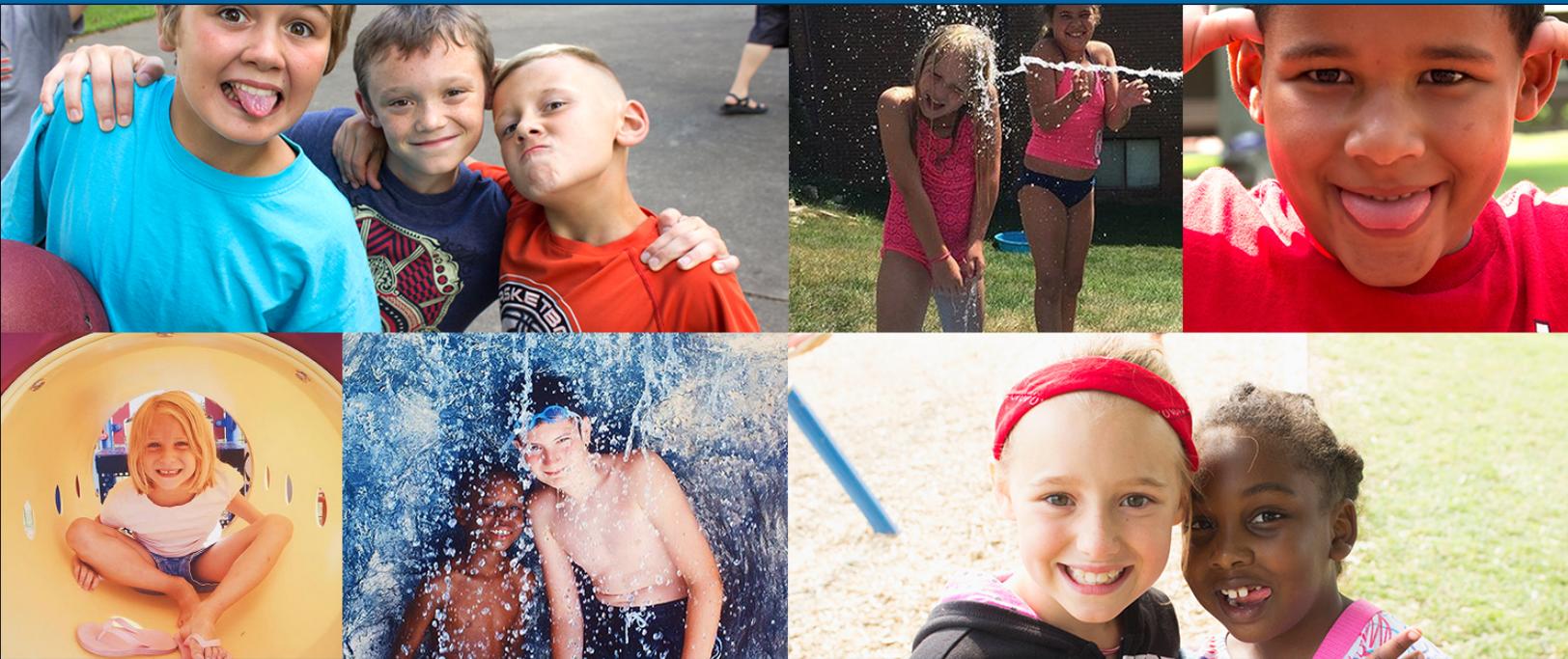


# MAKE YOUR SUMMER COUNT



3 STEPS TO MAKE THIS  
THE SUMMER YOUR KIDS  
WILL NEVER FORGET

*A free ebook from Camp of Champions USA*



## **3 STEPS**

TO MAKE THIS THE SUMMER YOUR  
KIDS WILL NEVER FORGET

- 1. HAVE FUN ON PURPOSE.** *(p.4)*
- 2. PROTECT YOUR FAMILY FROM THE FUN-ASSASSINS.** *(p.6)*
- 3. DO SOMETHING THAT MATTERS, TOGETHER.** *(p.8)*

# SUMMER.

That word holds a lot of weight, doesn't it? You probably started thinking about sunshine, a dip in the pool, or even an ice cold glass of lemonade. Maybe you're thinking about summers you spent as a kid - visiting your grandparents, riding your bike across town to see your friends, watching fireworks on the 4th, and those August nights when the temperature dipped *just enough* to make you reach for your favorite sweatshirt. As adults, summer time may have lost a little of the wonder it once held for us - we still go to work, we stick to the same routines, and our schedule marches on relatively uninterrupted. But for kids, summer is still magical - no homework, no tests, **no school for three whole months!**

*Woah.*

Ok, ok. In case you blacked out for a second after reading that last part, take a deep breath - *everything will be ok*. Yes, your kids won't be in school for Three. Whole. Months. You might be thinking, "What are they going to do? What am *I* going to do?! Are you sure it's three months?!?" Don't worry, we wrote this guide specifically for you. So take a second to wrap up your panic attack, breathe into one of those paper bags if you need to, and then let's make a plan together. **A plan to make your summer count.**

By the end of this short book, you'll know exactly what you need to do to give your family a summer of unforgettable memories. This will be the summer your kids look back on when they're older and say "Remember that summer when we..." This will be the summer that makes a lasting impact on your family. This will be the summer that makes all the other summers jealous. It will be **fun**, it will be **awesome**, it will be... well, it's really up to you to decide.

Your plan to make summer count has just 3 steps,  
so let's start with Step 1.

## STEP 1: HAVE FUN ON PURPOSE.

Fun is so much more than laughing and playing around and wearing your kids out so hopefully they'll sleep in just 3 minutes longer than usual. Fun is the foundation to building deep, lasting, meaningful relationships. Don't sit around and hope that fun will magically appear - have fun on purpose! Here's some tips to making it happen.

- **GET INPUT FROM THE KIDS.**

You know your kids better than anyone, right? Wrong! Your daughter is actually the leading expert in the field of knowing what she wants. Give your kids the chance to share their ideas about how to have fun together as a family this summer. You certainly don't have to use all of their ideas (I'd recommend staying away from anything that ends with the words "eating contest"), but they're bound to give you some creative things to do that you would never have considered. Plus, they'll enjoy the activities even more if they had a say in the decision.

- **SCHEDULE YOUR FUN.**

We've all been fed a lie about having fun. At some point in time, we all decided that being spontaneous was more fun than following a schedule (I think it happened the day *Dead Poet's Society* was released). Maybe it seems more genuine to "go with the flow" and "be in the moment." Sure, sometimes being spontaneous is fun. But there's a lot of fun things you miss out on if you never make a plan. For example, you can't *spontaneously* go to Disney World - that takes saving up and asking time off from work and travel and hotels and *planning*. So, I give you full permission to put FUN on your family calendar. I promise it won't feel forced or cheesy or weird. And remember, *quality* time with your family only happens when you have enough *quantity* time. Schedule enough time together to create the special moments they'll remember for a lifetime.

- **BUDGET FOR FUN.**

There are plenty of fun summer activities that cost absolutely nothing to enjoy: taking a walk, watching the sunset, catching fireflies, going to the park, joining a summer reading

group at the library, running through a sprinkler in the backyard. There are some things that cost a little bit of money: getting an ice cream cone, swimming at the local pool, shopping at the farmer's market, or going to the movies. There's also some things that will cost an arm and maybe even a leg: setting off on a cross-country vacation, sending your kids to a summer sports camps, or sitting behind the left field dugout at an MLB game. Whatever you plan to do this summer, 1) know what it costs, 2) shop around for the best deal possible, and 3) save up to pay for it ahead of time. Your fun summer activity will turn into a lingering ghost in the fall if you simply swipe your credit card and forget about it. Make a budget so that you can enjoy your summer now and not regret your purchases later.

- **\*\*BONUS\*\* HAVE A "YES, AND" MENTALITY.**

There's a old rule in improv comedy called "Yes, And." When comedians are improvising a sketch and someone introduces a new element into the scene, all the other actors accept the new element and then build on it. So if a comedian suddenly enters the scene and declares "I am a giant whale shark!" the other actor might say "Hello, there Mr. Whale Shark! We saved your seat right here for the hot dog eating contest." The actor said "Yes" to the whale shark, then "And" by adding the hot dog eating contest. Why did we just talk about improv comedy? Well, I'm glad you asked, Mr. Whale Shark. You can apply "Yes, And" thinking with your family plans. If your kid says "Let's go outside," you can say "Yes, let's go outside *and* see how many different kinds of insects we can find in the backyard." "Mom, can we get ice cream?" "Great idea, and let's all order for another person in the family." Use "Yes, And" to build on the fun your kids already want to have.

## STEP 2: PROTECT YOUR FAMILY FROM THE FUN-ASSASSINS.

You want to have a great time with your family this summer, but there's a few enemies who want to stop you from having fun at all costs. Here's how you can fight them off.

- **ENEMY #1 - DANGER**

You know that saying, "It's all fun and games until someone loses an eye." First of all, how did this saying ever become popular? Did lots of people lose their eyes while having fun? Is this still a common problem? Second, as weird as it may be, *that saying is true*. Nothing will kill your fun faster than an accident. Find things that your family can enjoy together that don't pose too great a risk to their well-being. We should always think about protecting our children in at least these 4 areas:

1. Physically (Can she really handle swimming in the deep end of the pool?)
2. Emotionally (Will this movie give him nightmares?)
3. Socially (Who exactly is going to be at this sleep over?)
4. Spiritually (His friends taught him what?!)

In order to have fun, we have to make safety a priority and protect our kids from danger.

- **ENEMY #2 - REGRET**

No matter how much you plan, no matter how creative your ideas, no matter how color-coded your family calendar is, some days simply won't be great. The weather might not be what you expected for your outdoor excursion through the park. Your son might need some stitches after that backyard gladiator showdown against the neighbor kid goes south. You might get to the zoo with a car load of children and realize you left your wallet on the kitchen counter at home. These are the moments when regret wants to settle in and make itself at home in your heart. But here's some good news: God gave us the incredible ability to choose our attitude. We're not a victim of our circumstances, we choose our response. You can choose to stay positive, push regret aside, and bring everyone else along

for a ride on the Optimism Super Rocket Ship Express (trademark pending). Make the decision right now to choose joy when things don't go your way.

- **ENEMY #3 - COMFORT**

It's easy to be comfortable. It's easy to take your kids to the same spots you always go to. You know where to park, you know where the bathrooms are, you might even recognize a few faces. Familiar is comfortable, but you'll miss out on so much if you only settle what's familiar! Your kids won't remember *another* trip to the same park. They won't reminisce later about sitting around watching Netflix. Try something new, eat some weird food, go to that cool park that's just a little farther away. Sure, you might end up hating it. But chances are it will be awesome (and if not, at least you'll have a good story to tell later). The worst enemy of greatness isn't failure, but being "pretty good." Going for the gold and shooting for the stars should be a little uncomfortable - that's what makes the end worth it.

## STEP 3: DO SOMETHING THAT MATTERS, TOGETHER.

So far we've had a lot of fun, and we've successfully fought off the fun-assassins. There's one more ingredient to creating last memories with our families: do something that matters, and do it together.

- **FOCUS ON CHARACTER.**

Just because school takes a break for the summer doesn't mean your kids stop learning. We can make the most of this break from teaching their minds by focusing on teaching their hearts. Think about summer break as another semester of class for their soul. You might read some books about character (the book of Proverbs would be a good place to start). You could make a family challenge to live out being trustworthy, patient, wise, kind, creative, you-name-it. Don't let summer slip by without teaching your kids to be better people!

- **INVOLVE OTHER PEOPLE.**

You're a parenting superstar. You're the best parent in the entire universe. No one else holds a candle to your mom-skills and dad-powers. Even so, your kids need other people to help them grow and thrive. This is why we need to find trustworthy people who share our values, and give them the freedom to build into our kids. Encourage your children to hangout with good friends. Invite grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins over to your house for a meal and game night. Enroll your kids in activities with positive role models like sports camp, college for kids, or a summer program at your church. Invite other like-minded people into the mix of making your summer count.

- **SET GOALS AND TRACK THEM.**

If you want to do something that matters, it's not going to happen by accident. You need to aim at something if you hope to hit it. Talk with your family, and set some goals about how you want to make this summer count. Have each person set 1 or 2 personal

goals, and then make a few goals you can work towards as a family. Write them down and stick them on your fridge where everyone can see them every time they pass by. Goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-sensitive. (“I want to read more books” is too vague, but “I want to read 4 books about cats this month” is a great goal, because you know exactly what you’re trying to accomplish). On the first day of school, you’ll all be able to look back and say “*This* is exactly how I grew this summer.”

- **\*\*BONUS\*\* LIVE MORE LIKE JESUS.**

Whether or not you’re a Christian, there’s no denying that Jesus has a lot of good things to teach us (and if you are a follower of Jesus, you know that he is so much more than just a teacher!). You see, Jesus lived his whole life for the sake of other people. He spent his life serving, teaching, healing, loving, comforting, empowering, strengthening, and redeeming others. He even gave up his life to save us from our own death, sin, and darkness. So, what would our families look like if we lived for them, and not for ourselves? How would our neighborhoods change if we lived to serve our neighbors, and not just look out for our own? What would be different in our workplace if we spent time helping other people with their problems instead of just worrying about our own? I’d like to think that the world would be better. If you really want to make your summer count, spend it becoming more like Jesus.



## THAT’S IT!

Now you know the 3 steps to make your summer count. To put this into practice, block out a few minutes to sit down and make your plan. Use the **Quick Reference Summary** on the next page as a guide while you brainstorm your unforgettable summer. Your kids will never know that you read this book, they’ll just remember how awesome you are. So go ahead, take the credit! After all, you are pretty awesome, right?

If you have questions, if you need some help, if you want your summer to count but don’t know where to start, we’re here to help! *Just send us an email at [hello@cocusa.org](mailto:hello@cocusa.org), and we’d be happy to give you some extra guidance in your parenting journey.*

# QUICK REFERENCE SUMMARY

1. HAVE FUN ON PURPOSE.
  - Get input from the kids.
  - Schedule your fun.
  - Budget for fun.
  - Have a “Yes, And” mentality.
2. PROTECT YOUR FAMILY FROM THE FUN-ASSASSINS.
  - Enemy #1 - Danger
  - Enemy #2 - Regret
  - Enemy #3 - Comfort
3. DO SOMETHING THAT MATTERS, TOGETHER.
  - Focus on character.
  - Involve other people.
  - Set goals and track them.
  - Live more like Jesus.



# Make Your Summer Count

AT



*Give Your Kids The Opportunity To*

-  **HAVE FUN WHILE BUILDING STRONG & POSITIVE FRIENDSHIPS.**
-  **GROW IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF QUALITY CARE AND SAFETY.**
-  **DEVELOP JESUS-LIKE CHARACTER THROUGH WORSHIP AND DISCIPLESHIP.**

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