

“What about me, Mom?”

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“Is there a place for me?”

The SCA is a wonderful place to nurture and foster your child's imagination, creative play and learning skills. There are limitless possibilities for a child to become an active participant as the family shares the adventure of learning new things within the SCA. The endless activities that children can participate in with the help and guidance of their parents will bring closeness to all family members. What a child may participate in may vary by their age or maturity. There is something for everybody in the SCA, and this allows for a great opportunity for a family to have fun, learn and grow together as they explore the Middle Ages. This article will take a quick look at some of the activities available to your child, and will encourage parents to explore, observe and ask endless questions as your family discovers the SCA.

“Can I get a sword, too?”

Many children want to learn right away to fight like those guys in armor. While policies and laws change slightly from kingdom to kingdom, there are many martial activities that children are encouraged to join. . Parents and even older children can familiarize themselves with the rules, guidelines and equipment requirements for all martial activities with a little basic research at the www.sca.org website. Learning about how fighting is adjudicated and scored and gathering and fabricating the proper safety equipment provides a learning opportunity for a child. And a child that manufactures his or her own fighting kit (with a little help) is more likely to continue to take responsibility for that equipment.

“How do I find other kids who like to swordfight?”

The Youth Combat program is a wonderful way the Society has developed to mold and train your younger fighter. Children have an opportunity to learn rapier and armored combat, and in some kingdoms there are opportunities for “foam boffer” fighting for the youngest of our little warriors. Along with learning how to fight, your child's experience on the list field and training will help them learn and understand courtesy and chivalry on and off the field. That is great! As there are also martial activities that you can enjoy as a family. Target archery, thrown weapons and equestrian activities all offer a family the chance to learn and grow within their new hobby together.

Can I make that?”

Some children, like some adults, have little interest in fighting or the martial activities. But they may be talented artists. Is your child good with his hands? Do craft projects come to her easily? A creative or artistic child also has the opportunity to display their crafts and skills in the

SCA. Arts and Sciences are the crafts, skills and trades from the 16th century and earlier. There is no age limit and this is another chance for your family to study, research, learn and grow together. Children can share their talents with others, whether they assist with preparing a medieval recipe, help sew a tunic, learn to dance, or sew their first embroidery; the possibilities for active, creative participation in the Dream are endless. There is always a craftsperson or artisan willing to demonstrate and teach their skills to others. And some talented gentles especially like to teach young people. All you have to do is ask!

“What is there for kids to do?”

Perhaps you would like your child to child meet other children in the SCA. Children/Youth Activities and Page Schools are a wonderful way for your child to meet their peers while they learn about the Middle Ages. This is another activity that changes slightly from kingdom to kingdom, but no matter what kingdom your feet find you it still remains a magnificent way for children to have fun, make friends and learn all at the same time! What more could a parent ask for? The Youth Programs with the SCA are there to assist parents in encouraging the education of our young gentles about the SCA, Medieval and Renaissance history. They also promote children’s participation by helping them to become an active and intrinsic part of the SCA, while enjoying age appropriate activities.

“How can I help?”

Do you have a child that loves to help and be a part of everything? That is beyond awesome, as the SCA offers them a chance to be a part of it all at every turn. Depending upon a child’s age and maturity he or she could volunteer as a water-bearer, run messages at the List, serve at feast, help in the kitchen, run to deliver messages for the Autocrat or Heralds, serve as Page for the Royals or Baronage.; A child could also help before an event by making favors or tokens, passing out favors at an event, and helping with clean-up duties during and after an event. Your child could also help you with anything you may volunteer to assist with: passing out the site tokens when you sign in gentles at registration, carrying a basket for the Royals if you are a retainer or helping to check the fire extinguishers in your camp. Even younger children, as long as they have their parents by their side, can give service in the Society. A child’s capacity to help others is only limited by your imagination and their skills and energy level. There are endless ways for your child to be a part of the group, help out, meet new people and learn about the SCA in the process.

Your family discovered the SCA together, now go out and explore it together. There are endless possibilities for all of you to enjoy as individuals, and most importantly, as a family. As a parent you have the opportunity to guide and support your child as they grow in the SCA. I will leave you with one final thought from Shel Silverstein, “Listen to the mustn’ts, child. Listen to the don’ts. Listen to the shouldn’ts, the impossibles, the won’ts. Listen to the never haves, then listen close to me... Anything can happen, child. Anything can be.”

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