

ADVENTURE IN A BAG

Give a gift bag. No, not the paper kind you put gifts in, but an actual bag. For starters, you could use backpacks, fanny packs, canvas bags, or a leather pouch. Then fill it with gifts for some fun exploring. That's what my parents did for us children, and now they do it for their grandchildren too.

For our most adventurous activities, we might receive bags filled with a pocket knife for whittling (a gift for older children, of course), a flashlight, work gloves, a first-aid kit, bandanas, note pads for recording finds or

experiences, food, and love notes from Grandma and Grandpa. The list could go on and on. We have sailing bags, hiking fanny packs, gardening bags, spur-of-the-moment sports bags. And we can't forget bags for walks, bike rides, and long car trips.

If assembling these bags seems expensive, just give the bag as a present and let the recipient decide what goes in, or fill it later during an outing. Our children love to fill their bags with treasures of shells, pine cones, rocks, flowers, and so on. These gift bags have been a fun tradition for our

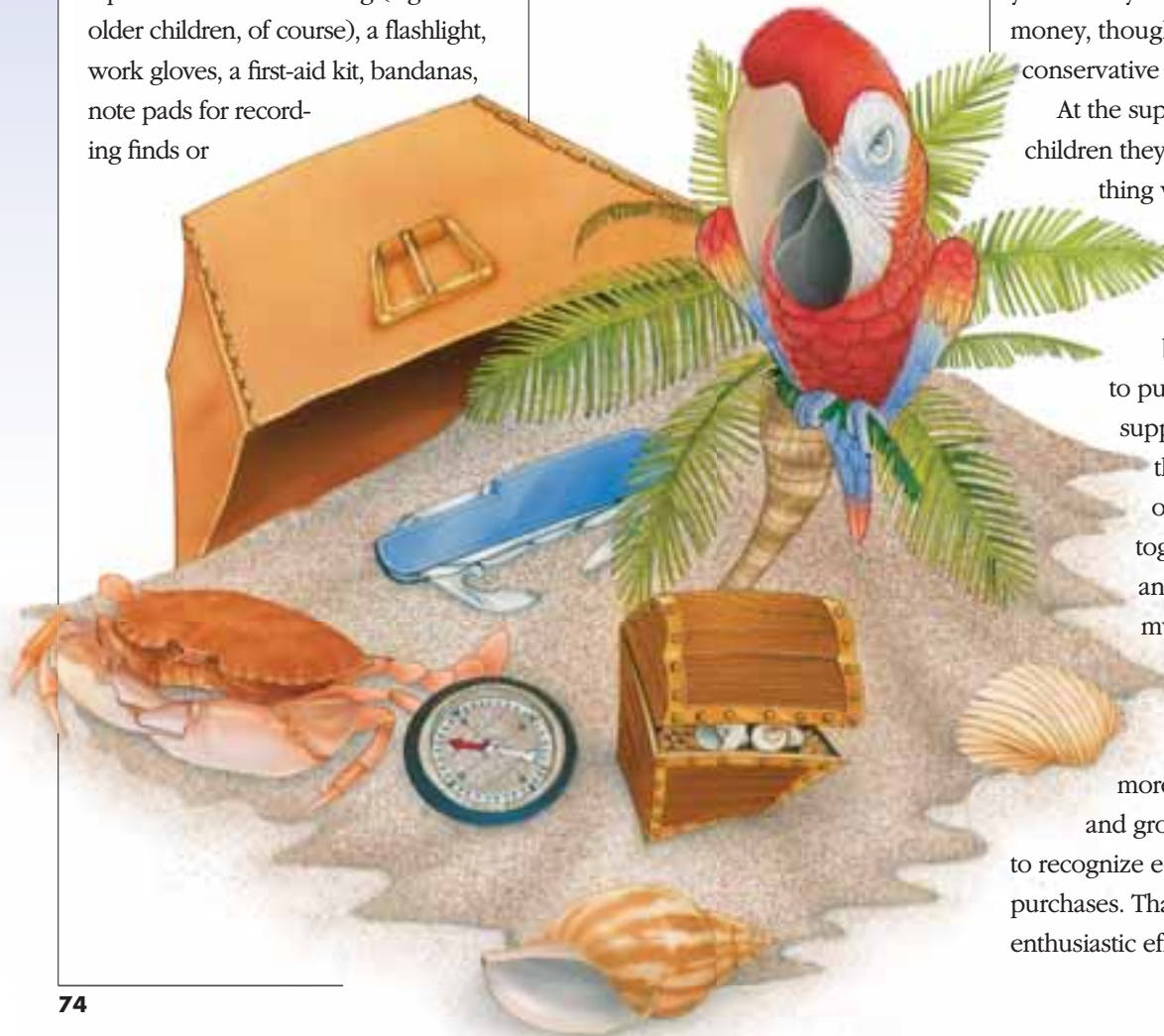
family, and they've helped us to create many lasting memories.

Dori Lee Hall, Utah

DOLLAR DINNERS

What if you gave your children a few dollars to buy something for tonight's supper? Would they choose wisely? Maybe it's time to find out. I first did this activity with my children in the 1970s, when a dollar bought more. Since times have changed, you'll likely want to allot a little more money, though I would still suggest a conservative amount.

At the supermarket, I told the children they could purchase anything with their dollar that they wanted for supper. Some of them bought sweets; others combined their resources to purchase items for a tasty supper. We all enjoyed the meal and the fun of shopping and eating together. I also recognized an opportunity to teach my children more. In the days that followed, my husband and I began to help them become more experienced cooks and grocery shoppers, learning to recognize economical, healthy food purchases. Thanks to my children's enthusiastic efforts, our next dollar



dinner, a few months later, provided another fun and interesting meal together—and an even more nutritious, satisfying experience.

Jean E. Lyman, New Mexico

WHEN ADULT CHILDREN RETURN HOME

Job loss, divorce, schooling—all are reasons an adult child may return home, sometimes bringing a family with them. What do you, as parents, do?

Of course you want to help your children, but you wonder how to make it work. While you want to offer love and support, you don't want to foster unhealthy dependency.

Below are some suggestions for making the best of the situation. Circumstances can vary widely, so the following list is not intended to be exhaustive or to apply to every situation.

1. Make expectations and rules clear at the beginning. Will the single daughter who has been away at college for the last four years be expected to call if she's going to be late from a date? What of the son who has no car? Will he be allowed to use the family vehicle? The rules may change according to the age of the child, family resources, and other circumstances. Some parents make up a written agreement, spelling out the expectations on both parts.



Roommates 101

Living away from home with new roommates can be challenging. But there are things you can do to make the adjustment easier. Our singles family home evening group brainstormed ideas that have helped us to enjoy positive roommate experiences.

Maintain open communication. Being able to talk with roommates sincerely but with kindness is key. Initiate an apartment meeting to establish expectations for all. Earn your roommates' trust by listening intently and being honest with them and respectful of them.

Figure out the finances. Decide who will pay which bills, if applicable, and pay your share promptly.

Keep it clean. Everyone appreciates those who do their share of the chores and keep their personal space tidy. You'll

benefit by feeling better and being more organized too. Having a clean apartment can reduce chaos and stress, thus creating an inviting environment for the Spirit to dwell. Never allow anyone or anything into your home that would negatively impact the spiritual cleanliness.

Be unselfish. Most serious students focus primarily on school and preparing for their future. This is important, but we must also remember to help one another when we can. Something as simple as folding your roommate's laundry or helping wash dishes can go a long way in establishing a good relationship.

Learning to get along with others is a 101 course for life. And what better time to start than now?

Nathan Justis, Utah



2. Address financial matters up front. Will the adult child pay rent? How much? How will the cost of food be handled? What about utilities? Some families handle the matter by having the parents buy the food and the child pay the utilities. Decide what works for you.

3. Decide how grandchildren will be handled. Will you, the grandparents, be expected to babysit? If so, will you receive monetary compensation? Grandparents often welcome the opportunity to spend more time with their grandchildren but may not

wish to become full-time babysitters. Jobs, other obligations, and health issues may prevent that arrangement.

4. Establish a time frame. Come to an agreement with your child on how many months (or years) he or she will be living at home.

5. Respect each other's privacy. Everyone needs and deserves privacy, including the parents of returning children. Decide if certain areas of the house are off-limits. Establish limits of conduct, content, and behavior in your home.

Jane McBride Choate, Colorado