



Team Travel Ideas

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Experienced parents, and coaches, know that travel by car is a necessary time eater of any sports program. Why not make it more fun, educational and team bonding, beyond just watching a DVD or listening to individual music players through their headsets....as a kid long ago, and a parent/coach with nearly half a century in the car traveling these United States, here is my collection of best team travel car activities that do not involve watching a DVD or Gameboy player, and that can greatly help with team cohesion and meeting group needs.

Make a Team Trip Journal

Have a team book, that players get to write in as a group, stories, poems, funny observations and team match play included. You should also have pictures drawn for special places along the way or matches played. This can be also be done per player. At the end of the season, the coach can use these books for the season ending party tales/highlights. When a player is missing, she can become part of the trip by reading these journals. On a side note. - if a player is missing for a valid reason, take a picture of their face/head with a digital camera and blow it up to life size, and put it on a stick – then put that missing teammate in the group/team photos, so they are a part of the trip they are missing.

Learn the Lyrics

With the advent of the Internet, the lyrics to the favorite hits are easily found online, so compile a list of your favorite beach boys or Beatles songs, then play them and sing along. If a player or you have time, put together a team CD of new favorites, and print out the lyrics to those songs so everyone knows the words. Classics with the lyrics are a gift to the next generation, and fun for all. Make sure on a December tournament trip to get the lyrics to all your favorite Christmas songs, especially verses two and beyond that not everyone knows!

State Plate Contest

My kids still battle with this one - each way on the trip see who can spot the highest number of different license plates on cars. Alaska and Hawaii count double. You can also make it a team challenge to see if you can get all 50 during the season, so collect that on a US State map and fill in the colors as you progress. See attached.

Cool Cars

This is a game that can be done by teams or individuals, and total for the whole trip there, or from stop to stop. There is an option to play using parked cars or just those “moving. on the main road you are driving and any side street or overpass as you go along. The way you get a point is to call both the kind of car and the color. Color guesses can be changed as you get closer to the car (sometimes a "black vette" becomes a navy one as the sun's angle and car distance changes). Wrong car guesses lose a point, but wrong color guesses do not. The "Banana" option means you get two points

for a cool car in yellow. My family's current list of cars are Chevy Corvettes, Chrysler Prowlers, Hummer (H2 or H3), Foreign sports cars like Ferraris and Lamborghinis (rare but cool to see), Volkswagen bugs and vans, PT Cruisers, and Box cars (Honda Element and the Scion). We also give double points if you 1. see any of these cars next to each other (no car in between them); 2. see them in a car transporter; 3. see them pulled over by a cop (even in the moving only/no parked car version).

Alphabet Games

You pick a topic - for instance cities, animals, vegetables, books, etc. then each person keeps the chain of the alphabet going one letter at a time. So a city version would be - Anaheim, Boise, Colorado Springs, Denver, etc. The player not coming up with one is out of the game until you pick a new topic. Winner is last one to name the next letter of the alphabet.

You can also do this with any signs on the way...billboard with the word All on it, then a road sign "Brake" etc. An easier version is in teams and done with license plate letters. After you get through the alphabet, find all the numbers from one to 100, either way, road signs or car plates.

Lingo is another version that is done by coming up with a phrase using the letters on another car's plate. So if you see the plate TMJ 543 the first person to call out a somewhat logical phrase such as "Teeth Masticate Jujubes," or "Tom Married June" earns a point.

Famous People Game

Much like the alphabet game, here you must keep the game going or be eliminated by linking a famous named person's last name, with your famous person's first name. My family allows cartoon characters too. No names can be repeated. Start with any famous name e.g. "Doug Beal" means the next person must name someone starting with the letter B. Double names are fine like Mickey Mouse, it just means the next person has to do the same letter the previous person did.

Buzz & Fuzz Buzz

This can be a bit annoying to the driver, so clear the playing of the game first. It is a team effort to try to reach 100 without making a mistake. Take turns counting, beginning with one. Every time you get to a number that's divisible by seven (7, 14, 21) or has a seven in it (17), say "Buzz" instead of the number. If one person forgets to say "Buzz," everyone has to start over. If this is too hard, say "Buzz" for every number that's divisible by five. If you want a real challenge, try Fuzz Buzz. Say "Fuzz" for every number with a three in it or that's divisible by three, and "Buzz" for every number with a seven in it or that's divisible by seven.

20 Questions

A classic game with many variations. The most common starts with a person thinking of something which falls under the category of animal, mineral, or vegetable and then tells the other players which category is correct. The players then take turns asking questions which can be answered with a "Yes" or "No." For instance, if the category is animal a player might ask "Can it fly?" or "Does it have four legs?" And after 20 questions are asked, if the players have not already guessed the answer, each player gets a last chance to make a guess. Afterwards, a new player tries to stump the group. Another favorite version following the same yes/no pattern is called "Guess where I am."

Team Scavenger Games

You can create lists before you go, pass them out and see which team can get the most items on your list. Here is a sample list:

Dog in a car head out the window, Red pickup truck, Sign with the word "welcome" on it, Ambulance, Statue, Flag without stripes, backhoe, Sign with the word "no" on it, Somebody wearing a hat, Car with big dice hanging from the rearview mirror, someone littering, Someone singing in a car, boat on the water, bus stop shelter, Car pulling a trailer, Greyhound bus,, lacrosse field/goals, black and white cows, Swimming pool, elementary school, water tower, fox or coyote, green tractor, bird of prey, cemetery, detour sign, volleyball team van not with your program, NASCAR car number, Alaska or Hawaii license plate,

Eye Spy

One teammate says - I spy something that begins with the letter "P"...and teammates try to guess what she has spied. You can also give the only clue of a color.

Famous Initials

You give the rest in the car a two letter hint, beginning with the first and last name of the famous person. Fantastic Singer would in the end be Frank Sinatra. You get yes and no questions (still alive? Female?, etc.)

Palindromes

See what you can come up with words that are spelled the same forwards and backwards, like dog/god - with each letter getting a point.

Domino Words

Player take turns saying letters and building the longest word together. Someone starts with any letter, maybe an R. The next person thinks of a word, such as rake, and says A. The next person thinks of a word, such as rabbit, and says B. Each player must have a real word in her head before speaking. If you challenge someone and they don't have a word, they're out.

Mad Libs

I confess to a soft spot for these fill in the blank books where you give out random and wacky adjectives, adverbs, nouns and numbers and the one person fills in the blanks to a story that is then told using those words....

You can also do a group tale, with each person telling one or two sentences then the next teammate follows with the same number of sentences, and so forth – the faster you create the tale the sillier it can become...

Brain Quest

Another good series found in most toy stores, and the quizzes teach at the same time...

Counting Cows

This one works along the farmland parts of the USA during the day. The team members take either the left or right side, then as you drive along, count the number of cows seen on their side. If a cemetery is passed, that side loses all its cow points.

Books on Tape

Whether CD or cassette tape, a great book that is popular with your team's age group can really help all, driver included, get much further down the road without realizing it. Books read by the author have special significance I think, but then the whole Harry Potter series read by Jim is also a wonderful way to move on down the road.

Klutz Games for Kids

This company makes many good options to use in a car while teaching traditional fun games with good directions. String games so all can learn how to do the Cats Cradle or Witches Broom are one great option, though if you have a talented string game player, let her be the teacher and just bring the yarn. Pipecleaner creations are another option.

Board and Card Games

It is amazing how some kids have not had the chance to learn all these games, while those team members who do know, get to be the teachers. Card games - from fish to poker and magnetic board games, so the team members can play chess, knockout, checkers, and Chinese checkers, all should be experienced.

Minute Mysteries

Also called lateral thinking puzzles, this brain teaser type logical but outside the box thinking challenges are great fun for a whole team. There are many books and web sites listing hundreds of good ones, the kind that can take a team hours to figure out...

How Far Yonder?

As you are driving and see an object in the distance, have the kids guess the distance from a certain "mark" call on the odometer, and then see who can come the closest in tenths of a mile.

Share Favorites

A chance to verbally learn about the team members, much like the "fill in the player" drawing. Ask each member what their favorite is in any area. Book, place visited, animal, class in school, etc. The list is near endless and you can learn a lot about everyone on the team this way, part of building the team community.

Vehicle Fairy Tales

Create tales about the person or people in the car next to yours. What is their job, favorite meal, fears, love life, last vacation stop, schooling, last book read and other hobbies, pets, can they swim, get into details...

Where Do You Do It?

This is a crack up game, one teammate mimics a noise or sound, and everyone tries to figure out where the sound is performed. While the bathroom is one obvious place, and where some will head quickly, there is also the office, school, department store, etc.

Two Truths and One Lie

Taking turns, the first person tells the group three statements about himself or herself. Two are true and one is a lie. Everyone tries to guess which one is the lie. For example, you could say, "I won a prize in spelling in second grade. My favorite food is spinach. I got lost at the ocean when I was a kid." Everybody then holds up one, two or three fingers to show which statement they think is the lie. The player sets the record straight, and then the next person goes...

Adventure Tales

Each player takes turns telling about the most memorable moments in their lives. The scariest, funniest, best, worst, hardest, most embarrassing, proudest etc...

What If...

Take turns answering these hypothetical questions and invent some of your own:

If you were king or queen of a country, how would you use your power?

If you could be the best on your block at something, what would it be?

If you could live any place in the world, where would you live and why?

If Spider-Man and Batman fought, who would win and why?

If you could make up a holiday, what would it be and how would you celebrate it

Hangman – Spelling the word and making the man on the gallows with each letter making another body part. You can use the format of wheel of fortune to guess letters that form the word indicated by the spaces on the pad as well.

Quietest the Longest

If needed, this is a game option and can make for a quiet car ride. The one way my dad got us to quiet down was brilliant – he would say “the smartest one of you, stay quiet...” and the battle was on to be the smartest.