

Kids in the Great Outdoors

Foster an active outdoor lifestyle this winter with these activities for your whole family.



Does your lodge host a Barneløpet or other outdoor youth programming? Send your ideas to *Viking*, Letters to the Editor, 1455 W. Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 55408 or vikingeditor@mvp-c.com.

Spending time outside is a great way to inspire a love of nature and share your Nordic heritage with the young people in your life. This winter, embrace the Norwegian concept of *friluftsliv* (the outdoor life) and plan a family outdoor adventure. You can start by sharing the legend of the Birkebeiners (see *Viking's* feature on page 16), a wonderful tale of Nordic ingenuity and survival out in the elements. For getting out and physically active with kids of all ages, David Goodman, author of "Best Backcountry Skiing in the Northeast," offers simple advice: "Keep it short," says Goodman. "You have to go their pace... understanding that is key to getting kids to come back."



Activities for Young People

PRESCHOOL

Make Believe

Read an outdoor story to your child. A great option is "The Race of the Birkebeiners" by Lise Lunge-Larsen. Young children will love the suspenseful story of medieval warriors fleeing on skis through snowy forests to save a young prince. After you've shared the story, head out with your family to your backyard or local park and role-play the characters in a game of Birkebeiner hide and seek.

Expand it: Try a short hike, or if you have access to children's skis or snowshoes, strap them on your preschooler and try a few strides.

ELEMENTARY AGES

Treasure Hunters

Exercise mind and body on a geocaching expedition. A modern-day treasure hunt for an above-ground "cache" of trinkets, logbook or disposable camera, geocaching encourages families with kids to get outside in any climate and helps kids learn orienteering in urban or wilderness settings. Choose from among thousands of caches, rated at five levels of difficulty, close to home or farther away. With GPS coordinates and a GPS device or app on your smartphone, you're on your way to a great family adventure.

Expand it: When your family has mastered finding caches, try creating and hiding new caches for others to find.

TEENAGERS

Living the Lifestyle

Sons of Norway's Sports Medal Program is a great way to get outside and be physically active with your teen. Designed for any age and ability level, the Sports Medal Program encourages physical fitness and an active outdoor lifestyle. Categories include walking, sports and fitness, skiing, bicycling and swimming. Choose a category that's right for you and your teen, then start logging miles toward a medal.

Expand it: Together with your teen, assist your lodge in planning a barneløpet, or "children's ski event."

LEARN MORE!

→ "The Race of the Birkebeiners" by Lise Lunge-Larsen (Houghton Mifflin 2007) is available through local public libraries.

→ To learn more about geocaching, check out geocaching.com.

→ For planning a barneløpet, go to sonsofnorway.com and log in to the Members section, click on Programming, select Idea Bank and scroll to Children & Youth.

→ For the Sports Medal Program, go to sonsofnorway.com and log in to the Members section, then click on Programming and select Sports Medal Programming.

