

Summer Contact Work

By Leslie Strader

It's a steamy July afternoon, and a carful of kids just pulled into your driveway, looking for something to do. You already shelved your cheese balls and shaving cream for the summer, and your guitar is way out of tune. What do you do? Well, don't have a heat stroke -- we're here to help! Here are some summer contact work ideas from across the country:

- **Retreats.** Rich Crawford, area director in Gainesville, Ga., charters a boat to the Bahamas for an intensive community-building, college-prep week with his seniors. Also try camping at a state park, a rock climbing/rappelling overnight or a long weekend at a lake house.
- **Stay-at-Home Camp.** Plan something fun each night for a week -- ice skating, bowling, skateboard park -- and afterward take kids through the Gospel series. Next, move into "cabin time" with a leader. This works great for kids with jobs or who attend summer school.
- **Pentathlon.** Randy Guista, senior area director in San Diego, plans this as a full-day event and charges each person a \$10 entry fee, which includes lunch and dinner. Teams of three compete in five sporting events, such as Frisbee golf, Giant Jenga (using 2x4s), a climbing wall, Mountain Bike Polo and kayak races. Any sporting events will do -- be creative!
- **Tournaments.** For guys, try Ultimate Frisbee or video games (the Xbox can be networked and played in different rooms throughout your house); with girls, see who can buy the most stuff with the least amount of money at the mall.

- **Road Trips.** If there is a college town within driving distance, take a group to watch a baseball game or football scrimmage. Investigate local attractions -- Six Flags, water parks or a really big mall are all fun day trips.
- **Summer Life.** A scaled-down version of Young Life. Meet every other week for an informal club; on the weeks you don't have club, do something fun.
- **Miscellaneous Fun.** Pool parties, barbecues, dinner and a movie night, mini-golf or the driving range, game night, sleepovers, batting cages ... use your imagination!

Remember:

- **Be organized.** "Do something planned at least once a week," said Ben Dubow in Storrs, Conn. "Have it on the same night at the same time, meet at the same place and go from there."
- **Be intentional.** "We pride ourselves in being a relational ministry, but way too often we depend on massive events to get kids to make a commitment to Christ," Randy said. "We look to camp for the harvest. But if you use the time you have in the summer with kids, you can communicate the same thing at home."
- **Be purposeful.** Reach outside your comfort zone. Call and include a "fringe" kid in an activity with your core group.
- **Be there.** "They may not remember their Frisbee golf score, but they'll remember that you called them," said Scott Hennigan, area director in Norman, Okla. "It really doesn't matter what you do, just go do something."

Suggested Links

[Contact Work](#): Helpful hints for doing contact work.

[WyldLife](#): Ideas for contact work with junior high kids.

[Camping](#): Followup ideas for after camp to incorporate into contact work.

[Campaigners](#): After-camp discussions to have with kids as part of a Bible study or one-on-one when you're at home.