

## Celebrate What Matters

5/19/2020

If life during this pandemic has taught us anything, it's that we need to be flexible and not get too attached to the way things are "supposed" to go. That becomes especially clear during holidays. We just celebrated Mother's Day, which may have looked very different from Mother's Days in the past. Next week is Memorial Day, which marks the end of the school year and the official beginning of summer. We normally celebrate with parades, cookouts and trips to the beach.



This year, Memorial Day is going to look a little different. Even though many states are opening back up, most are doing so with restrictions and it's still not a good idea to gather in groups even if beaches and restaurants are open. You and your family may have been planning a trip that's not going happen. We're all having to make adjustments.

Even if you're not doing your usual activities for the holiday, you can still celebrate. Memorial Day is a perfect day to explore some of your family history. If you have a family member who gave their lives in the military, you and your kids can learn more about them and find your own ways to honor them.

Another wonderful way to honor the holiday is to reach out to current members of the military. If you have living family members who served (or serve) in the military, arrange a phone call or video chat with them to show your appreciation. Many organizations may need virtual volunteers to help with projects, like creating care packages for members of the military and

their families. Alternatively, you and your family can write letters or make phone calls to members of the military, their families, or to veterans living in nursing homes or senior centers.



If you and your family want to learn more about Memorial Day, many museums, like the Smithsonian, are offering virtual tours and other information on their websites. With a little planning, you can preview the content and decide what would best suit your kids.

Don't worry, even though plans have changed, you can still enjoy some of the traditional Memorial Day activities. Have a cookout or picnic in your backyard. You can play games and listen to your favorite music. Arts and crafts projects to celebrate the holiday or decorate the house are engaging activities that your kids can do with you or on their own (when you need a break 😊). You can even involve other family members or friends via video chat- connect your cookout to their cookout and it'll be like a block party. You may not be able to attend a parade, but many cities are hosting virtual events that you can watch instead. PBS will be airing their annual National Memorial Day Concert, so gather your family and watch from 8:00 to 9:30 pm EST on Sunday, May 24, 2020.





If you and your family normally take a trip during Memorial Day weekend, you can recreate your vacation at home. Go camping in your backyard or your living room. Print out pictures of your intended destination and use them to decorate the house. You may even be able to do some of the activities you had planned, like safely going for a hike or a bike ride, hanging out by the pool, or playing in the sprinkler or on the backyard water slide. Recreate the kinds of meals you would have had during your vacation. Making a special “staycation” meal can be a fun family activity and a nice way to bring your vacation destination to you.

If you and your family do decide to go to a local beach or park for the holiday, please have fun, stay safe and observe social distancing guidelines. No matter how you decide to celebrate this Memorial Day, remember that you can still focus on what’s important: remembering and honoring all of the men and women who have given their lives in military service.