ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOL-AGE KIDS (AGES 5-8)

1. **BUILD A FORT**

I would venture to say that you built forts as a kid yourself. And if not, pretend you are a kid again and join in here.

For this activity, you will need some pillows, blankets and a creative mind. I always loved to build my fort around the kitchen table, or in between furniture. I always wanted to create a fort that would allow for the blankets to not be sitting on my head.

Let your kids get creative and build to their heart's content. This is one of the fun family activities to do indoors WITH your kids.

And I would venture to say, you'll need the password to get in.

2. **SIMON SAYS**

Simon says is one of those games that just about anyone can play. It is played in school and often played at camps as well. It teaches your kids how to listen carefully and follow instructions. In case you aren't familiar with the game, here's how you play.

You have one person be Simon. Simon is the person who is responsible for calling out instructions. Sometimes Simon will give instructions by saying, “Simon says”, and other times not. When “Simon says” is spoken with an activity, all participants are expected to do that activity. If “Simon says” is not spoken, and someone follows the direction, then they are out of the game.
3. **SCAVENGER HUNT**
The great thing about scavenger hunts is that they can be completed indoors or outside. I love doing scavenger hunts outside, but when the weather doesn’t cooperate, indoors we go.
If you create a list of items ahead of time and have that list available, you have a fun activity for your kids to do without any thought. One great way to do this is to have pictures of items. This is especially important if your kids aren’t great readers. Give them the list of items and then have them bring the items to you as they go.

4. **TELEPHONE**
The great part about telephone is that it is going to force you to put yours down. Telephone is a game that is played with a group of people. The larger the group, the more hilarious the game becomes.

All participants sit down in a line. The first person in the line comes up with a sentence to share with the others. The sentence is whispered into the ear of the second person in line only ONE TIME. The second person then whispers to the third, and this continues until the sentence has been whispered to the last person in line. The last person when says the sentence out loud and 9 times out of 10, the sentence that is spoken is nowhere near what it was when the game originally started.

5. **WATCH A MOVIE**
There is nothing better than sitting down with a bucket of popcorn (or your favorite snack), a good movie, and your kids. There is something calming and good for the soul that comes from spending some quality quiet time with family. And with any luck, some will take a nap.

6. **PLAY A BOARD GAME**
It really makes me sad that board games have started to become a thing of the past. They have been replaced by video games. But, there is still room on your shelf for at least a few great board games. Chutes and Ladders, Hungry, Hungry Hippo, Candy Land, Memory, and the list could go on. All super fun games for kids of all ages.

7. **BAKE COOKIES**
Baking teaches kids so many things. Measurement, precision, and patience to name a few. But, one way I also like to use cookies to teach my kids, is by teaching them to share blessings with others. I like to do this by way of taking the cookies to places like the fire department, or the police station. I want my kids to be appreciative of the service these men and women provide to their community.
8. **READ A BOOK**
As I mentioned before, reading is one of THE BEST things you can be doing for your kids. Whether you are reading to them, or they are starting to read on their own, have some books in your house they will enjoy. Or, better yet, take them to the library and let them pick out some books to borrow for free!

9. **PAINT BY NUMBER**
As long as your kids know their numbers, then paint by number is a nice, quiet activity your kids will be able to do by themselves. At this age, kids are starting to want to exercise their autonomy, and this is a great activity for that. The paint by number kits that I have used in the past usually come with everything you need, including the painting board, the paints, and the paintbrush. It is likely still a good idea to have a **craft smock** to keep your kids’ clothes clean.

10. **BAKE A PIE**
I mentioned baking cookies for a group in your community, but why not teach your kids to bake a pie. A lattice pie at that, maybe. Baking can be stressful with kids, BUT if you tell yourself ahead of time that it’s likely going to be a bit of a mess, it may be easier to handle when the flour hits the floor. And, if you aren’t the best baker, all you really need is pre-made pie crust, and some pie filling.
Your kids will think it’s great because it’s something new and they are getting to help, and you’ll think it’s great because you’ll have a yummy dessert to enjoy!

**ACTIVITIES FOR TWEENS (AGES 9-12)**

1. **CHARADES**
For charades, all you need is a bag full of slips of papers with things written on them. You will want the papers to have things written on them that someone can read and then act out without using any words for a crowd of people guessing. If you have a large group of kids, separate into teams and make it a competition. Let one person from one team act, while the other team guesses, and then switch roles.

2. **PRACTICE AN INSTRUMENT**
If your kiddo enjoys playing an instrument then some downtime inside is a great time for some practice! And, if they don’t already play an instrument, today could be a great day to head to your local music store or pawn shop to take a look around and see what is available.

3. **READ A BOOK**
I mentioned this was going to be listed for every age group because I think reading is that important. Make a quick trip to the library or grab a few books at your local bookstore.

4. **BUILD A ROBOT**
If you have random objects or recycling laying around your house, then you have the makings of a robot. It is likely all you will need is a hot glue gun and glue sticks. Let your child use their creativity to create a robot from the items once headed for the trash!

5. **PLAY A CARD GAME**
Solitaire is a great game for one person to play alone. But, if there is more than one person, there are other card games you can play as well. Speed, Rummy, Rummy 500, are just a few of the card games you can play with friends. A few other card games you might enjoy playing are Uno, Apples to Apples Jr. (with parental guidance), and Phase 10.

6. **PAPER AIRPLANE RACE**
So many of these activities require kids to think, and I love that! Paper airplane races are right up there on the creative juices list. Kids will need to use their best techniques to build airplanes they think will fly the furthest.
This is the most fun if there are a group of people building and flying airplanes together. The person whose airplane flies the furthest wins!

7. **ENCRYPT A MESSAGE**
Encrypting messages requires incredible creativity. The most common encryption code often only requires the alphabet. A person starts to create their code by listing out the alphabet. Then, starting on a different letter, they begin listing the alphabet again, right below. For instance, if the second alphabet was started below the letter G, then G would become A on the encrypted message. H would become B, I would become C, and so on.

This can be a lot of fun for two people to write notes back and forth. Don’t let anyone find your encryption code!

8. **PUZZLE BOOK**
There are some awesome puzzle books available for kids. Some of the most popular are word finds, number finds, Sudoku, and crosswords. The great part is that you can often find puzzle books at the dollar store for really cheap, but they will provide your kids with hours of fun!

9. **WATCH A MOVIE**
I love sitting down with a yummy snack, a great movie, and my family. There really is nothing better. There are so many sites you can rent movies from, BUT did you know that most local libraries have movies you can borrow as well!? I love FREE things, and this is a super win for you!

10. **BRAIN TEASERS FOR KIDS BOOK**
There is nothing better than a great brain teaser, except maybe an entire book of brain teasers! My friend Adriana, over at Educational Toy Factory, has created an AWESOME, and SUPER CHEAP book, called Brain Teasers for Kids, that I know your entire family will love. There are 43 puzzles (with solutions), that are sure to have your family putting on their thinking caps. One great way to play is to use a timer and see who can figure out the puzzle first!

Reference: cheerfullysimple.com  whatdowedoallday.com

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