



Maximizing Your Programming Time

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The objectives

- Learn how to use the resources provided by Activity Connection themes to minimize necessary planning time.
- Showcase at least three hidden gems on Activity Connection's site that can save time, especially in planning for men.
- Demonstrate the interconnectedness of Activity Connection's offerings so that Plan B is always easy to find.
- Other resources – COVID 19 has generated many!

Disclosure

I have been writing for Activity Connection since 2003. In recent years, most of that writing has consisted of creating their online courses. Activity Connection also sells my slide shows for themed programming and some of my books in their shop.

What I'd like you to know about me

My life:

- Full-on caregiver for multiple relatives, multiple years
- Absolute believer in the power of humor to get us through (Fun fuels the brain)

My work at Wiser Now, Inc:

- Upbeat content provider and course creator
- Known for fast-paced, content-rich, highly practical material
- Nature nurtures

Here's what I've been asked to talk about today

My primary focus will be on how Activity Connection can save you hours of planning time if you use their site wisely, but I am including other resources. Here are the AC categories I'll highlight:

- Monthly theme, events, special days
- Publications

- Holidays and parties
- Men's Programs
- Printables
- Tech Corner, AC videos, and In-services
- The need for humor and good cheer
- Exercise – getting outdoors
- COVID 19 and other resources

To make it easy for you to envision without logging on, at right is a screen shot of all the categories under Plan.

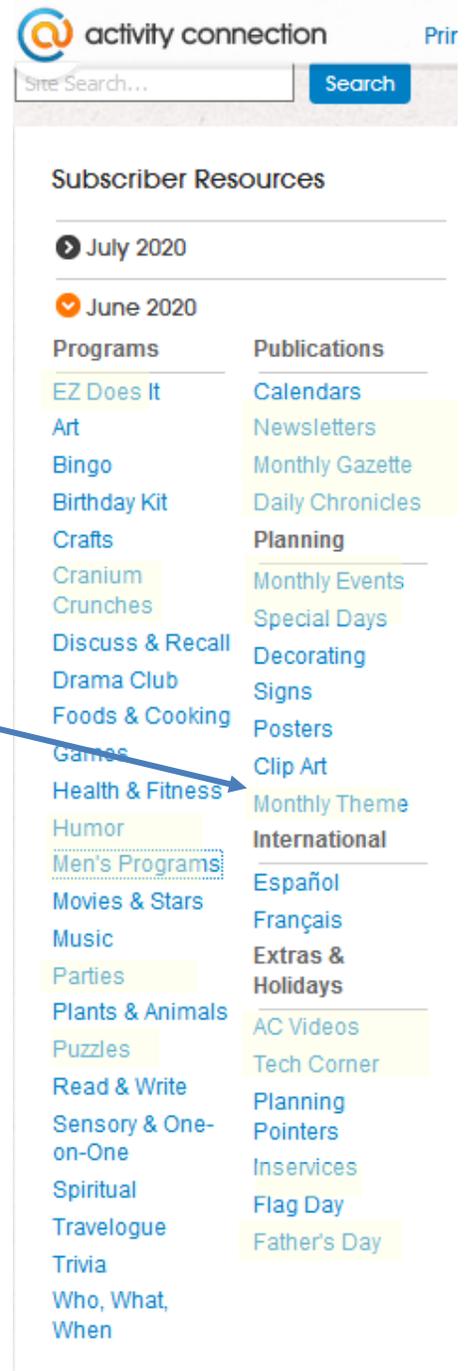
Most time-saving of all: AC's Monthly Theme

- Login
- Click on Plan on the menu bar
- Choose the month you want to view
- Click on Monthly Theme under Planning

Here's what you'll find under **Monthly Theme**

Title, sign, clip art, and image suggestions + activities in all these categories (May vary slightly month-to-month):

- EZ Does It (dementia)
- Crafts
- Discuss & Recall
- Foods & Cooking
- Games
- Health & Fitness
- Men's Programs
- Music
- Plants & Animals
- Puzzles
- Read & Write
- Travelogue
- Trivia
- Who Am I?
- Often: Additional resources



In June there are even more than are listed, including adult coloring pages under Art and a Midsummer Fika under Parties – more on that later.

Follow the same procedure for **Monthly Events**

When you click on Monthly Events, it will take you to the Table of Contents with these categories:

- General
- Music, Games, Hobbies, Arts& Crafts
- Clothes and Fashion
- Featured Foods
- People/Professional Pride
- Health & Wellness



Scroll down to see them all or click on any of the six individually. Pick whatever appeals!

Note that there is more to many entries than you might expect. For example, June is Dairy Month and AC offers a number of ideas for partying until the cows come home!

Activity Connection’s Special Days

Follow the same procedure for finding and clicking on Special Days. AC sometimes makes up their own special days, but most are taken from *Chase’s Calendar of Events* and infused with links to AC or online activities. Many highlight celebrity birthdays or foods. We provided an example that was shorter than most.

Activity Connection’s Publications - Newsletter

Publications have their own subcategory on the Plan page

- When you click on Newsletters, it will take you to a Table of Contents page where you choose the newsletter style you want.
- Let’s say “1B – no mailer” – When I click on it, it takes me to a page where I then choose my size and format.
- I click on “Letter Size (MS Word)” and another box pops up, allowing me to click OK and download the newsletter when the arrow appears in the upper righthand corner of my screen.
- I can then print it as is or manipulate content if I choose.



The lead article is usually tied to the monthly theme. The stories that follow are tied to the month, but wide-ranging, ripe for discussion and often appealing to men. June samples:

- The Making of a Man (Father’s Day and Men’s Health)
- Nailed It! (about nail polish)

- Napoleon’s Waterloo
- June Birthdays
- Horsing Around
- Elvis Shocks the Nation

Activity Connection’s Monthly Gazette

The 2- page Monthly Gazette focuses on general information related to the month – usually the flower, tree, and gemstone of the month, zodiac signs, famous people with birthdays that month, good luck symbols, and so on. Content varies slightly each year for each month, Some areas can be customized, which means you might want to print it out as a greeting to a specific resident, or list all of the residents with birthdays that month – and maybe staff and volunteer birthdays as well.



Activity Connection’s Daily Chronicles

Daily Chronicles and Daily Chronicles Extra, as their names imply, offer brief date-related information for every day of the year. With slight variations, each single-page daily chronicle

- lists a few events that happened on that date
- asks a question or offers an answer under “Did you know?”
- celebrates the birthday of someone born on that date, and
- provides a short quotation or joke
- Activity Connection’s Daily Chronicles

The Extra version is more focused on stimulating our brains. It offers odd information and brain teasers such as:

- a trivia question
- a word origin story or other word game
- an unusual picture, or
- a pun or a riddle

THE **DAILY CHRONICLE**

MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2020

Today is Say Something Nice Day. Many people feel good when they receive a compliment. Don’t be shy. Say something nice to a stranger. The best compliments are specific to whom you are complimenting and if you expect nothing in return.

The discussion possibilities for ALL of these are endless and they also work as printable self- entertainment.

Briefly: Men's Programs

The Men's Program category has been expanded by Activity Connection, so it's another time-saver, if you are looking for programming for them. June offerings include:

- A short story and discussion on a trip to Sweden
- Fishing lines – finding fishing expressions in a grid
- "Manly" puzzles which include a word search, crossword and matching exercise
- A YouTube link to unusual vehicles
- A whole section on "Something else for the men" that highlights a bunch of other offerings for the month suitable to men.



Activity Connection's Holidays

You can see that **Father's Day** is already planned for you. What's less obvious is that many of the items, such as crafts, puzzles, and a Father's Day party include multiple ideas. Here, for example, is a list of all the suggestions under that party, some of which can be used for other activities besides a party:



- Theme/name – "Gone Fishin' Get Together"
 - Attire
 - Decorations
 - Table settings – includes a "beach in a jar" centerpiece that could be a fun craft project
 - Music
 - Food & Drink
 - Fun & Games – trivia, word search, crossword puzzle, pool noodle activity, plus a few Father's Day games
- Parting gift/Goodie bag

Other Activity Connection parties

The Swedish party to go with the June theme (It's called a Midsummer Fika) includes:

- Welcome invitation
- Decorations
- Music
- Food and Drink
- Fun & Games – including trivia, and a Food for Thought discussion on Swedish fish – a Gummy-bear like candy in fruit flavors, fish shaped PLUS advice on the importance of breaks for fun and games in all our lives.
- Farewell

Activity Connection printables

Nearly everything AC produces is downloadable and printable. Most are also able to be shown on a large screen TV, but during this isolated time, think print and sharing:

- Distribute trivia quizzes, word games, etc. in resident mailboxes or directly to their doors.
- Make them available to families, too, for shared Facetime or Skype activities.
- Carry ones that suit individual residents' interests with you for one-to-one visits.
- When isolation is eased, leave a new activity every day at the reception desk for residents, families, and even staff and vendors to do at their leisure or during visits.

The main places you'll find them are under Cranium Crunches and Puzzles

Cranium Crunches consists of 6 activities, always including:

- Wacky Wordies
- Concentration – decipher the phrase from pictures and letters

And various others, such as:

- Word quilts
- Pass it on
- Math and logic exercises
- Sudoku
- Optical illusions

The 2-dozen+ **Puzzles** include

- IQ trivia quiz – month related
- A variety of crossword styles
- Word searches
- Word mining
- Fill in the blank
- Matching
- Mazes
- Junk drawer detective
- Jigsaw puzzles
- And more!



Changing Digits



4 Concentration Puzzles
Another option: [Each puzzle on a separate page](#)



Eight-Letter Word



Squared Up



Summertime Word Quilt



Wacky Wordies
Another option: [Each puzzle on a separate page](#)





A few words about dementia

Activity Connection has added new parts and improved others. What works always depends on the individual and your approach.

Activity Connection's other Extras

Three more time-savers are part of every month's Extras: **AC Videos**, **Tech Corner**, and **In-services**.

If you have to give an **in-service**, it's right there, ready-made, and June's is full of ideas that all staff can easily adapt.

Activity Connection's Videos

If you click on AC Videos, it will take you to the Table of Contents which currently has more than 20 free interactive videos on these topics:

- 7 featuring cities, including Fort Collins, CO; Nashville, TN; Sn Antonio, TX; Philadelphia, PA; Baltimore, MD; Charleston, SC: and Portland, OR
- Multiple versions of "Do you hear what I hear?" about identifying sounds
- Riddles
- 2 on zoo animals
- A Colorado Wildflower Tour
- More coming!



Activity Connection's Tech Corner

Many people miss the goodies in the Tech Corner because you must scroll down to a lot of unchanging material to get to them. When you do so, three sections provide instant activities that DO change monthly:

- **Internet sites to see**
- **APPLY put** (interesting apps to download)
- **YouTube Entertainment**

June's YouTube links ranging from 1 minute to 180:

- Babies React to Daddy Coming Home
- Inside the Largest Handmade Candy Factory
- Amazing Nature
- Headspace (workings of the mind)
- Funny Cats and Dogs



A few words about humor

Activity Connection has a humor category each month that is usually an instant activity with little prep required. Holidays also often include humor. Here are some sample quotes in June for Father's Day:



- If you ever want to torture my dad, tie him up and right in front of him, refold a map incorrectly.
~ Cathy Ladman
- Remember: What Dad wants for Father's Day is a nap. Really.
~ Dave Barry

There are very few occasions when lightheartedness is unwelcome.

Activity Connection – Exercise and Getting Outdoors

June's feature: Hand Exercises for Arthritis from Healthwise Exercises TV

What I like about these is that they are paced for seniors, usually done outdoors, and often show a seated version. Other exercise options are also offered each month. Do everything you can outdoors.

More Resources

- When you can't get outside:
Wiser Now Slide Shows
- **Wiser Now Wednesday** – This free weekly publication with its quizzes, quotes, quirky



observations and more is another source of instant programming. Join here:
<http://wisernow.com/>

COVID 19 resources

This is a rabbit hole if ever there was one. Here are just five suggestions:

- <https://www.activityconnection.com/Coronavirus/>
- <https://naap.info/covid-19-activity-resources/> - absolutely loads of links
- <https://in2l.com/covid-19/>
- <https://www.goldencarers.com/coronavirus/>
- Virtual field trips, especially those that take you to parks and gardens.

Thank you for all the brave and vital work you do to lift others' spirits.

And always remember:
Fun Fuels the Brain

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