

ARE WE THERE YET? A Story Activity for Long Car Rides

I travel throughout the year telling stories to young and old alike. At every performance parents ask for tips on storytelling with their children. Here are a couple of tips for traveling tales. Remember that a well told story enriches any experience and seasoned travelers know that a well told tale is a perfect diversion when you hear the words, "Are we there yet?"

Here is a simple formula for creating stories the whole family can join in and tell: have someone in the car take out a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. (If the children are old enough, this entire activity can be done orally.) Your story is going to be about a journey.

First, have the children decide if the characters in the story are going to be people or animals. I always suggest animals. But which species?

Next, where they are going?

Now, it's time for questions. The person keeping the list can ask the questions or, if the children are old enough, then the person who answers a question gets to ask the next one.

Examples:

What are characters wearing?

How many characters?

What did they bring with them?

What sort of vehicle did they travel in?

What was written on the side of the vehicle?

THE FUN KEY: In order to add a detail to the story, the child has to see the detail out the window. So, if someone in the next car is wearing a hat, then a hat can be added to the story. If someone sees a cow, then the characters can bring along a cow.

AN ADDED CHALLENGE:

If your children are old enough, you may not need to use paper. Every time someone adds a detail to the story, they have to tell the whole

story. They then get to ask the next question and the story is told again.

DRIVER'S PREROGATIVE: If the story bogs down to just details, the driver gets to add a problem that the travelers have to solve on their journey. (Example: the travelers have to cross a river and the bridge is down.) You can add as many problems as you wish.

Once they get to their destination, the story is over.

Good luck and e-mail me and let me know how the stories work out.