

Living Faith @

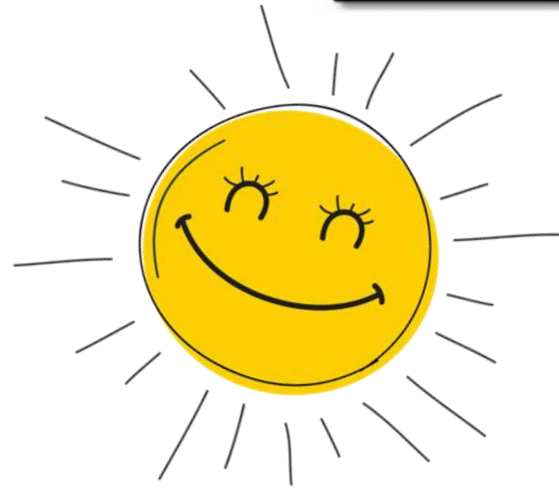


The lazy, hazy days of summer are truly upon us! I hope you and your family are able spend a little extra time just enjoying the slower pace that summer can bring. Last year, due to the pandemic, there were a lot of summer events cancelled, and many of our usual summer destinations were shut down. One thing that 2020 taught us is that we can still provide a lot of fun for our families without going to a whole lot of trouble and planning. Good old-fashioned walks in the park, Bicycling trails, backyard picnics & camping were once again quite popular!

Even though places like amusement parks, zoos, museums, and municipal swimming pools are now opening up again to the public, I hope that we can still take some time to enjoy God's creation and the beauty of nature in the simple ways like we did last year.

It will not be long, and our fall calendars will start filling up again and before we know it, we'll be heading to the store with our back-to-school list in hand.

May you enjoy and savor the precious days of this summer while they last!



25 Responses to "I'm Bored!"

- Play Hopscotch
- Look at Old Pictures
- Write a Story
- Do a Puzzle
- Have a Fashion Show
- Blow Bubbles
- Create a Super Hero
- Give the Dog a Bath
- Read a Book
- Play Tag
- Wash the Car
- Dance to Music
- Have a Tea Party
- Look for 4-Leaf Clovers
- Write a Letter (and Mail it!)
- Pick Flowers for the Table
- Practice a Sport
- Take a Bubble Bath
- Learn a Magic Trick
- Pick Some of Your Toys to Donate
- Make a Nature Bracelet
- Paint a Picture for a Neighbor
- Play Charades
- Take Pictures of Nature (A-Z)
- Make Sock Puppets

Planning for Fall and Faith Formation

I'm always a little bit "caught off guard" when August rolls around and I realize that school is starting soon – especially in Iowa, where many schools start classes the third week in August. And that means also being prepared for going back to Sunday School, Confirmation, and other youth activities. Here are some things to think about *now* so that you are ready! If you are a pastor or a faith formation leader or volunteer, start now in preparing your congregations for what they can look forward to this fall. Here is a list of some things to start thinking about:

- Blessing of the Backpacks – a fun way to send the kids off to school knowing that God is watching over them. Start letting everyone know now so they will bring their backpacks on the Sunday you designate. Our Synod has resources on their website for a backpack blessing: <https://www.neiasynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Milestone-Ministry-Blessing-of-the-Backpacks-worship-sheet.pdf>
- Plan a Rally Day for the First Day of Sunday School – What I've learned is that it doesn't have to be complex – create a simple theme and focus your activities on that. One year we created the theme "It's SWEET to Love Jesus!" – we had lots of simple, fun games with pieces of candy: Contests for throwing Tootsie Rolls in a bucket; Guessing how many pieces of candy were in a big jar; Jenga type contests with Candy Bars; and the favorite: Making homemade ice cream in a bag: <https://www.thebestideasforkids.com/ice-cream-in-a-bag/> Involve the adults as well – they'll have a blast!
- Plan a Mission Project for the school year – Start out the year with a planned mission or outreach project. It can be supporting a local cause such as a food bank or some other charitable organization, or a world-wide cause such as Lutheran World Relief. Maybe incorporate it into a "God's Work our Hands Sunday" or "Rally Day Sunday." You can visit our Synod website for mission ideas: <https://www.neiasynod.org/ministries/>
- Decorate Church Bulletin Boards for Fall – a couple of weeks before the beginning of Sunday school, invite some families to come and decorate church bulletin boards - make them welcoming and inviting! Make it a party and have snacks or a light lunch available.
- Plan for ways that children, youth and families can assist during worship services. Children love to participate! Find simple ways for them to help with ushering, reading scripture, praying, acolyting, and helping with communion and worship offerings. Put out a signup sheet now and start encouraging families and children to sign up.
- Prepare (or update) Worship Activity Bags for children to use during the worship service. Make sure they are clean and that broken crayons, marked up activity/coloring books, etc. are replaced.
- Make sure to pray special prayers for the beginning of the school year – for our children and families, for teachers, for all those who are involved in the care and education of our youth.

This information is prepared for you by the Northeastern Iowa Synod – Home Life Network for use by families and local congregations. Like our page on Facebook and our posted resources will appear in your newsfeed. Our page is [Home Life « NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD \(neiasynod.org\)](https://www.facebook.com/NEIASYNOD)

