



Parent *pages*

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



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It's a field trip day!

Back when I was in school, field trips were the most exciting days of the school year. As students, we knew we were headed for a new experience, and most important, we were getting away from our desks. Field trips are still an important part of education. Teachers recognize that trips offer unique ways of learning and they motivate students to learn beyond the curriculum.

There are education theorists that give us reasons to use field trips for learning. Piaget would point out that field trips are a form of experiential learning, which allows students to make meaning from direct experience. This is especially important in a world of virtual technology.

Montessori would remind us that children learn by doing, so any opportunity to use a variety of senses will enhance learning. When we experience new sights, sounds and smells, our brains make more connections that allow us to retrieve the information later. So much of school learning is visual, it is important to involve our other senses too.

Vygotsky would chime in with his assertion that we are social learners. When we learn in a group and have an opportunity to talk about that learning, we are learning in the way our

brains were designed to work. This can only complement the individual learning students practice in the classroom.

Furthermore, Lewin would point out that field trips offer students an opportunity to do research. When



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students are out in the field, they use skills of observation, data collection and theorizing, much the same way a scientist does. Later, they compare what they learned with information found online or in books.

Of course, Dewey would want to have his say in the matter. He would point out that field trips work to create situational interest, which is a motivational factor in learning. A field trip opens up a student's mind to new things and encourages them to continue that learning as the motivation carries into the classroom setting. Field trips are a great way to start or sustain the momentum for learning new science or social studies concepts.

If you talk with your child's teacher, he or she will most likely list the above reasons and include opportunity to extend learning through writing, creating and discussion. A

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good field trip can either begin or summarize a classroom unit. Think of it as the glue that attracts or cements factual learning.

In spite of these great reasons for field trips, some students would prefer to miss out. Schools offer many different types of learning experiences, so skipping a field trip should not be an option any more than skipping PE or English class. It is a good idea, however, to do some detective work to find out why your child displays reluctance.

Does she have anxiety in regard to the field trip?

Some children do not do well with a change of routine, but that does not mean that a change of routine is bad for them. Work with your child and her teacher to help her address her concerns. Be aware that children who are being bullied might have more reason to be anxious on a field trip day, as it might be easier for bullies to be mean with different supervision circumstances.

Again, this is an excellent opportunity for you to work with your child and her teacher to take control of the situation and make a plan.

Does your child insist he is just not interested in the field trip?

Some children will not admit that learning is interesting. Others, who have spent many summers in childcare, might equate field trips with activities designed just to give kids something else to do. Childcare field trips are important learning experiences too but tend to take time away from play rather than time away from the desk.

Encourage your child to visit with his teacher, and find out

the reasons why the field trip has been scheduled. Let your child know, with no uncertainty, that you are excited for this opportunity and want to hear all about it at day's end. Parents do not have to endure a child's lack of motivation; you can do much to create a positive attitude.

Does your child see skipping a field trip as an opportunity to get a day to spend at home with video games?

I am sure you can appreciate the desire to have a day off; however, it is not good to encourage this in regard to school. School is for learning, and school is your child's job. Missed school is missed learning, and with a field trip, not learning that can be "made up." If this is the situation for your child, then you have a chance to teach her an important life skill.

When God gives us an opportunity to learn or serve, we take that opportunity and remember that our attitude is important. Stand strong on this issue; you will not hurt your child or damage your relationship with him. Children are healthier emotionally when they trust their parents to set limits and stick by them.

If you have the chance, take time off work and come along on the field trip or plan a family field trip for another day. This will give you a chance to do some learning and to model a good attitude for learning.

For further study:

A website such as Field Trip Factory can help you find interesting activities for you to enjoy with your children: www.fieldtripfactory.com.



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