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Cheap Activities You Can Do With Your Kids

By Chin Guo Heng

Now that GST has settled in, Playstations, Xboxes and Nintendos may end up being too expensive to buy your kids; not to mention the games that need to be purchased along with those devices.

an engaging activity and good exercise for the whole family. They're even easily made if you don't want to buy one from the store.

Just don't do it during thunderstorms!

To help ease your budget, we've come up with a few suggestions to help you entertain your children on the cheap (and show them life beyond an iPad/smartphone screen!).

Take a Stroll in the Park

There are plenty of public parks and greenspaces around the city suitable for family time. Instill a sense of wonder about nature and appetite for exploration in your kids by bringing them to hang out at these places over the weekend. It might be hard to convince them that people go to parks for fun at first but if you can get the parents of their friends to agree – they might feel more inclined with a group of other children tagging along.

You can even bribe them with picnic baskets filled with their favourite goodies. They may like the experience so much, they'll ask to be taken every week!

You can even organise a hike in the nearby hills for slightly older children (but remember, safety first!). If you are adventurous enough, bring your kids for an unforgettable canopy walk at the **Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM)** in Klang Valley.

Go Fly Kites

If a stroll at the local park is not sufficiently exciting to capture your kids' attention, sling along a kite. Kite-flying is

Build Something

Engage in a DIY project with your kids, be it crafting or scrapbooking. In fact, you can even undertake the making of that kite we mentioned in the earlier suggestion. Lightweight paper and sticks (such as those from the lidi broom) are perfect to get started on your kite project and are cheap enough to buy. Encourage your kids to explore their artistic inclinations by decorating the kite themselves.

Or perhaps shoot a short film with your iPhone and edit it into a masterpiece using one of the plethora of free video editors available on the internet.

DIY projects are great because your kids pick up new skills as they indulge in the project. Not to mention DIY projects often span a couple of weeks, so there's activities for a few weekends sorted.

For all you know, you could end up igniting a spark in your kids as you discover a latent passion in them for creative work.

Read a Book

It turns out that books are exempt from GST, which means books would probably be spared from the impending price hikes.

Foster your kids' imagination by encouraging them to delve into the multitude of worlds found in books. If

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they prefer something less fictional, there are always biographies and popular science books to whet their curiosity.

Reading will also help improve their command of the language they are reading.

Watch a Film at Home

GST may have made a trip to the cinema and for the whole family, significantly more expensive, but that does not mean all of you would have to cut down on the movies.

Buy or rent a film and watch it together back home. That way you only pay GST once.

Bonus savings if you whip up a nice meal for the family at home instead of dining out and paying more for both GST and service charge.

Go Fishing

Many man-made lakes in the country charge nominal fees for use of their pond (stocked with fish) and bait. Prices range from RM7 – RM35 depending on the pond and bait would cost an additional RM10.

You don't have to buy expensive fishing rods and tackles as you are probably not doing this for legitimate sport but even if you do – the investment is one-off.

Many times the thrill of catching a fish gets many kids interested in the sport and the wait for a bite will teach them a bit of patience.

If you'd like to fish in one of the huge town council lakes like Taman Jaya; MBPJ gives permits for day-fishing too at RM5 per person. The downside is unlike the private ponds there may not be as many fish to catch!

Conclusion

There is no need to cut down on the family time fun in the name of tightening your post-GST budget. These activities have the added bonus of getting every member of the family involved rather than just the kids.

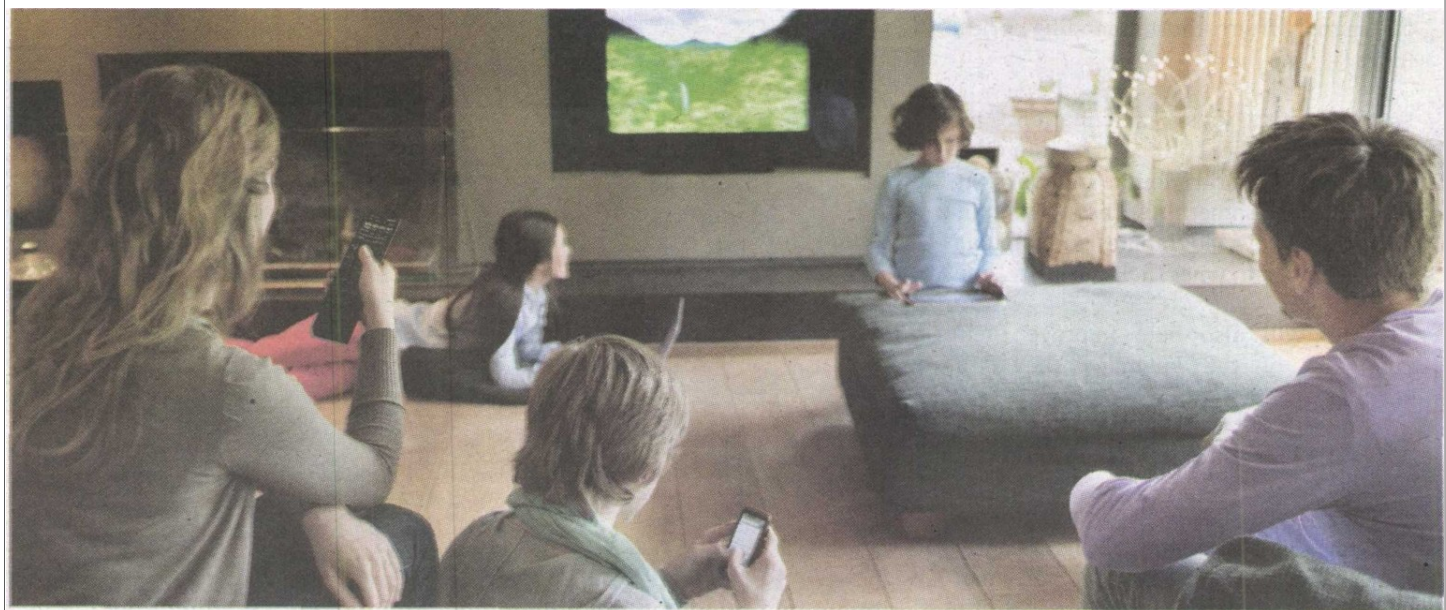
***Chin Guo Heng** is an Investigative Journalist at SaveMoney.my, an online consumer advice portal which aims to help Malaysians save money through smart (and most of the time painless) savings in their daily banking, technology, and lifestyle spending habits.



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