

Father's Day

Fun ideas for an activity session for children and their families

Introduction

Father's Day falls on 19 June and gives us a great opportunity to explore and celebrate fatherhood, both in the earthly and heavenly sense, and have some fun together.

Use some of the following ideas to organise an event for children and their dads, step-dads or granddads, or for whole families, maybe on a Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon. Ideally every child will have an adult present, but if necessary, mix up the family groups.

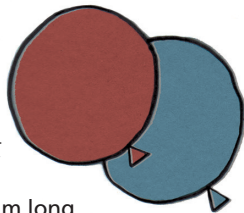
Games

Balloon racing 15 mins

A friendly competition using 'balloon energy'

You will need: balloons, pieces of string 3m long (one per family), drinking straws, sticky tape, paperclips.

- The idea is to race deflating balloons along a string. Set up two rows of chairs, with their backs facing each other, 3–4m apart.
- Give each family a balloon, a piece of string, a drinking straw and some sticky tape.
- Thread the string through the straw, then tie one end to a chair on one side of the room and the other to the chair opposite. Blow up the balloon and seal it with a paperclip, then tape it to the straw (all balloons should be taped in the same direction).
- Stand on the same side, balloon nozzles facing the chair. Gently take off the paperclip and hold the nozzles. On the count of three let go, and see which balloon travels the furthest and fastest.
- Afterwards, suggest that the balloon is like a parent and child. A parent fills up their child with encouragement, energy and love. When we become deflated, like the balloon, we can go back to our families and our heavenly father to be refilled, so we are ready to go again.



Craft activities

Scrapheap challenge 15 mins

Make a junk sculpture to model relationships with fathers

You will need: junk items, e.g. cereal boxes, newspapers, cardboard tubes, old clothing – be as adventurous as your building will allow – old tyres, tarpaulins, etc. If you have limited space, use simple building blocks.

- Ask family groups to create something out of junk, or with the bricks, that represents an aspect of our relationship with fathers. Encourage everyone to value and include all ideas.
- Families could present their sculptures to the rest of the group.
- Remind people about the Genesis story of creation in which God took the soil of the earth and created something amazing – Adam!



Put your hand in mine 15 mins

A reflective craft activity about being held in our father's hands

You will need: small canvases, coloured paints in trays, marker pens, hand-washing facilities, or coloured paper, A4 card and glue.

- Give each family a canvas. Starting with dad or another adult, dip a hand palm down in paint and place it on the canvas. Allow the print to dry a little, then in age order, put hand prints on top of each other. Finally, everyone signs their names on the finished picture.
- Alternatively, draw round hands on coloured paper, cut them out and stick them on top of each other on a larger piece of card.
- Place the canvases or cards on the floor, holds hands in a circle and close with a prayer, using the words of Isaiah: 'For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you.' (Isaiah 41.13)



Scavenger hunt 10 mins

Find things that can symbolise fathers and the parent-child relationship

You will need: packets of soft sweets, wrapped chewy toffees, small chocolate bars, other small items, e.g. a shoelace, an item of red clothing, a Bible, a watch, a £5 note, a cross, a pencil, and lists of the 10 items (one per team), pens.

- Beforehand, hide the sweets, toffees and chocolate bars around the room.
- Form family or mixed teams. Give each team a list of the items (including sweets/chocolates) to find together as quickly as they can. Award a prize to the team which finds them all first.
- Now challenge each team to come up with an explanation of how each item can be a symbol of fatherhood or the parent/child relationship, e.g. chocolate – solid and reliable, watch – spending time together. These can be written down and compared for fun at the end.



Finish the event with refreshments for everyone, e.g. heart-shaped biscuits, edible letter 'D's, or the children could ice cakes with their own messages.