



## Spring Break Planning Activity

*Ideal for 10–15-year-olds*

*Duration: One 40 min classes.*

In this activity, students will pretend they are a family of five (two parents, three children) who want a terrific Spring Break. They evaluate all possible Spring Break trip/ activity options to answer the question, "Can slower spending help our family plan and then have a super Spring Break?"

### ACTIVITY: Plan a Super Spring Break!

**Students Imagine this:** Spring Break is only months away. You and your spouse have three kids. You want to plan a budget for the school break you'd like your family to have. This can be as simple as each child choosing a day trip/ activity they'd like to complete or as elaborate as a week away. You'll anticipate all the costs associated with the week off school to see if it's achievable.

**Step 1:** Split into groups of five (two parents/ three kids). If you have a blended family, your group may have to be larger to accommodate half-siblings, stepmoms, or stepdads. Establish an overall Spring Break budget between \$500 and \$5000.

**Step 2:** Parents should discuss the week *they* believe their kids would enjoy and calculate the [DIMS-DOES IT MAKE SENSE?® SCORE](https://www.giftingsense.org/dims-score) (at GiftingSense.org) for all associated costs (e.g., for each activity/day trip, concert, pro sports event, or even an entire week away, as well as any purchases that may be necessary for the week's plan).

**Step 3:** Parents then ask their children to calculate the [DIMS-DOES IT MAKE SENSE?® SCORE](https://www.giftingsense.org/dims-score) (at GiftingSense.org) for the week the *children* believe would make for a terrific Spring Break. This will also likely involve more than one DIMS SCORE® Calculation (e.g., one for each activity and/ or associated equipment/ wardrobe requirements such as new bathing suits, camping equipment, or theme park tickets).

**Step 4:** Kids and parents then present their various DIMS SCORE® reports to each other to discuss the various options that exist for the upcoming break, as well as if their Spring Break budget has already been met or exceeded. If it has been exceeded, kids can:

- a) Return to the drawing board and research less expensive options/ activities.
- b) Commit to evaluating discretionary purchases between now and March or April to see if the shortfall can be saved by thinking before buying during the remaining weeks of winter. All winter purchases that kids are willing to forgo after calculating the DIMS SCORE® and realizing they may not make sense (e.g., store-bought lunches, going to the movie theatre versus streaming a film at home...) should be listed below. See #4 in "What Your Group Will Submit".

### What Each Group/ Family Will Submit:

1. A cover page for their family detailing the names and ages of each child.
2. The family's Spring Break Budget, highlighting the shortfall (if any) identified in Step 4.
3. A DIMS SCORE® report for two possible purchases per family member. These should be for the purchases that help define how the Spring Break Budget will be spent, e.g., meals out, an afternoon at the movies, theme park visits, concerts, pro sports events...
4. A list of all the purchases kids commit to forgoing in service of being able to direct the money saved towards the family's planned "Super Spring Break."
5. Collaborative group response to the reflection questions asked below.

### Reflection Questions:

1. Were the parents surprised by how "off" or "on the money" they were regarding what their kids wanted to do for Spring Break? Are "staycations" more popular than you anticipated?
2. Were kids surprised at the total cost of a day trip or a week away? For example, how much safe transportation, snacks, and souvenirs add to the cost of attending a concert or pro sports game?
3. Did any of the kids change their minds and decide to ask for an alternative activity/ trip after calculating the DIMS SCORE® and realizing just how much they were asking to spend, or that they may not enjoy/ appreciate a choice as much as they had originally anticipated?
4. Did family members find they only declined possible purchases that couldn't generate a DIMS SCORE® of less than 8? What does a DIMS SCORE® of less than 8 mean? What factors make a purchase "make sense"?
5. Should parents spend an equal dollar amount on each of their children even if the activity one child wants costs far less than what their siblings might enjoy?
6. Do you think having a Spring Break savings goal in mind will help family members decline discretionary purchases throughout the winter? Is it easier to save for a future that looks like fun?
7. Does thinking before buying take up lots of time? Does being in the habit of asking and answering simple questions about typical purchases help a person understand that spending may not make sense, even if "in the moment" a purchase seems like a really good idea?