

100 Things to do in the Summer

1. Have a musical sleepover. Invite those friends of your child who also play musical instruments, and have the slumber party include playing music.
2. Go to a Suzuki institute. Turn it into a family vacation or special trip. Institutes are held all over the world, so choosing the location for this special vacation will be fun! And the student needs to practice hard to be ready to participate in lessons and group activities.
3. Read a parenting book. Here's a link to my show notes that recommends several really good books for parenting: teachsuzuki.com.
4. Read a Suzuki book. I will include links to Dr. Suzuki's two books, and I highly recommend that all parents have these books in their personal libraries: teachsuzuki.com.
5. Set up weekly lessons with the teacher so that the child has a reason to practice.
6. Schedule short performances at the local nursing home.
7. Schedule short performances at the local retirement home.
8. Check into the possibility of a performance at a local library as part of their special events.
9. Schedule a swim party or barbeque that includes music. Have the children bring their instruments to play several songs between swims and food. Practicing and reviewing would be helpful.
10. Contact the local mall or shopping merchants to get permission to perform for the community.
11. Have the student play something special for church.
12. Arrange for the student to play for shut-ins or other special folks who are unable to get out and about to hear live music.
13. Set up a home concert in your home or backyard. Make up a stage area and make programs as an art project.
14. Make a video performance for a far-off relative to watch.
15. Play for grandma over the phone (facetime or Skype).
16. Contact a local art gallery (or two) and arrange a special performance.
17. Find out if there are any special fund-raising events in your community and contact the organizers to see if your child could provide music in some way.
18. Check to see if your community is hosting any special community events and offer to have your child (and other students) participate by providing music in some way.
19. Plan a neighborhood circus of performers. Invite neighbors to participate in some way by hosting an event. Your student could participate by providing music alone or with other music students.
20. Are there any dancers in the group who might like to partner with some of the musicians to provide a special talent show or revue? Contact the local dance studio to find out the possibilities.
21. If there is a local fair or rodeo, find out if there is a possibility to have the students perform.
22. Contact the chamber of congress to get a list of local clubs. Ask the clubs whether there is a special event or other need for music to encourage the children's performance. Some of these local groups might also sponsor scholarships for music lessons or attendance at music camps.
23. Attend a summer music camp that may or may not be related to Suzuki. The music departments of local universities may have more information.
24. Contact a local convalescent or other rehabilitation hospital and ask if there is a possibility of scheduling a performance.
25. Make a movie of the child performing several songs. This movie project could last for months as each video takes planning, artwork, and practice!
26. Schedule a summer Olympics. There is a good description of this in Diane Wagstaff's book, "Games and Motivation for the Suzuki Violin Student." I'll provide a link in my show notes. Basically there are 3 judges, and the students select what piece they will perform. The 3 judges

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put a check next to each item on a 10-item list, which the judges think the student achieved. These 10 items include things like: good playing feet, proper erect posture while playing, proper left hand while playing, proper bow hold, proper bow arm position and use, straight bow, correct intonation, strong tone, good memory of song notes, and correct bowing. The 3 judges provide an average score of the number of checks, and the student receives copies of the score cards as well as a ribbon that represents the number of points achieved. Just like the Olympics, one can have more than one event, such as a technical event, a fast piece event, a slow piece event, and so forth. I also think it would be possible to vary the score cards to reflect the considerations in the different events.

27. Host a special workshop in your community for your local students. These events could be 1-3 days long and be combined with other ideas I've mentioned already. You could invite students from several nearby studios and set up master class lesson exchanges with the different teachers. The workshop could conclude with a potluck and play-in, which is an event where the students gather to play many of the songs together. These workshops are like mini-Institutes.
28. Organize a play-a-thon in order to raise funds for a special thing. The funds could be for a scholarship to attend an institute or other workshop, or the funds could be used for another special event. At the play-a-thon, the student could bring pledges that the student has collected, and then the teacher or organizer could note how many of the songs were played at the play-a-thon so that the student could go back to collect the pledged funds.
29. Hold a fiddling workshop or special event to teach students some fiddle songs.
30. Plan a graduation recital for local students. Decide which pieces are to be included as representative pieces of each Suzuki book, and have the students gather to perform those graduation pieces to receive special graduation certificates.
31. Reserve a pavilion or other similar venue in the local community park and schedule a musical park day.
32. Start learning holiday or Christmas songs. Students never get tired of holiday songs, no matter what time of year it is. Might as well get started in a timely way.
33. Contact your local senior center and ask about opportunities to have students play music on a regular basis or as part of a special event.
34. Research a composer of one of the repertoire songs.
35. Go to <http://youtube.com> and listen and watch some videos of performers playing one of the repertoire songs.
36. You can pretend that you are a music critic and come up with a review of the YouTube performance.
37. You can pretend that you are a teacher and what you would instruct the performer to make the performance better.
38. Invent a dance or tumbling routine that would fit the music of one of the repertoire songs.
39. Invent a story that would use recordings of the repertoire songs as the movie backdrop. What order would you put the songs in order to tell the story?
40. Complete a 100-day practice challenge and determine in advance what awesome reward waits at the end of completing the challenge.
41. Complete a 100 days of summer review song challenge.
42. Complete a 100-day photo challenge that relates to the student's repertoire. The challenge will be in deciding what photo to take.
43. Complete a 100-day video challenge, where the parent makes a daily video of a different songs. At the end of the challenge, compare the progress made on the videos from the beginning to the end of the 100 days. The videos can also be made once a week.
44. Research one of the repertoire song's composer and the country that he or she lived in.

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45. Using the research found about the composer's country, draw a picture of a part of the country, or the country's native costumes, or of some other important part of the country discovered in the research.
46. Put on a puppet show with music provided by the repertoire recordings or have the student accompany the puppet show with live or pre-recorded music.
47. Put on a "stage" show like a puppet show, but use small paper plates with faces or scenery drawn on them and attached to popsicle sticks so they are movable.
48. Rewrite the Harry Potter Puppet Pals video about the mysterious ticking noise, and substitute other family or friend names that match the rhythms.
49. Designate a week for extra vigilant bow hold practice.
50. Designate a week for extra attention paid to instrument hold and posture.
51. Designate a special review of all the short bow songs that the student knows for the week.
52. Designate a special review of all the creamy bows or slurred bow songs that the student knows for the week.
53. Designate a special review of all the fast songs that the student knows for the week.
54. Designate a special review of all the slow songs that the student knows for the week.
55. Have the student design special merit "badges" to be earned by completing special assignments. These badges can be designed, drawn, or colored by the student and earned by completing a list of special requirements, as badges are earned in the scouting programs.
56. Make up a special summer calendar by day and list all the songs that the student knows, one song per day. When the first 7 songs are listed, begin again on Sunday and fill in the next row. Keep filling in this calendar until all the songs are included on it. Then have the student review the songs listed on each day.
57. Alternately, have the student play the songs for the day in a particular book, such as book 1 songs or book 3 songs.
58. Make a suggestion box and have everyone, especially the students, come up with ideas about fun things to do in the summer related to music. Once a week, empty the box and read through the suggestions.
59. Make up a treasure hunt. Have the parent hide pieces of paper with song titles or instrument skills (e.g., a correct bow hold and 5 Mississippi Hotdogs on the E string), and hide these pieces of paper in various places in the student's home. Then place clues to each location. As the student completes each task on the treasure map, there is another clue to figure out and task to complete, until the student reaches the ultimate destination and the treasure. Hopefully the parent will have come up with something special for the treasure.
60. Designate one week for throwing the dice. Decide in advance what tasks the student needs to complete each day and have the student throw the dice to determine the number of repetitions of the task that day. Be sure to designate a special number (the child's favorite number perhaps?) as the "wild card" number. When the student throws that number then the student picks what to do, and then the game might end early.
61. Have the student decide what to practice. This can be done on a regular basis, such as a particular day every week.
62. Line up the puppets and dolls as if they were at a concert, and have the student perform for this rapt audience.
63. Designate a special color day, when the student will figure out to relate all the songs in practice to that particular color. For example, on a "blue" day, Lightly Row might be about a blue boat, Song of the Wind might be about the wind blowing across the blue sky, or Perpetual Motion could be about a soldier who went on a VERY LONG hike through a blue meadow.

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64. Make up a summer reading chart, as they do in libraries. Give the child a certain number of points for reviewing certain songs, and then keep track of the number of points a child earns. Designate prizes for reaching certain milestones.
65. Learn a song that is popular to the student from a favorite movie or TV show.
66. Make up the list of items to be practiced and reviewed and give each item a number. Then throw the die and practice the number song that shows up.
67. Make a list of items to be practiced and reviewed and assign each item a color. Then use a color wheel spinner to see which item to practice next.
68. Cut color construction paper into small rectangles. Use four or five different colors. Then write on each card a particular song or practice task. Group similar tasks on the same color, such as bow tasks on yellow, and left hand skills on red.
69. Draw a giant caterpillar that has great big circle segments for its body, and write each practice task on each segment. Then have the student color in the segment once the student has completed the practice task.
70. Fill a small jar with marbles (I believe a baby food jar holds 21 marbles). Then have the student complete review or other practice tasks or even a day's practice for each marble that the student places into the jar. When the student fills up the jar, celebrate with a special treat!
71. Make a list of things to practice, and set out a row of candies – 1 candy per item practiced. As the student finishes working on each item on the list, the student may eat the candy or save it for later consumption.
72. Make a list of things to practice, and set out a row of pennies – 1 penny per item practiced. As the student finishes working on each item on the list, the student then “earns” the penny for that item.
73. Buy an incentive pad or make one of your own that has a number of squares to be checked when something is completed. Decide in advance what practice items will count toward filling in one of the squares with a checkmark or other designation.
74. Buy an incentive pad or make one of your own that has a number of squares to be checked when something is completed. Decide in advance what review songs will count toward filling in one of the squares with a checkmark or other designation.
75. Have the student teach you how to play something that the student has learned, such as a review piece or other practice skill (like holding the bow).
76. Make up a “squares of 8” game board. Number each square from 1 to 8, and then write a few (e.g., 5-7) practice items or review songs for each square. Have the student begin with square 1 and work through each number square, picking one item on the list, until the student gets to square 8. The next day, go through the second item in each square, and so on until all the items in the squares have been completed. You can make this game board by folding a regular piece of construction paper in half, then quarters, then 8ths.
77. Make up a “Candyland” game board and write review songs and practice skills throughout the game board on the different squares. Then have the student play the game by throwing a small die and moving a game piece throughout the board. Be sure to have some “easy” squares and some “move back 3 spaces” squares.
78. Make up a “Candyland” game, but when you get to the end, have the student do a “playoff.” This means that whatever number the student throws on the die, the student moves ahead, and if there is any of the number left over, the student then moves back that number of squares. The game will finish when the student finishes exactly on the last square. For some reason, students really like to do the ending this way.
79. Play dress up during practices. Allow the child to put a costume together for the day's practice. Some parents have found it useful to keep a small chest filled with possible costume items.

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80. Practice outside if possible. Be sure to keep the instruments safe from too hot temperatures, wet weather, or sunlight. Watch out for bird poop and distracting breezes that knock over music stands and toss music!
81. Make a special summer practice workbook for your special student. Include pages that the student can color or draw on, and include the summer practice and review list. The student will enjoy making up their own special book, and you might consider doing this for the regular school year lessons as well.
82. Buy a dot to do book, and allow the student to complete a dot to dot page each day that they practice. You might also consider having the child earn this page each week by completing a certain number of practice days each week.
83. Buy a simple jigsaw puzzle (maybe 50 pieces or so). Have the student earn the pieces with practice tasks. Reward the student by providing them with the straight edge pieces first. You might also consider having the child earn the bow of pieces by completing a period of practices, such as 2 weeks.
84. Combine practices with a special reading book that you will read together with your student. For each practice, read part of the story. I have found this technique to be very helpful to encourage group class attendance.
85. Buy a special candle and light it every time you practice. Make a mark on the candle and decide what special treat you will have when you reach the mark on the candle.
86. Consider buying something special for your student if and when they complete 100 days of summer practice. Think of ways to break down the item into pieces that can be given earlier and help to keep up the student's practice motivation. For example, one student might like an aquarium. He might receive the aquarium at the end of a few weeks, the gravel for the bottom in another few weeks, the plants and other decorations a few weeks after that, and ultimately the fish at the end!
87. The aquarium practice idea would also work with a small pet, such as a hamster, guinea pig, rabbit, or mouse. And during the build-up phase, you could be studying and learning about how to care for the new pet.
88. Pick a composer each week and help your child find information about that composer. Make up a composer scrapbook for the composers and songs that the student has learned so far.
89. Make a set of flashcards for doing extra special practice on all the tricky places in the student's songs. For example, many students have trouble remembering the 3rd part of the book 1 songs because the 3rd part gets repeated less than the other parts of the song. Make a set of special practice flashcards that include these troublesome places.
90. Make a set of review flashcards. You can use a set of blank index cards (large or small), and the student could draw or color an appropriate image of the song on the cards. Then decide each day how many review songs the student will do. As the student completes each review card, put that card in a discard pile. Then repeat the process the next week.
91. Arrange a special dinner at your house, and have your student prepare a special entertainment playlist for the guests' listening pleasure either during dinner or after dinner as a special after-dinner entertainment.
92. Talk to some of the local shop owners in your local town about allowing the student to do some "busking" in front of the shop. Busking is when musicians or small act performers play or demonstrate for tips of money. Many students have had success raising money for summer camps or music lessons or even new instruments when the student is ready for the next size.
93. Check into local flea markets or market days in your community. Many students have been permitted to do some busking as part of a vendor's booth display.

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94. Form a club with other students and their parents to play duets, trios, or other small orchestra pieces on a regular basis.
95. Complete a 100-days listening chart, where the student gets to check a box for every day that the student listens to particular repertoire, such as book 1 or book 4. Remember, a listening program is very powerful, even if the student is listening with the volume turned low in the background.
96. Consider setting up a special funding opportunity, such as gofundme or indiegogo or some similar organization to raise funds for a special purpose, such as a music camp. The student could submit videos or special pictures as part of the fundraising enticement. One local teacher here raises money to help her many students attend summer camps.
97. If your student will be traveling this summer, plan ahead to have the student's instrument and practice materials available so that the student may continue his or her progress. Even a short daily practice and strong listening program will still be possible and go a long way to keep the student's progress secure.
98. Have the student work on making a special book. Buy a blank sketchbook at the local office or art supply store, and have the student draw, color, and write in the book about the music activities the student did each day during the summer. You could call it, "What Music Did For Me This Summer" or "How I Spent My Summer Vacation With Music" or some other title that is special to the student. Then when the fall school session begins, the student will have a colorful and thorough record of the music activities that the student accomplished, and the parents will have a beautiful memory of their children's development at that point.
99. Schedule extra lessons in the summer. There is nothing in any teacher rule book that prevents a student from having more than one lesson in a week. Sometimes extra lessons will help to keep the motivation going.
100. Learn to read music! There are many music reading books of various levels to suit all ages of music students and their parents. Start slow and add a note per day or even per week. Learning to read music will open up even more fun possibilities!