the rain.

59. Build a fire. Try to do it with a magnifying glass first. Or, try rubbing two sticks together (this is way easier with a bow-type arrangement). Clearly, younger kids need supervision and older ones, wisdom.

60. Make S'mores. Roast marshmallows over a fire. Put a square of chocolate bar on a half a graham cracker. Top it with the roasted marshmallow, and then another half Graham cracker.

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61. Roast a hotdog on a stick. You can do this over a campfire (ask permission) or over a wood fire in the fireplace.

62. Choose an ambitious reading project. The whole Lord of the Rings series. The whole New Testament. Read a whole series of something. Read every book in the library by your favorite author.

63. Be the chef. Cook all three meals for your family. My kids can do this by nine or ten, really anyone ought to be able to by 11 or 12. Older kids can do something more ambitious – cook a new recipe from scratch or try a new ethnic food.

64. Omelets. Kids that can make good omelets get invited to cook a lot. This is a good thing for a growing, hungry kid!

65. Make gas. Put a few inches of vinegar in the bottom of a two liter and quickly add baking soda and stretch a balloon across the top. Shake it up and watch the balloon inflate with carbon dioxide gas. This is why you burp when you take an antacid.

66. Turn a box into a house. If you see a big box by the side of the road, grab it and cut side-ways H's to make windows that close. Use crayons to draw bushes and flowers on the outside. Give it to a preschooler or toddler to play in. We won't tell if you play in it yourself first!

67. Learn how to sword fight. You can start with sticks (make sure they aren't sharp), or make your own from wood or foam, but for best results, use training swords. Check out ours here: www.RaisingRealMen.com/gear.

68. Have a water balloon fight. Fill balloons with water and tie them off. Once you have a pile, have fun!

69. Play horseshoes. Set up a stake and each throw twice. Ringers (around the stake), get 3 points, if no ringers, any leaner (on the stake) or nearest shoe gets 1 point. If both of one players' are closest, he gets 2 points.

70. Lay on the couch and look up at the ceiling. Imagine what it would be like to walk on the ceiling. For some reason, we did this a lot as kids. :-)

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71. Build a bird feeder and try to identify the birds that come. The Merlin Bird ID App can help you identify birds with their picture of a recording of their song. Or ask for a Bird Guide for your region.

72. Build a scratching post for your cat or a friend's cat from scrap wood and carpet.

73. Learn to knit or crochet. There are lots of instructional videos online. Or ask your mother or grandmother to teach you.

74. Have a tea party. Use the nice dishes. Make some finger foods. Find a nice cloth for the table and make a centerpiece. Invite your family. Make tea and have a tea party one afternoon or every day!

75. Write a short story. Who knows, it might one day become a book or even a series of books like the Promised Land series by Hope Auer. Hope started it by writing a short story about what it was like to be a slave in ancient Egypt when she was 13.

76. Learn to play Spades, Hearts, Bridge, or another card game. Ask an adult family member to teach you their favorite.

77. Learn about heraldry and make up a coat of arms for your family. Make a list of the characteristics you love about your family. Look up how to represent those things in heraldry to make your coat of arms.

78. Take up wood-burning. Make a gift for someone, a treasure box for yourself, or burn your new coat of arms. If you need a tool, see if there are any Craftsman Crate Woodburning Crates available at www.RaisingRealMen.com/gear.

79. Play in the rain. Put on old clothes and play outside when it is really pouring rain. So much fun. Don't track mud in the house, though.

80. Bake a cake, make cookies, or make some other snack for the family. Ask your mom or dad what their favorite snack is and offer to make it. The best part about this is you'll get some!



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81. Make a train out of laundry baskets. Pretend it's taking you somewhere amazing. Make tickets. Narrate a tour.

82. Make a salt dough map or sculpture. Use two parts flour to one part salt and one part water. Do a map of a famous battle or an imaginary country or create a new tree or animal.

83. Fold paper boats and test them out. You can test them in the bathtub or in a stream or ditch.

84. Hang a sheet over your bed and pretend it's a stagecoach. Imagine where you are going and what you'll do when you get there.

85. Have a shooting contest with foam dart guns or rubberband guns. Buy or make a target and make rules about scoring. Find cool rubberband guns on our site here: www.RaisingRealMen.com/gear.

86. Freeze ripe bananas for fast, healthy popsicles. Dip them in melted chocolate and/or nuts for an even more special treat. Or, drop frozen bananas in a blender or food processor with some milk or orange juice for a great smoothie or shake.

87. Pick flowers and make a bouquet for your mom. Ask first if you are picking them out of someone's yard.

88. Make a tin can telephone with old cans and string. Use a hammer and nail to knock a hole in the bottom of each of two cans. Stick a string through the hole and knot it. Use a lot of string, at least 10 feet or more. One of you put a can over your ear and the other talk into the other can. Can you hear?

89. Learn to play an instrument. One of our sons taught himself to play the guitar with free online videos. One of daughters used a self teaching curriculum to start playing the piano. Her teacher was amazed how much she knew when she started lessons.

90. Take the dog for a walk. He's just as bored as you are. Or, teach him to fetch or jump through a hoop. Treats are very motivational.



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91. Bathe the dog. Do it outside with the hose so you both get wet.

92. Make up a new sport. Grab a ball, make some rules, have fun.

93. Explore the crawl space under the house. Wear old clothes! Use a flashlight. Keep an eye out for creepy-crawlies.

94. Learn to refinish furniture. Start with something out of the garage, that you pick up on the side of the road, or at a thrift store.

95. Learn wood-carving. Make a whistle or flute from a piece of bamboo.

96. Polish your mom's silver. Listening to an audiobook while you do it will make it more fun.

97. Make helmets out of milk jugs. Cut the handle part out and paint to make a helmet. Pretend you are in the Roman Army.

98. Step up to adulthood. Learn how to do something real - change the oil in the car, do the laundry, make your bed, change a tire, repair a leaky sink.

99. Do a play or talent show for your grandparents. Memorize a poem, sing a song, show a painting, play an instrument. Or, write a play for yourself and your siblings.

100. Make a card or write a letter for your grandparents or a far-away relative. Making someone else happy is a great way to make yourself happy.

101. Keep a journal. We have a journal kept by one of our ancestors over a hundred years ago. We've loved learning about what life was like in their time. Record your memories for your children's children.

Can you add to the list? Did we forget anything?





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More Resources from Raising Real Men & Craftsman Crate

Here are some resources that might bless your family this summer:

Raising Real Men: Surviving, Teaching and Appreciating Boys – from the parents of six sons in a row, now grown.

No Longer Little: Parenting Tweens with Grace and Hope will help you navigate the challenging 9-13yo age range.

Craftsman Crate: The Subscription Box that Builds Your Skills teaches a new artisanal craft skill each month using real tools in a complete kit – no trips to the store! Learn things like woodburning, scrimshaw, candlemaking, globemaking, and more!

Want to try Craftsman Crate before you subscribe? Shop for past crates, while supplies last.

The Character-Building Audiobook Library contains ten of the books that our adult kids say influenced their characters growing up. These books are exciting, funny, and memorable. Appropriate and fun for the entire family. Get other great audiobooks, too.

Find quality adventure gear like rubberband guns and rubberband long guns, wooden swords and training swords, and more.

The Christ-Centered Holiday series will help you to celebrate in a way that will draw your kids' hearts to home and, through your home, point them toward Christ.

Got struggling learners? We carry Dianne Craft's materials as well as our own.

Find them all at www.RaisingRealMen.com and CraftsmanCrate.com!

