

Activity Ideas for Middle School Students

1. **Capture your session with photos.** Make a photo album of all the activities you do together each time you meet. Take along a camera (regular, digital or disposable), photo book, markers, construction paper, glue, white paper. Each time you visit with your mentee, take a picture or two of what you do together. By the end of the year, you will have created a whole book of your times together!
2. **Play games.** Checkers, chess, Battleship, Life, Risk, Scrabble, Cranium Cadoo, etc. Check with your school contact to see if s/he has any games and will let you borrow them. If not, bring games from home.
3. **Build a model rocket or kite and let it fly.** Building a model rocket or kite is a perfect opportunity for you to work together. This activity may take several weeks, but that's ok.
4. **Talk about what middle school is like, what they're having difficulties in and how you can help.** Ask them about their goals and dreams.
5. **Play sports.** You can hit golf balls (find a safe place!); play soccer; arrange a football, basketball or volleyball game with other mentors/mentees; or anything else you can think of.
6. **Talk about how you spend your day.** Make a list of all the activities during a day (sleeping, eating each meal plus snacks, classes or work, chores, leisure activities, homework, family and friends time, etc.). Talk about how each of you could rearrange your time to be better spent.
7. **Introduce the joy of books.** Select a book that is on their reading level or even a book on tape. You can read during your time together or stop at a high point and ask your mentee to finish it at home. You will, too, and discuss the book at your next meeting.
8. **Make a "Dream Map" together.** You'll need a poster board, scissors, stick paste, piles of old magazines. Begin by cutting out pictures of things you would like to have in your life in the future. You can have different categories such as friends or relationships, family, education, sports or fitness, material things, etc. One of the pictures must represent a source of inspiration to the creator. This particular picture will go in the center of the poster and is pasted on first. It could be a picture of the sun, Nelson Mandela, etc. The idea is that inspiration is the beginning of all great things. You can also paste a picture of yourself on the poster.

9. **Create a time capsule.** You can create a meaningful reminder to be opened at the end of the year or even several years from now. You'll need a container large enough to hold pictures, articles, and small objects. Plastic containers about the size of a shoebox are available at most craft stores. You'll also need a place to store your capsule. You could store it in a safe place in the school or at home—just make sure you remember where you store it! You can place a picture of the two of you, letters to yourself or each other, newspaper or magazine clippings that reflect current events, trends or fashions, etc.
10. **Encourage your mentee to join a club and see if you can get involved, too.** Find out what clubs are offered at the school, talk to student to help determine areas of interest, find out if you can get involved. For example, if the school has a karate club and you have a black belt, talk to the club sponsor to see if you can come do a demonstration. You can also talk to the sponsor to find out what other ways you can support and get involved with the club. Of course, make sure that this is ok with your mentee.
11. **Put together a family tree.** See how far back both of you can go. Include parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts/uncles, cousins, great-grandparents, etc. Talk about the origins of your name and your mentee. Tell each other the story of your name, who you were named after and why.
12. **Get organized.** Middle school years are a perfect time to learn how to keep an accurate account of your daily life, your schedule at home and assigned chores, school assignments, after-school activities and weekend plans. Also include your mentoring times. You can do a written schedule, or if you have access to a computer, create your own personalized calendar. If you have a palm pilot or other organizer, share with your mentee how you use it. While some organizers are too expensive for a youth at this age, there is no reason why you cannot make your own. Fill in school vacation dates, summer activities, holidays, family/friend birthdays, etc.
13. **Learn calligraphy.** You will need some calligraphy pens and an instruction book. These can be purchased inexpensively at a local craft store or a school book fair. Learn together how to draw letters and before you know it, you will have mastered a very special art of writing. It is a great way to address party invitations, greeting cards, middle school graduation invitations, etc.
14. **Talk about exercise and nutrition.** Sixty percent of middle school youth are obese. Discuss healthy nutritional choices and set up an exercise schedule. Walk around the school track together and talk about other ways you can get healthy. If you have a dog, find out from your school contact if you can bring the dog to walk the track with you.

15. **Learn a foreign language from each other.** If either of you speaks another language, teach the other. Begin with basic survival words and phrases and reinforce them each time you meet (my name is, how are you, until the next time). Check with the school to see about bringing in food and reinforcing the learning with the item. Examples include French words such as baguette or croissant.
16. **Practice good manners.** It is never too early to learn the rules of good etiquette. Since people are judged by how they act, helping your mentee to learn how to behave in public and be polite will go a long way in helping them impress others. Books by Emily Post can be great resources. Here are some things you can discuss: Who opens the door when a guy and girl are out together? When you are out in a restaurant, who is supposed to push the chair in? When someone gives you a gift or invites you to dinner at their home, have you ever written a thank-you note? Do you answer questions with “yes” and “no” rather than “yup” and “nope”? Do you use “sir” and “ma’am” when speaking to adults? What is the appropriate dress code in a restaurant, church or synagogue? Do you know how to shake hands and look people in the eye when meeting them? Do you know how to be a good listener and not interrupt others when they’re talking? Do you know how to introduce others? Do you know when to put your napkin in your lap? What is the correct way to answer the phone? What do you say when you meet someone for the first time?
17. **Talk about your pets.** Discuss the responsibilities of pet ownership, including feeding & watering, walking a dog, cleaning up after pets, costs for food and medical care, bathing a pet, loving your pet and spending time with it. Share pictures and stories.
18. **Share your musical tastes.** Chances are, they are much different! Listen to the other’s music and see what you think.
19. **Arts and crafts.** Ask the school for supplies or bring some from home. You’ll need paper, scissors, tape, colored paper, and stick paste. You can build Popsicle stick houses, make picture frames, greeting cards, refrigerator magnets, or make your own rubber stamps. You can even design your own personal flag.
20. **Preparing to move up.** The end of the school year means a transition to the next grade and possibly a new school. Some youth are fearful of this change and need to be encouraged. Mentors can assist in this process. Find out from school staff the names of the teachers your mentee will have next year and arrange to meet them. If it is a new school, schedule a visit, meet the principal, take a tour and learn what is offered. You will need to get special permission from the current school and parents in order to take the child off campus.