

Going on a Field Trip

by Shay Seaborne

Someone in your group has announced a homeschool field trip, and it sounds great! Go for it, and remember-you can best assure there will be more field trips to enjoy in the future by implementing a few simple considerations:

- 1) Reply as soon as possible. If you put it off, you may find all the slots are filled, or the trip has been cancelled due to lack of response.
- 2) If fees are involved, pay them when you register-unless instructed otherwise by the trip coordinator. Keep in mind that, if you must cancel, refund may or may not be available, especially on short notice. The field trip coordinator will likely do what she can to help you recover your cost, but it may not always be possible to receive a refund.
- 3) Ask what you can do to help. It is in your interest to assist field trip coordinators if you can. They will be more likely to initiate another trip if they are happy with the results of previous efforts.
- 4) Find ways to prepare your family for the trip: read books, visit similar sites, talk about related topics and what you can expect or might see. If you find any particularly good resources, share them with the trip coordinator, so she can pass them along to other attendees.
- 5) On the day of the trip, wear your homeschooling t-shirts, buttons, etc. J Good PR for homeschooling! Also, remind children of appropriate behavior. Fair or not, you'll be considered representative of "homeschoolers."
- 6) Allow plenty of travel time, and plan to arrive at least 10-15 minutes before the tour begins. This will help the coordinator with the head count and last minute details.
- 7) During the field trip, keep an eye on your children and remind them about appropriate behavior as needed. If your child is distressed or needs a break, don't feel guilty about leaving the group; it is kinder to bow out than to stay and allow sustained interruption.
- 8) When the visit is over, verbally thank (and encourage children to do so) the host. Ask the field trip coordinator if there is a Thank You note to sign. If possible, mention something specific you liked about the visit.
- 9) Thank the field trip coordinator for the work you KNOW was involved! A follow-up phone call, E-mail or hand-written note-telling how the trip made a difference-can bring the recipient a warm glow, and foster her interest in arranging the next trip for you to enjoy.