

Reading Events

FROM THE RIF MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK

Since its founding, RIF has emphasized the importance of motivation in becoming a reader. Show young readers how eventful reading can be with these RIF volunteer field-tested activity ideas!

EVENT IDEAS

Treasure Hunt on RIF Island

Turn the library, cafeteria, or classroom into Treasure Island, where an as yet undiscovered path leads to buried treasure-books for kids to keep! One RIF school constructed a maze, using cardboard refrigerator boxes, where hidden "dangers" lurked around every turn: Deadman's Cave, a volcano, quicksand (where children could sink toy animals in wet sand), and Crocodile Lake.

Enter the Kingdom of Reading

Make merry and learn about times past with a medieval celebration! Volunteers and children built a castle out of shoeboxes-one box for each book read-in the lobby of the school. A juggler/storyteller visited the school. Individual classes kept track of time spent reading by moving jousting knights closer and closer to each other or adding paper chain loops to make a princess' hair grow longer and longer. Anon, children dressed as damsels and knights and chose a new book inside their new castle.

RIF Day at the Beach

Often used as a kick-off for summer reading or as a mid-winter break, this activity has many variations. Children, teachers, and parents wear tropical clothes to school and bring a beach towel, which they will later spread out on the floor as they settle down for a little beach reading. Children can make their own designer sunglasses. The school library or a classroom is decked out with palm trees and swimming fish. Place books in an empty plastic wading pool and let readers dive in!

Spring Training

Link reading with sports and you have many possibilities for activities. At one RIF school, the gym teacher led the students in "reading warm-up" exercises-eyerolling, page turning, and book opening and closing. Another school had children "jog into reading" by asking them to wear sneakers and sweat suits to school and tracking reading progress with paper sneakers displayed toe-to-heel around the school. Yet another school, using the slogan "Be a Sport, Read a Book" asked children to wear uniforms or shirts from their favorite sports team and invited athletes from local high schools to serve as guest readers.



Dinosaur Appreciation Day

Dinosaurs will forever hold the fascination of children, especially younger children. Why not spend some time highlighting dinosaur stories? Then parade the children outside to figure out just how big those dinosaurs were. Use a piece of string to demonstrate how long they were and chalk to draw outlines of dinosaur feet. One school alerted children that dinosaur "eggs" would be delivered that day and when they (watermelons, actually) arrived, everyone shared in a slice. Another school used large green garbage bags, stuffed with newspaper and taped together, to make a large dinosaur mascot for the library. Another RIF coordinator asked the children to work in groups to design dinosaur traps and list 10 ways to catch a dinosaur.

FOOD FUN

RIF-nic

Grab some good books and a bag lunch and head outside for a book-nic under the shade of a tree. One school added another dimension to this by giving the children chalk, which they used to draw pictures of favorite books and to write "sidewalk slogans" to promote reading.

Bite into a Good Book

Give the school food services staff a chance to emphasize the importance of reading. The staff at one school

dressed as chefs and cooks from popular books and dished up alphabet and "stone" soup. RIF books were distributed in the cafeteria after lunch was served.

Book Walk

Like the "cake walk" of community fairs and carnivals of the past except the children, if standing on the number called, receive a book! Instead of numbers, some RIF coordinators substitute books or book characters.