

Toy Swap

By Julie Filby



This activity will encourage children to “think outside themselves” and instill the virtue of generosity by donating not only their own toys—but also collecting toys from family, friends and neighbors—to be donated to children who are less fortunate.

For

Young Family

Season

Summer

Needed

Donations of previously loved toys and new toys, promotional flyer or invitation

Prepare in Advance

- Set a date and time for the toy swap (for example, Saturday 10 a.m. to noon).
- Make a guest list, considering whether the event will be small and simple (e.g. family, neighbors), or open to many guests (e.g. family, neighbors, school friends, church friends, scout troops, etc.).
- Make an invitation or flyer and send it to guests, via email, mail and/or social media.
- Contact a charity and arrange pick-up of the toys following the swap.

Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer together before the event.

O God, thank you for this opportunity to serve you by serving others. Bless our toy collection efforts and bless all those who donate today to help make life a little brighter for other children. Amen.

2. Set up a table on your driveway or in the yard or garage with a sign labeled “Toy Swap: Sign In.”
3. Optional: decorate the venue with “**Toy Swap**” and other posters, balloons and other decorations to create a festive atmosphere. Make an upbeat iPod Play List for the event.
4. Every guest is required to bring five previously loved toys to donate, or one new toy.
5. Upon arrival, guests bring toys to the sign-in table and list their name and address on a roster. This will be used to write thank you notes.

6. All donations are set-aside in a relatively organized fashion.
7. Children are welcome to select one toy from the previously loved choices to take home with them if they'd like.
8. Variation: serve snacks, like cookies, popcorn and lemonade to guests. Consider recruiting older students looking for community service hours to donate snacks. These students might also be interested in helping with the swap by setting up a station such as face painting, temporary tattoos, or balloon animals.
9. Give each guest a sticker that reads: "I donated to **Toy Swap** for _____ {insert charity name}. These can be printed on the computer using a label template in a program such as Word.
10. Following the toy swap, meet the pre-arranged charity pick-up truck. Help load the truck if possible, and offer drinks to the driver(s).
11. The next day, write a thank you note to each donor. Begin thinking about Toy Swap for next summer!

