

Top 10 Tips for Traveling with Kids



1. **Pray:** Pray for safety, contentment, joy and patience.
2. **New Toy:** On the day you're packing to leave, it helps to give the kids a new toy to play with.
3. **Clean House:** I realize this sounds weird and I always wondered why my mom did this before we left on family vacations, but I completely understand it now—it is wonderful to come home to a clean house! If you have time, at least straighten up so that you don't have to come home already exhausted knowing you not only will have oodles of laundry to do, but that you'll also have to clean the house...no, thank you!
4. **Catch-All Bag:** Inevitably, my husband will have the car packed exactly the way he wants it and I will tell him that I forgot to put something in a certain bag. Well, I've learned to have a tote bag set aside to put all those little items that I forgot to pack up as I am going through our travel checklist. This is also helpful to use the catch-all bag when you're ready to leave a hotel room.
5. **Family Time:** Trust me, I realize that watching DVDs and playing electronic games can certainly make a road trip more quiet and pleasant, but I want to encourage you to also take some time to allow the kids to sight-see, play car games, sing songs, talk (and argue), and just enjoy being together as a family!
6. **Be Flexible:** This one's hard for me, and many times my husband would have to say, "Honey, chill!" So, try to let go of your usual routines and naps and regular meal times and just (as we told our kids on our last road trip) "go with the flow" and "make the best of it"! (I actually needed this advice more than they did!)

7. **Set Expectations in Advance:** Before you go anywhere, let the kids know what they will be doing and what you expect their behavior to be. We even give consequences in advance...if we remember. 😊
8. **Potty Seat:** Gas station bathrooms are nasty! Bring a potty seat in the car along with toilet paper. This can be helpful to everyone in the car...not just the kids...I'm just sayin. 😊
9. **Hourly Surprise:** On long road trips, it's fun to give the kids a little surprise every hour. My kids loved having something to look forward to! You can choose little things that you know your kids will like. I chose things that they would be able to enjoy even when we returned. Their favorites were: Bendaroos (I divided them up in little baggies for each of them), Color Wonder paper and markers, balloon buddies (a balloon filled with play-doh), sticker books, matching game (I actually kept matching game cards in my giant purse and we played this several times while we were waiting for food at restaurants and even one time when we were waiting for our hotel room to be cleaned. We played a quick game right there on the floor—you gotta do what you gotta do!).
10. **Journal:** Every night write down 3 things that you enjoyed as a family or that you were grateful for during that day.

Praying for a great trip and wonderful memories made for you and your family!