

~Traveling

"Care in the Carry-on"

For me, filling up a carry-on for a kid is even more special than filling up their stockings for Christmas. It really makes me have to stop and think. It is a chance for me to be intentional about fulfilling my child's needs according to who they are and how they are feeling before they board the airplane. So, I always wind up putting extra "care" in their carry-on. Yes, there are some busy things to keep them pre-occupied but there are also meaningful things. For example, there's always some type of a slip-in photo book in their carry on. The first half is filled up with photos that help them remember life before their trip. The second half is empty with room to fill up their adventures they have yet to live out. I especially like to get favorite snacks and tuck them away in hard to find places so it's like a treasure when they find it. One last and very important part for my children is loading up their little mp3 players with fresh new songs that they have connected with. Those songs are little musical memory banks for them that they can withdraw rich memories when the musical notes flow into their ears. It does take a bit more time to put the "care" in carry-ons but it is so worth it for them during the flight and in the long-run.

"On the road games"

In the States, a very familiar game is the ABC game while in the car driving along. A little twist on that game is to find the next letter of the alphabet while thinking of a name of someone who is a friend or family member. While living in China finding a Chinese character we know and saying it earns one mao coin or one mao bill. This game is fun as we ride the city bus, taxi, or walk along the streets.

"Returning Sand to the Beach"

Grams was super thoughtful when she sent us something special in a care package. There were little plastic bottles of beach sand from our favorite beach in the States. During our summer back to the States we were able to return the sand to the beach with Grams. Super meaningful! Thanks to you, Grams!

"Campouts"

Each time Baba (or Daddy) is out of town my girls make camp underneath the kitchen table for one of the nights he is away. They get everything ready including the dog who joins in the fun. Storytelling, of course, takes place with a flashlight near our faces. Then we settle in with some great goodnight songs and prayers. I wind up snoring on the couch. The next morning we wake up to poking marshmallows in chopsticks and roasting them over a candle.

"Hotel Getaway"

Every once in a very blue moon we will getaway for a night's stay at a hotel. This keeps things a little fun when we have exhausted other fun "staycations" at home.

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"Music and Singing"

Always, always, always we bring music that we can all share. If we aren't listening to music we make up our own songs!

"Language Learning"

Simple flash cards we have made or language books are helpful to us as we cross the miles.