



Labor Day Crafts for Kids

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It's one of the most misunderstood holidays of the year: Labor Day. Often viewed as the unofficial end of summer, most folks recognize this day with time off work and perhaps a family barbeque. For children, this is one holiday that often doesn't get a lot teaching time either, due to it falling so early in the school year. So, what can a parent do to make sure their early learners understand its importance? Easy Labor Day crafts for kids, of course!

As a parent, you already know that kids learn best when having fun, and one of the best ways to have a great time while honoring an important holiday is with project-based learning. Before we tackle some of the best ideas for Labor Day crafts and activities, let's learn a little bit more about its history and why we have this day off from school and work.

What is Labor Day and Why Do We Celebrate It?

Observed each year on the first Monday of September, Labor Day isn't really the patriotic holiday that many assume it is. Often confused with Memorial Day, Labor Day isn't about celebrating our armed forces, either, which isn't to say that honoring our hard-working service men and women isn't important. It is! But this holiday has a slightly different significance.

Labor Day came into existence thanks to the large-scale labor movement in the 19th century, well after the industrial revolution in America. The day is meant to honor American workers' contributions and their achievements for our country.

Working a full-time job might be a given for most American adults, so you might be wondering why our country takes a day out to honor contributions we all make on a daily basis. The answer rests within the fact that average everyday laborers were once mistreated, having been forced to work backbreaking 12-hour days, 7 days a week, in dreadful conditions, just to make a meager wage. Even so, it was barely enough to make a meager living. What's more, is that during the industrial revolution, children were also forced to work. Due to the harsh conditions, riots broke out and labor unions were born. Attempting to mend ties with workers, Congress along with President Grover Cleveland made Labor Day an official public holiday in 1894.

Today, we celebrate the day as to not forget about what occurred during the Industrial Revolution, and to honor the hardworking Americans that contribute to our society each

and every day. Now that we know exactly why we celebrate, let's take a look at fun Labor Day arts and crafts for kids to reinforce it with our favorite little learners!



Labor Day Activities and Crafts for Kids

Search for Labor Day arts and crafts online, and you'll be hard pressed to find something historically accurate, since this holiday is so often misunderstood! That's why it's important to keep the focus squared on American workers. The following ideas will help early learners prepare the right way:

Colorful Thank You Letters for Community Helpers



Turn Labor Day into a helpful civics lesson for preschoolers by creating cards especially for community helpers! All you need are simple supplies and a few magazine cutouts or clipart images!

Get started by using construction paper or cardstock as a base for your cards, and work with your child to choose which workers he or she would like to create them for. For instance, send cards to local firefighters, policemen, teachers at your child's school, nurses, or any other community helpers you would like to honor. If you need help choosing, think about whether any of your family or friends work in these fields, as this is an easy way to send cards to those your child is comfortable with.

Next, find some magazines and cut out any pictures your child can find to represent these workers. These images can include photos of police cars, fire trucks, etc. If you do not have magazines available, simply print out colorful clipart images. Glue each image to the card for decoration. Tailor each card to its recipient, and practice writing with your child, and focus the message on the specific hard work that the worker does for your community. To enhance the message, swing by the fire station or police station on Labor Day to deliver the card!

DIY Utility Belt Craft

When it comes to preschool crafts for Labor Day, this project is as easy and cheap as they get, but still a lot of fun! To make a DIY tool belt, you can use one of a few different types of materials for the belt itself. Use an elastic band, a long piece of fabric, or make one using black or brown construction paper and tape or a stapler to fit it around your child's waist.

After the belt is made, help your child draw or print out pictures of tools to color. Choose a hammer, wrench, screwdrivers, or other similar tools to find, print, and color. If you're feeling extra crafty, make pouches from construction paper to attach to the belt that can hold your child's plastic tools! Finally, glue the tools to the belt and let your child wear it around the house when they are playing. Don't forget to discuss how each tool is used, and why working Americans need tool belts to do their jobs!

Create Puppets for a Show



Put on a puppet show for your family or friends using homemade puppets made to resemble American workers! Make sure to have the following basic supplies on hand to create a wide array of adorable worker puppets:

- Blank paper lunch bags
- Pencils
- Markers
- Paint and brushes (optional)
- Buttons, pom poms, sequins, or any other decorative items that can be glued onto bags (optional)

To create puppets, first decide upon which workers should be featured in your child's show and work together to create a brief play starring those characters. Once your kids have an idea of what to make and the action of their show, begin making puppets using the paper lunch bags. For instance, make postal workers, police officers, taxicab drivers, or other community helpers. Use markers or paint and optional extra items to decorate each puppet to look like the worker that is being portrayed. Finally, practice the play and put on a show for friends and family!

Make a Box Town

Similar to the puppet show, this idea involves children building a town that can be used for role play purposes, or perhaps the box town can serve as the set for the puppet show above! Create a community just like yours or make a new one entirely!

Materials to collect:

- Boxes of different shapes and sizes; examples include K-Cup boxes, cereal boxes, or any other box that holds food items with the contents removed
- Markers and/or paint
- Construction paper
- Cardboard- optional
- Scratch paper

To create your town, first decide if your child would like to emulate his or her own or create a new one. Whichever is decided, gather available supplies and boxes and draw up a map on paper to decide what the layout will look like once created. Then, decorate each box to make it appear as a building in the community. For example, make a fire house, police station, gas station, etc. Use markers and paint to design each building, and use plain cardboard as roads. Use the town as a backdrop for your puppet show, or as a standalone project!

Magazine Collage- What Will I Be?



Labor Day is a great time to talk to children about what they want to be when they grow up! For this next craft, brainstorm some ideas with your child about potential professions he or she might be interested in for the future!

Have the following items on hand for this project:

- Age appropriate magazines
- Scissors
- Glue
- Poster board
- Markers

Using a black marker, help your child title the poster, "What Will I Be When I Grow Up?". To extend this activity, read the famous Dr. Seuss book, "Oh, the Places You'll Go!" and title the poster the same, using it as a theme for this craft.

Next, search through the magazines to find pictures of people who are dressed up similar to workers your child looks up to. For instance, find a football player in uniform, or a scientist wearing a lab coat. Cut out the photos and glue them around the poster board

to make a collage. Encourage little learners to cut out as many people as possible to explore different types of workers! Label each person with what job they complete and discuss with your child what each does for their community or even the country.

Once completed, use the internet to explore other people who complete the same jobs, and research what those workers do, or what education it takes to become like them!

Labor Day is often overlooked and undercelebrated, or at least just thought of as a day off work and school. Set the record straight and teach your child the meaning behind the holiday once and for all with the above fun-filled crafts and activities!

