

# RACE TO THE PLANETS FAMILY EVENT

## SAMPLE AGENDAS

Family ASTRO Leader Kits and Guides are designed to contain enough materials and activities for two full family events. Because families may attend the first session with enthusiasm, but not a lot of knowledge, it is important to schedule a second follow up session. This gives families a chance to digest some of what they have learned in the first session, continue their learning at home, and then have the opportunity to come back with questions. Answering questions and encouraging new interest are key components of Family ASTRO's positive impact on family learning.

### SESSION 1: 90 MINUTES

| TIME NEEDED  | NAME OF ACTIVITY          | COMMENTS  |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| 25 minutes as families arrive  | Worlds in Comparison*     | Welcome families as they arrive and have them fill out the sign in sheet and their nametags, and if snacks are provided, this is a good time to point them out or serve them. Then encourage each family to pick a table and get started rolling and cutting playdough. |
| 15 minutes   | Debrief Station           | Call the group together and make sure everyone has signed in and made a nametag. Compare the scale models of the solar system that each family has created and ask for surprises and discoveries made.  |
| 20 minutes   | Toilet Paper Solar System | Families get a feel for distances between the planets.  |
| 15 minutes<br><i>(optional activity that will increase Session time)</i> | Scaling New Worlds        | An optional activity that allows families to compare other planetary systems to our own solar system.   |
| 20 minutes   | A Flag for Your Planet    | Families design a flag for the planet of their choice and share their ideas with the group.   |
| 5 minutes  | Surfing the Solar System  | A web-based activity for more fun and exploration at home. Describe the activity and distribute family handouts.  |
| 5 minutes  | Evaluation                | Families will appreciate this opportunity to give input and their comments may help you plan your next event.   |

#### What's Next:

■ As families leave, make sure they know about the date and time for your second Race to the Planets session and that you'll want to know how they did playing the "Surfing the Solar System" game. Remind them that the second session will include a take-home game which uses the Planet Guide cards the families got to know in the "A Flag for Your Planet" activity.

\*The Worlds in Comparison station activity is rather involved and materials intensive. If you have the resources, you should set up one station for each family and assign a volunteer to help you.

**Note:** Another Family ASTRO Leaders' Guide, titled *Stars-Planets-Life*, has additional activities you could use to add to or substitute activities in this agenda. For more information, email: [astro@astrosociety.org](mailto:astro@astrosociety.org) or go to:

<http://www.astrosociety.org/education/family/resources/spl.html>

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## SAMPLE AGENDAS CONTINUED

### SESSION 2: 90 MINUTES

| TIME NEEDED | NAME OF ACTIVITY                                | COMMENTS  |
|-------------|---|---|
| 20 minutes  | Planet Bottles*                                 | As families arrive, welcome them and point out the sign in sheet, nametags, and any available snacks. Then have them go to their “Planet Bottle” stations. Ask families to work in teams to figure out which planet they would be on with each bottle.  |
| 10 minutes  | Debrief   | Call the group together and make sure everyone has signed in and made a nametag. Give answers to the bottle activity and ask if there were any surprises. Have a discussion about the size of each planet and why some may be much larger in volume (i.e. Saturn, Uranus and Neptune), but have similar gravity to Earth. |
| 10 minutes  | Your Weight on Other Worlds                     | Distribute calculators (or ask families to get theirs ready) and worksheets to each family and ask some questions to get them thinking, such as: “If Junior were on Jupiter and Dad on Mercury, who would weigh more?”  |
| 10 minutes  | Introduction to <i>Race to the Planets</i> Game | Before you hand out the games, revisit the “A Flag for Your Planet” activity, reminding families about the Planet Guide cards and how different types of information for each world can be found on them. Open your own game and explain the basic instructions.  |
| 35 minutes  | Playing the <i>Race to the Planets</i> Game     | Help your families get started playing the game and circulate and answer any questions that may come up.  |
| 5 minutes   | Evaluation                                      | Pass out and collect evaluation sheets to help you plan your next event.  |

#### What’s Next:

- As families leave, thank them for participating and let them know if more events are planned. Give them the event title and a teaser to pique their interest in what they might learn and take home.
- If there are any planets visible in the night sky, a nice follow up to this family event is a planet observing session. If possible, ask local volunteers with telescopes to assist with this.

\*The Planet Bottles station activity is rather involved and materials intensive. If you have the resources, you should set up one station for each family and assign a volunteer to help you.

**Note:** Another Family ASTRO Leaders’ Guide, titled *Stars-Planets-Life*, has additional activities you could use to add to or substitute activities in this agenda (or use for a **third** session). For more information, email [astro@astrosociety.org](mailto:astro@astrosociety.org) or go to: <http://www.astrosociety.org/education/family/resources/spl.html>