

Hands-On Projects Across the Curriculum

By Maggie Hogan

Why hands-on? *What we Perform – We Remember*

The following notes are jumping off ideas – adapt them to your own family’s preferences. Try something new--surprise your kids! Have fun – they’re only young for a short time. You will never regret spending a little extra time and energy to make homeschooling memorable.

History and Geography

Great Internet Resources for Hands-On Geography Ideas

- My Yahoo discussion group for hands-on geo ideas: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Whole_HOG/
- www.letterboxing.org this is so much fun!
- www.wheresgeorge.com track your dollar bills!
- www.flatstanleyproject.com send a flat traveler on a trip!
- http://groups.yahoo.com/group/flat_travelers_homeschool/
- <http://flatstanley.enoreo.on.ca/> - the official Flat Stanley site

History & Food

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· Fruit Cake Dig

Archeological digs with food to demonstrate in a small way, how these scientists go about uncovering artifacts. The patience and time involved in archeological discoveries becomes more significant when a student spends time attempting to work in a precise way similar to that of the Archeologist. Note similar assignment (“Chocolate Chip Geological Dig”) along with grid paper and recipe in *The Ultimate Geography & Timeline Guide*.

Tip: Read a kid’s book about archeology before beginning this assignment.

Materials:

- 1 old fruitcake or a dense cookie with lots of “goodies” in it (i.e. raisins, nuts, coconut, cherries,

chips, dried cranberries or other dried fruit, etc.)

- Tube of icing
- Probing tools – toothpicks, fork & knife, scalpel, (dissection tools are great for this – disinfect thoroughly before using)
- Graph Paper & pen

Directions:

- Draw a grid across the fruitcake with the icing (think Battleship)
- Provide graph paper to each student
- Proceed to dissect the fruitcake a square at a time.
- Mark on the graph paper what is found in each section of the cake. For example, A1 might have two dark raisins, one cherry, and a walnut.
- Make a key on the graph paper:
 - = raisin
 - ~~= coconut
 - @=cherry, etc.

· Food Models

- Gingerbread castle
- Pretzel Log Cabin
- Sugar Cube Pyramids & Ziggurats
- Sheet cake and icing to depict any number of historical places for example:
- Jamestown - cut cake into a triangle, use pretzel sticks for the fort walls
- Marshmallows - The Great Wall of China
- Fruit Leather - Teepee

- www.foodtimeline.org

“Ever wonder what foods the Vikings ate when they set off to explore the new world? How Thomas Jefferson made his ice cream? What the pioneers cooked along the Oregon Trail? Who invented the potato chip...and why? Welcome to the Food Timeline.” Great site for finding recipes related to the time period you are studying.

Study Housing – use Legos, blocks, other toys to make:

- Greek City house
- Zulu Huts
- Peasant Cottage
- Long House
- Viking House
- Norman Manor House
- Cliff Dwellings
- London Town house
- Palaces
- 19th Century Frontier Log Cabin
- Traditional Japanese House

History Newspapers - Family project

Let's say you are studying the Middle Ages. Instead of writing a report, as a family assemble a newspaper as if they are reporters during that time period. For example:

- Extra! Extra! Plague Hits London
- For Sale, slightly dented suit of armor
- Wanted: Male serf, with good teeth and strong back.
- Community Events:
 - Sharpen Your Swords and get ready for the next Jousting Tournament to be held at the castle fair grounds

The Plays the Thing

Putting on a play about a specific time period could include several short skits or an entire play about a specific event, person, or time period. The kids can write the plays for English class from the information they have gathered from their history studies. Or you can take a famous poem or work and adapt it to a play. For

example, one of our history nights began with the kids acting out Casey at the Bat, during the semester they studied 20th Century American History.

History/Science Tubs

Not a file kind of person? Looking for a way to organize materials you find but don't need immediately? We keep tubs – mainly history and science tubs. These are inexpensive, clear plastic tubs that we used to store all sorts of topic-related paraphernalia in. For example:

Books

Videos

Field Trip Ideas

Newspaper Articles

Magazine Articles

Experiment/demonstration ideas

Historical Documents, Primary Sources

Games

Posters, Charts, Graphs

Web Sites

Cards

Fact sheets

Calendars

Toys

Reading Lists

Lists of things you can borrow from friends

Catalogs

Post cards

Stickers

Costumes

Costume ideas

Timeline materials

Maps

Art ideas

Cards with:

Wish List of books you'd like from catalogs and library

Living History Timeline

This is great for a support group in which the families are not necessarily studying the same time period. At the beginning of the year, each family signs up for a specific event or person. Their job is to come up with a verbal presentation that highlights the importance of this event or person. This can be in the form of reading a primary source document aloud, memorizing something from a diary, a speech, or a narrative explaining the significance of their choice.

The co-ordinator then takes all the entries and arranges them in chronological order. The night of the performance, all the presentations are done in the sequence in which they originally occurred. It would be cool to have a timeline printed up to use as the program listing the event/person and the appropriate date.

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Science

- Dry Ice—many sites on the web explain how to use it. Great fun for an educational birthday part!
- Slime Science – look for recipes like “oobleck” and “glurch”
- Make a chocolate chip molecule cookie (from *Christian Kids Explore Chemistry*)
- Make Volcanic Fudge (*The Ultimate Geography & Timeline Guide*)
- Measurements (Math + Science)
 - Take liquid measurement containers outside and make water games out of learning them
 - Mark out a whale on a parking lot using chalk or painter's tape
 - Wrap a piece of string around your house and find out the perimeter
 - Pace out the length & width of Noah's Ark (it was really huge!)

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MATH

<http://www.livingmath.net/Index.html> Great ideas for Living Math!

- Make a Math-to-Go kit
- 123 Math Book (*George Washington's Breakfast*)
- Practice using grids & graphs on a large scale by using blue painter's tape (removes easily from any flooring) and toys as the "markers."
- Play Games

Yahtzee (adding, strategy)

Monopoly (adding, subtracting, multiplying, money skills)

Uno (basic number order, following directions)

Pool (Geometry)

Dominoes (many different versions, make up your own)

Tangrams (geometry)

Candy Lane (counting)

Language Arts

Book Projects

- Diaromas
- Book Boxes (collections of items symbolic of important themes in a given book)
- Girdle Book
- Family Book Race: set goals, devise colorful way to show progress

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Bible

- Tyler's ABC Book of Esther
- Creation Days timeline
- Measure Noah's Ark
- Act out a Bible Story
- Map a Bible story

Recommended Resources: *The Ultimate Geography & Timeline Guide*, *Hands-On Geography*, *Christian Kids Explore Biology*, *Christian Kids Explore Chemistry* from:

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