

TPE Kids page THRILLS AND SPILLS

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Roller coaster riding

Have you ever been on a roller coaster? Some people think roller coasters are scary. Others say they're great fun. Whether you're on board or just watching from below, there's something about the high speeds, dizzying heights and twisty turns that make your heart beat a little faster.

People have been attracted to thrill rides for hundreds of years. In the 1700s, ice slides were popular in Russia. Steep, curvy tracks were carved in the ice, and riders went down on sleds made of wood or ice.

Many riders were hurt, but that didn't stop people from lining up for their chance to slide.

An early version of the roller coaster showed up in the United States in the 1800s. It was first made to move coal and supplies in and out of a coal mine in Pennsylvania. Then someone got the idea of loading the cars with people and pushing them down the hill. People paid \$1 each for a chance to try the wild,

bumpy ride that reached speeds of 100 miles per hour.

By the early 1900s, wooden roller coasters were popping up all over the country. Inventors tried — and scrapped — all kinds of new ideas. Someone created a loop-the-loop, but it was discontinued because it hurt riders' necks. Another designer made a roller coaster that jumped a gap in the track, but it also failed. Not a single person was willing to ride it until the missing piece of track was filled in.

In 1955, Disneyland opened in California. One of its most popular rides was a roller coaster called Matterhorn Mountain. That was the beginning of theme parks featuring roller coasters.

Today, there are stand-up roller coasters, roller coasters that hang from their tracks, and ones with upside-down loops. Like the early coasters, most still rely on gravity to carry the trains through their courses.

Sometimes life is like a roller coaster — filled with ups and downs and unexpected twists. There are fun times. Other times, we face things that seem a little scary. But through it all, it's good to know we're never alone. Jesus is riding beside us the whole time.

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"
(Matthew 28:20, NIV).



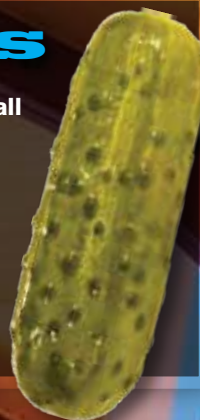
JUST FOR laughs

What do you call a small kitchen appliance that runs on a track?

A roller toaster.

What do you call a pickle with wheels?

A roller kosher.



Did you know?

In 2007, Richard Rodriguez rode a roller coaster for 17 days straight at an amusement park in England. He was only given a five-minute break every hour to use the restroom and eat.



Kingda Ka

The fastest roller coaster is Kingda Ka at Six Flags Great Escape in New Jersey. It reaches speeds of 128 miles per hour.

Try this!

Design a roller coaster!

Try designing your own roller coaster. Draw the track on a piece of paper. Include all the features you'd like to see in an amusement ride, such as water, lasers, animation and loop-the-loops. Think about how it would work. Don't forget to give your ride a cool-sounding name.



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