



Kids & Families Together

May 2017

9 Memorial Day Activities for Kids

Memorial Day often heralds the arrival of summer and that summer vacation is almost here. But this year, take some time to teach kids about what this holiday actually celebrates: remembering all of the people who have given their lives in service to the United States Armed Forces.

“Memorial Day” by Mir Tamim Ansary
“Memorial Day Surprise” by Theresa Martin Golding
“The Wall” by Eve Bunting.

Or visit The History Channel's website for interesting information.

Here are nine crafts and activities ideas to get children into the spirit of the day.

1. Read All About It - So many of us forget why we actually mark Memorial Day on our calendars. If you need some help explaining it to kids, these three books (appropriate for children ages four to eight) talk about the holiday in clear language that kids will understand:

2. Tie-Dye an American Flag T-Shirt

3. Make a Patriotic Fruit Pizza Dessert
Use the colors of our American Flag to make a delicious dessert pizza made of cookie crust, topped with Greek yogurt frosting and fresh berries.

Cont. Pg. 2

Having Faith

Dear Faith,

Q: My husband and I adopted our 11 year old daughter when she was four years old. She recently started in a new school. Our daughter is African American and Filipino. My husband and I are both Caucasian. There is some diversity within her classroom, but there are no other adoptive families. She's gotten non-stop questions about being a different "color" from her parents and, when she told a group of kids that it's because she was adopted, they said they "feel sorry for her." She does not want a classroom presentation about adoption or any

more attention brought to this, but she's clearly upset about it. What can I do?

Needing help in Saticoy

A: As parents, it is challenging when we can't just make things better for our kids. As children get older, they may want to address more and more situations on their own. Fortunately, there are ways you can help in this situation while still respecting your daughter's boundaries. Rather than give a presentation to her class, consult with the teacher to make sure he or she is aware of these comments and the hurt they cause, and help your daughter's teacher prepare some supportive responses

Cont. Pg. 3

Kids & Families Together's mission is to strengthen relationships and provide safe, supportive help and education to keep family members emotionally connected to one another.

IN OUR COMMUNITY

A look at what's happening this month

May 6 - SPRING CRAFT & GIFT FAIR

10 a.m.-4 p.m. Spring fine arts & crafts just in time for Mother's Day gifts. Held inside and outside. Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center, 3050 E. Los Angeles Ave., Simi Valley. For vendor information, call 583-7905.

May 13 - OJAI STUDIO ARTISTS MINI TOURS

10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free studio tours in Ojai. For locations and map, visit ojaistudioartists.org.

May 22 - SECRET GARDEN TOUR

Camarillo Grove Park. Take a trip in to the secret public gardens of Camarillo. Bus transportation and lunch provided. Led by Master Gardener Carol Haverty. \$19. For more information and registration, call 482-1996.

May 20-21 - STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

For more information, go to www.conejovalleyguide.com.

May - August 2017 - FAIRY TALES IN THE PARK Throughout Ventura County

A series of free, live theatrical performances throughout Ventura County geared towards children ages 3 to 10. For more information go to www.conejovalleyguide.com.



Keeping up with Kids & Families

There are a number of ways to stay in the loop with what's going on at Kids & Families Together. If you are reading this, you're already on the right path!

You can also "Like" us on Facebook, send us a tweet on Twitter @Kant, follow us on LinkedIn, check out our calendar on our www.kidsandfamilies.org website, give us a call, or stop by our www.kidsandfamilies.org Center.



9 Memorial Day Activities for Kids cont. from Pg 1

4. Send a Letter to a Soldier Overseas - A thank you letter or care package sent to a soldier stationed overseas is a wonderful way to show appreciation for the brave men and women who serve our country. There are many nonprofit organizations dedicated to this effort, such as Operation USO Care Package, Any Soldier and A Million Thanks.

5. Enjoy Fruity, Frozen and Festive Drinks - Place blueberries, blackberries, strawberries and raspberries (or any combination of those) into an ice cube tray and cover with water. Freeze overnight for festive ice cubes in the morning. Stay cool by adding these to sparkling water or lemonade this Memorial Day.

6. Visit a Local Cemetery or Memorial - Many families visit cemeteries annually on Memorial Day to pay respect to loved ones who served their country. Even if you don't have family members in these cemeteries, your kids can still honor these fallen service men and women by placing flowers or flags at headstones that don't have any.

7. Break out the Face Paint - Nothing gets kids in a celebratory mood like face painting! Use blue paint to draw a square around kids' right eye (your left), then make red stripes across the rest of their faces to create the flag. Make sure to get a picture.

8. March On - Memorial Day goes hand-in-hand with parades. Find one in your local area and bring a flag to wave!

9. Say Hi to a Vet - Today is a great day to give back to the people who have served this country. Visit a veterans hospital or throw a party for a veteran on your block.

And once Memorial Day passes, start planning for another exciting holiday.

Having Faith cont. from Pg. 1

when these comments are made in his or her presence. For example, the teacher might want to address with the class the many ways that families are created which could address the diversity within families and include adoptive families as one of the many wonderful and normal ways that families are formed.

Talking with your daughter may seem more difficult, but it is important for her to be able to talk through what is most hurtful about these questions and

comments. She may feel some inadequacy about your family or she may be internalizing adoption as something she caused rather than a choice made by adults. She may be concerned about how peers view her. The comments may have inspired new questions about her birth family, and it could be an excellent opportunity to share any additional information you may have with her. If your daughter seems hesitant to open up, try talking while in the car or during some other activity when eye contact is not required. This tends to make it easier for kids to volunteer the things they are thinking.

—Faith

Thank You!

Kids & Families Together would like to thank the wonderful and gracious people and organizations who generously helped us and our families these past few months.

Carrie McAuliffe
Stacy DeWitt
Corey Branchflower,
Kaitlyn and Sean Mckee
Lennie Vilches
Ventura Sunrise Optimist Club
Senior Concerns in Thousand Oaks for our continued partnership in serving kinship caregivers

We want to thank the following partners and community volunteers for helping make this year's Spring Fling a wonderful event for over 130 foster, kinship and adoptive children and their families. The children were able to participate in egg hunts, art activities, games and face painting:

Heart 2 Heart
James' Storehouse
Youth Groups from Oaks Christian
Wings to Grow
RaisingHOPE
Shelter Care Resources
The Branchflower Family
St. Jude's Church and Youth Group
Steffi Steffen-Disney
Sunrise Optimist
Mark Soovajian with New York Life Insurance Company
Barbara Bonbright and her friend Judy
Carly Heath and Jake
Kenne Kennedy
Ernie Sandoval
Alexis
Jay
Katlyn & Kevin
Hope
Youth Groups from Oaks Christian
Wings to Grow

Training Opportunities

from Ventura County Community College District's Foster & Kinship Care Education

Kinship Parenting for Relative Care Givers

These training groups will explore the practical issues related to parenting a second generation and provide tools and support to help you get and keep your bearing along the way. *No RSVP needed- Walk-ins welcome!*
Sponsors: Ventura College FKCE, Oxnard College FKCE and Kids & Families Together

Ventura Resource Group
1st and 3rd Tuesdays 6:00-8:00pm

Santa Paula Resource Group (Bilingual Spanish & English). 2nd Tuesday of the month 6:00-8:00pm.

Oxnard Resource Group (Spanish)
1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month 6:00-8:00pm.

Camarillo Resource Group
Last Thursday of the month 6:00-8:00pm.

Thousand Oaks Resource Group
2nd Tuesday of the month 6:30-8:30pm

Simi Valley Resource Group
3rd Wednesday of the month 6:00-8:00pm

Ojai Resource Group
4th Tuesday of the month 6:00-8:00pm

For more information on the above classes or to RSVP you may call **Debbie Flowers at Oxnard College 678-5144** or **Rhonda Carlson at Ventura College 289-6181** or send an email debbiefowers@vcccd.edu or rcarlson@vcccd.edu

K&FT Staff Spotlight: Laura Figueroa

Our staff members play a critical role in maintaining the everyday flow of Kids & Families Together. They are kind, nurturing and here to serve their community



1. What is your role at K&FT and how does it impact the organization?

I'm a peer mentor who helps families navigate through the system and empower families to be able to help themselves.

2. Describe yourself in one sentence.

Reliable

3. What's something most people don't know about you?

I get up at 5am to run.

4. On a scale of 1 to 10 how "cool" are you? Why?

I'm about a 8, I don't believe anyone is perfect and we all have room for improvement to better ourselves daily.



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