Good Shepherd Center

GUIDE TO FAMILY FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES

CHICAGO:

Voted Best Large City 8 Years in a Row by the Conde Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards. If you're a lock, you may already know but Chicagoland is much more than the City itself. In this guide we touch on the area's greatest hits and encourage the exploration of towns and villages that make up the surrounding municipalities. Many activities are FREE and/or budget friendly.

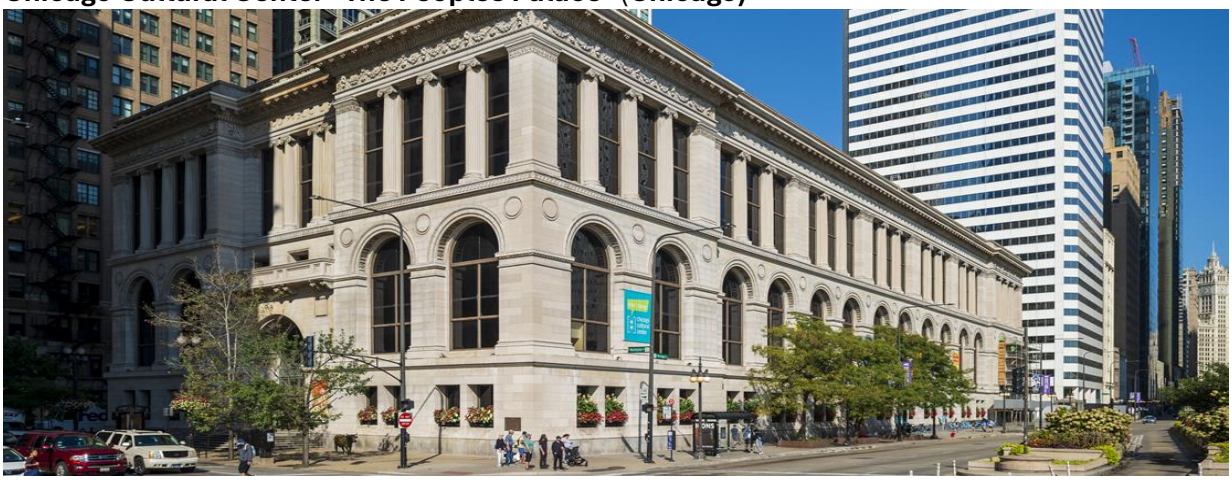
MUSEUMS

Museums For All Initiative (Nationwide)

A fun day out at the museum isn't always super fun for your wallet. Through Museums for All, families that receive food assistance can take advantage of free or significantly discounted admission when they present their SNAP EBT card. This is a national initiative that goes far beyond the Chicagoland Area. https://museums4all.org/

World Culture

Chicago Cultural Center "The Peoples Palace" (Chicago)



What better place to start? Hundreds of thousands of visitors are drawn annually to The Peoples Palace on East Washington St. The nation's first and most comprehensive free municipal cultural venue. Every year, the Chicago Cultural Center presents hundreds of free international, national, regional and local artists, musicians and performers, providing a showcase where the public can enjoy and learn about the arts. Learning Lab with Artist-in-Residence - Open Second and Fourth Fridays & Saturdays of each Month, 12-2pm **FREE** Admission

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF ANCIENT CULTURES
West Asia & North Africa

The Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures (UofC Campus)

Decipher hieroglyphs and learn the basics of this ancient Egyptian writing system with an Egyptologist. Suggested Admission Fee (payable at entry): Adults $15, Children (12 & under) $10. Fieldtrip rates and tours on website.

National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture (Humboldt Park, Chicago)

NMPRAC is devoted to the promotion, integration and advancement of Puerto Rican arts and culture, presenting exhibitions and programming created to enhance the visibility and importance of the rich Puerto Rican arts tradition. **FREE** everyday!

Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center (Skokie)

The *Family Youth Exhibition* is a highly interactive space where hands-on activities for kids ages 8-12 foster leadership skills, empathy, self-esteem, and positive decision-making. This exhibition uses the tenets of character education – trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship – to help visitors learn what they can do to be Upstanders and affect positive change in their world.

National Museum of Mexican Art (Pilsen, Chicago)

Chicago proudly hosts the largest population of Mexicans outside of Mexico. The Museum is home to nearly 20,000 pieces dating from today on back to the pre-colonial era, here you'll find one of the most impressive collections of Mexican indigenous art outside of Mexico itself. Admission is **FREE** all year-round!

The DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center (Hyde Park, Chicago)

The museum is proud of its diverse holdings that number more than 15,000 pieces and include paintings, sculpture, print works and historical memorabilia. 2025 Intro to AF Studies, **FREE** Certificate Program. They offer several **FREE** admission types including but is not limited to All IL Public School Students K-12.

The Swedish American Museum (Andersonville, Chicago)

Active for over 40 years in the heart of Andersonville, a traditionally Swedish area on the north side of Chicago. Andersonville, the "Little Sweden" of Chicago, is one of the most concentrated areas of Swedish heritage in the United States, with Swedish roots dating back to the 19th century. Tourists visit the area continually to sample Swedish food, buy gifts, visit the Museum, and partake in traditional Swedish holidays such as Midsomer and Julmiddag. Admission **FREE** the 2nd Tuesday of every month. Reg Admission is $6 for adults and $4 Seniors/Students/Kids.

Science

Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum & Chicago Academy of Sciences (Lincoln Park Chicago)

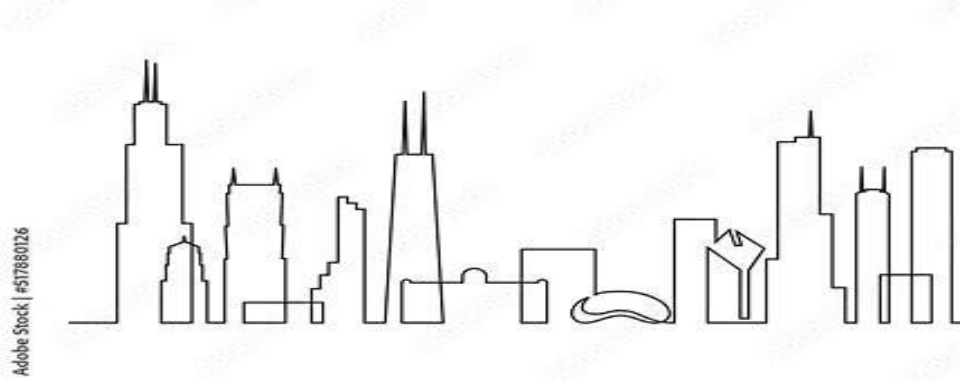
Children under 3, active-duty military, veterans, and Illinois K-12 teachers are always **FREE**. Thursdays are suggested donation days for Illinois residents. Illinois residents can enjoy **FREE** admission during these Donation Days or support us with a $10 suggested household donation at the time of admission.

Lincoln Park Zoo (Lincoln Park, Chicago)

General Admission is always **FREE**. The Zoo also offers a wide variety of educational activities for students PreK-12. Visit the zoom from anywhere with LIVE Cameras

John J Shedd Aquarium (Museum Campus Chicago)

Opening its first new exhibits in over 50 years, historic rotunda is transformed in *Wonder of Water* and Amazon Rising. **FREE** Tuesday Evenings: 5-9 p.m. Free Days March 4, 11, 18, 25; April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; May 6, 13, 20, 27



Field Museum (Museum Campus Chicago)

Pre-Registered Illinois field trips are **FREE** everyday of the week! School groups can enjoy a deep dive into Ancient American cultures or watch groundbreaking DNA research happen before their eyes. Students learn about evolution through fossils and dinosaur skeletons and discover what centuries-old specimens and artifacts can teach us about how we live today.

The Adler Planetarium (Museum Campus Chicago)

Touch the second-largest fragment of the Canyon Diablo meteorite that created Barringer Crater (aka Meteor Crater) in Arizona. Offers a variety of discounted tickets throughout the year. The majority of the discounted tickets available must be purchased online in advance of your visit. Including Museum 4 All, **FREE** Days for IL Residents Wednesdays 4p-10p.

Museum of Science and Industry (Jackson Park, Chicago)

The largest science museum in the Western Hemisphere and one of the biggest in the world. 2025 **FREE** Admission Days: March 17 -- 20 April 7 -- 11 May 6, 8 June 10, 12, 19 July 8, 10 August 5, 7 September 8, 11, 30 October 2, 13 November 3 --7, 10, 11 December 8 --14 Visitors can preregister up to two months in advance for **FREE** admission days.

Homewood Science Center (Homewood IL)

Through our programs and events, Homewood Science Center is working to improve STEM literacy; close the STEM achievement gap for female, minority, and low-income students; and increase economic mobility. Check out their field trip programming and **FREE** STEM Saturdays 10am-1pm.

Dave's Down To Earth Rock Shop and Museum (Evanston, IL)

A shop and a Pre-Historic Life Museum showcasing one of the largest private collections on display in United States. Selling authentic fossils, colored minerals, unique jewelry and a large assortment of beads and precious and semi-precious stones starting at $0.90. This is a store for beginners as well as serious collectors. The museum is **FREE** of charge!

Children's Museums

Chicago Children's Museum (Navy Pier, Chicago)

A proud ***Museums for All*** **partner**. Offering families that qualify for state food assistance and are in possession of an EBT card or WIC card $5 admission per person for up to 6 people when identification is presented in the general admission line. We accept EBT cards or WIC cards from every U.S. state and territory. Reg admission is $21 for IL residents.

Bronzeville Children's Museum (Bronzeville Chicago)

Their philosophy of building children's minds is reinforced by a unique guided tour format that emphasizes the educational message each exhibit is designed to achieve. We believe that this format is critical to ensuring that the hands-on play experience imparts knowledge, and that our children remember what they learned and not just that they had time to play.

The Children's Museum in Oak Lawn (Oak Lawn IL)

A place for families to learn, explore and soar together. It's a place for children to be creative, role play and build. It's a place for parents to be the teacher in their child's life. CMOL is a member of **Museums 4 All**.

Kohl Children's Museum (Glenview, IL) Offering hands-on, interactive exhibits designed exclusively for children. Learning is fun and interesting here. A visit to a grocery store, a veterinarian's office as well as a day care inhabited by dolls allow children to participate in adult activities on their own scale. Children can also build a house, make music, take care of cars, explore the properties of water and much more. Member of **Museums 4 All**. Reg GA is $20.

DuPage Children's Museum (Naperville, IL)

DCM strives to make our learning-through-play experience accessible to every child, regardless of economic, physical, or social barriers. **Museum 4 All** price is $3 per person for up to 4 admissions. $25 reduced 1-year membership.

[History Museums]

Chicago History Museum (Chicago)

Check Out The 5th Star Challenge. If Chicago's flag had a fifth star, what would it represent? On the city's current flag, the four red stars stand for notable events in the city's history. **FREE** for Illinois Resident, ages 18 and under. Non- Residents under 12 are also **FREE**. Check website for adult FREE/Discounted days.

McCormick Bridgehouse and Chicago River Museum (Riverwalk, Chicago)

A suggested donation or "**Pay What You Can**" system will gain you entry to this hidden gem on the Chicago Riverwalk. Guided Tours and Lift Viewings are available for additional cost.

Chicago Architecture Center

Interact with the Chicago City Model Experience, an incredibly detailed, three-dimensional cityscape activated by special effects and a short film. Adult $14. Students with ID are $10. Kids 5 and under are **FREE**

Elmhurst History Museum (Elmhurst, IL)

The Elmhurst History Museum offers a wide array of interesting programs and special events for patrons of all ages throughout the year. Always **FREE**. Must reserve tickets in advance.

Wilmette Historical Museum (Wilmette, IL)

Check out the Local Legends exhibit for a selection of celebrities that have called Wilmette home, including Bill Murray. Always **FREE.**

Art Museums

Art Institute of Chicago (Museum Campus Chicago)

Kids under 14 and Chicago teens under 18 are always **FREE**.

Museum of Contemporary Photography (South Loop, Chicago)

Always **FREE**. 600 S Michigan *Must reserve tickets in advance.

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

FREE admission for any Illinois elementary and high school teachers (with ID), Visitors with disabilities and their caregivers, Active members of the military, police, and fire departments and veterans as well as their families (with ID) and students 18 and under. Admission on Tuesdays is free for Illinois residents 5-9pm.

Smart Museum of Art (UofC Campus)

The Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago opens the world through art and ideas. Always **FREE** and open to all.

Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Arts (Oak Brook, IL)

This museum is dedicated to the art of cutting and polishing stone. Sharing with others the eternal beauty of gemstones and promoting the study of earth science. **FREE** admission on Wednesdays

Parks & Nature

Chicago Greeter Program by Choose Chicago (Select Neighborhoods)

The **FREE** Chicago Greeter visits are led by friendly locals who will guide you through authentic Chicago — it's fascinating histories, diverse cultural traditions, iconic landmarks, and off-the-beaten-path gems. Chicago Greeter offers a variety of ways to explore the city: register for a customized neighborhood visit with a friendly local, join a fast and flexible walk of downtown, or explore on your own with self-guided tours. https://www.choosechicago.com/chicago-greeter/

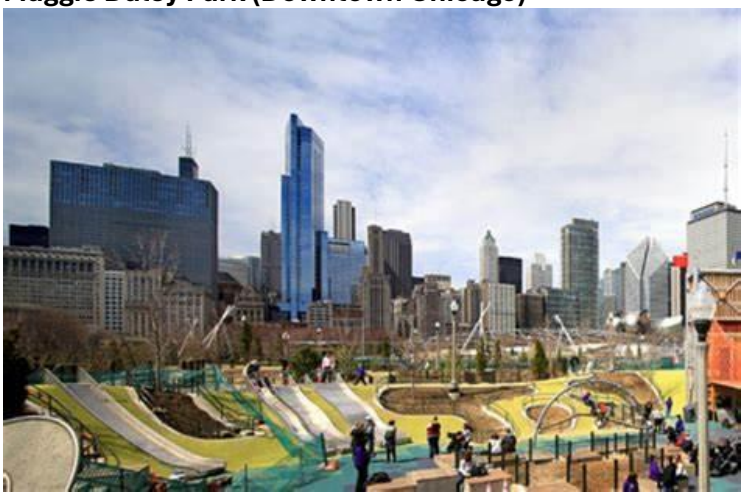
Garden of the Phoenix (Jackson Park, Chicago)

Over the past 130 years, the Garden of the Phoenix has endured through the highs and lows of the U.S.-Japan relationship and today is one of the most important sites in the nation reflecting the enduring importance of these two country's relationships. Located on Wooded Island in Jackson Park, south of the Museum of Science and Industry. **ADA and Family Friendly**

North Park Village Nature Center (North Park, Chicago)

Often described as a hidden gem in the city. Their mission is to provide visitors with an opportunity to interact with and learn about wildlife and natural resources in an urban setting. There are programs, events, and activities for all ages to enjoy while discovering our shared natural heritage at the first nature center within the city of Chicago. Free and Open to the public 7 days a week.

Maggie Daley Park (Downtown Chicago)



Sprawling public play space inspired by classic children's tales, like *Alice in Wonderland* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Kids of all ages will love the mini lighthouse, a life-sized ship, two climbing walls, 30-foot suspension bridge, skating ribbon, tennis courts, and several picnic groves.

Chicago Women's Park And Gardens (South Loop Chicago)

The park honors the contributions women have made to the city throughout its history and provides a quiet respite for the community. The park's fieldhouse features an indoor children's playground, a cafe and meeting room facilities.

Garfield Park Conservatory (Garfield Park Chicago)

Admission is free year-round. Advanced reservations are recommended. A fantastic place to bring family members of all ages. To make your experience here even more enjoyable, they offer a number of year round educational opportunities FREE for kids and families!

Lincoln Park Conservatory (Lincoln Park, Chicago)

Conservatory offers visitors a tropical experience within its four display houses: Palm House, Fern Room, Orchid House and Show House, which is home to the annual flower shows. Admission is free.

The Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center (Willow Springs IL)

The LRS has educated and delighted generations of families with live animals, exhibits and free self-guided trails.

Fullersburg Woods Nature Education Center (DuPage, IL)

A 13,000-year-old wooly mammoth skeleton, an animal print-making table, and a larger-than-life bird's nest are just a few of the features kids can experience at the Fullersburg Woods Nature Education Center. Live animals, crafts, and coloring are also available in addition to views of the scenic forest preserve.

Chicago Botanic Garden (Glencoe, IL)

CBG is an active member of Museums 4 All (parking included). Illinois primary and secondary educators receive free parking and admission for one educator per visit. **Free** Admission Days do not apply to ticketed events. March 17-20; April 7-11; May 6 & 8; June 10,12,19; July 8 & 10; Aug 5 & 7; Sept 9,11,30; Oct 2 & 13

Emily Oaks Nature Center (Skokie, IL)

Nature is truly appreciated at this 13-acre savanna and center. People of all ages enjoy this natural oasis full of native wildflowers, grasses, oak trees, three-acre pond and trails. Some of the plants and animals that frequent the pond or have been sighted in the savanna include Great Blue Herons, Coyotes, Flying Squirrels, Northern Water Snakes, Red Foxes and Cooper's Hawks.

The Talking Farm (Skokie, IL)

A non-profit dedicated to educating the community about agriculture, biodiversity, and horticulture. Using sustainable practices, they grove and distribute seasonal produce, herbs, and flowers to farmer markers, food pantries and local restaurants. They also have a wide variety of youth educational programs.

Ladd Memorial Arboretum & Evanston Ecology Center (Evanston IL)

Stretching along a three-quarter mile segment of McCormick Boulevard on a narrow, 23-acre strip of reclaimed land following the diagonal course of the North Shore Channel, the arboretum is an area of natural beauty and recreation open year-round. The Ecology Center is the education nucleus of the arboretum presenting many programs throughout the year. A great field trip experience $4 per student and no charge for chaperons.

Wildwood Nature Center (Park Ridge, IL)

Stop in at the Wildwood Nature Center during our open hours to visit with the animals, and learn and play with nature in our Nature Nook. Animal Room Exhibit hosts over 35 animals such as multiple snakes and turtles species as well as prairie dogs and a tiger salamander.

River Trail Nature Center (Northbrook, IL)

Learn how to make maple syrup, meet an owl or join a guided hike at all-ages events each week—or just let the kids climb and create at indoor and outdoor play areas. **FREE** exhibits, walking trails and onsite nature educators help tell the story of the plants, animals and natural landscapes formed by the Des Plaines River.

Libraries

Harold Washington Library Thomas Hughes Children's Library (Chicago)

Even parents whose kids aren't school-age yet can have fun wading at the Thomas Hughes Children's Library on the second floor of Harold Washington Library. Since the kids' library is organized by neighborhood, kids aged five and under can learn through play with a puppet stage, baby garden, and story nook in the Early Learner Neighborhood. Elementary-age kids can explore STEAM topics through activities in the Elementary Learner Neighborhood. Tweens can check out a digital media space, blue screen, and virtual-reality tools in the Tween Neighborhood. This gives parents the ultimate outlet for all ages of kids on snow days.

Chinatown Branch Chicago Public Library (Chinatown, Chicago)

This Feng Shui-inspired library branch was completed in 2015 and has a first floor devoted to kids. Pick out a picture book, build something fun from a variety of supplies, or attend one of the branch's regularly scheduled family-friendly programs. Teens can also participate in CPL's YouMedia program at this branch

Arlington Heights Memorial Library (Arlington Heights IL)

The Arlington Heights Memorial Library doesn't just have a kids' section; it has a Kids' World. A puppet theater, toy area, and seating for parents complement the library's programming and computer learning (complete with a filter so your kids won't learn anything they shouldn't). The library also encourages DIY Kids' Book Discussions, and *I Can Read to a Dog*. Library Card Not Required.

Oak Park Public Library, Main Library (Oak Park IL)

Books are just the start at this near-west suburban library. The kids' area at OPPL includes a TV with video games, a wooden toy boat climbing structure, toddler tree houses, and an art alcove. Kids can even visit the library's resident gerbils.

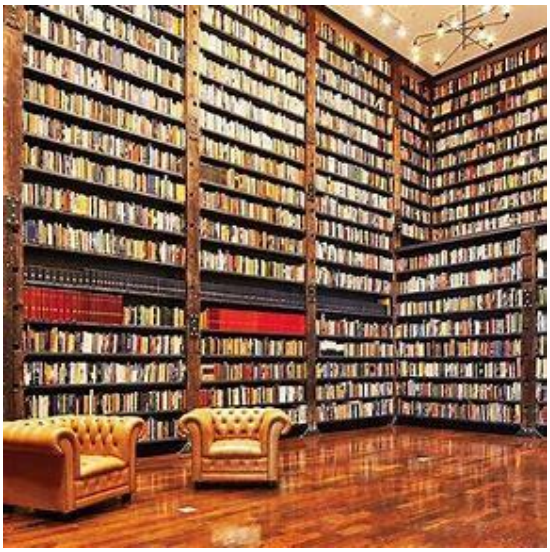
Joliet Public Library (Joliet IL)

JPL was awarded NASA's 2025 Universe of Learning Grant, and welcome the Discover Exoplanets: The Search for Alien World's exhibition. The library will host 700 square feet of interactive display, providing an introduction to the search for life on other planets and tools NASA scientists use to search for exoplanets.

Elmhurst Public Library (Elmhurst)

The recently renovated first floor of the Elmhurst Public Library has tons of amenities for children. Its Learning Garden boasts a play kitchen, train table, puzzle table, and a Duplo Block building table. Older kids can enjoy the Middle School Hangout: it boasts a TV and high-top seating. Kids of all ages can submit stories to Kids Ink magazine to be published and distributed in the library.

Indoor Activities



Stony Island Arts Bank (Hyde Park, Chicago)

They offer a regular schedule of **FREE** live music, DJs, film screenings, exhibitions and events including readings, talks, and performances. Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 12:00-8:00pm for viewing of the current exhibition, When Clouds Roll Away. 6760 S Stony Island Ave

HelloBaby (Hyde Park, Chicago)

This one-of-a-kind **FREE** play space on the South Side is designed for underserved families with babies, toddlers, and preschoolers. Drop in any day of the week between 9 am and 4 pm to play and build community with other local parents and caregivers. Or pick out a story time or music class to enrich your child's learning. hellobabychgo.org

Exploritorium (Skokie, IL)

Part of the Skokie Park District, A great place for youngsters to play, especially when the weather is unpleasant. Children and adults can explore together through lots of interactive stations. Make-believe in the costumed dress-up area, run your fingers through the water play area, make music, climb a wall, play with trains, experience new heights in the two-and-a half-story tubes and tunnels. Non-Resident fee is $7 per child.

Skatium Ice Arena (Skokie, IL)

More from the Skokie Park District. Whether your preference is hockey, figure skating, or recreational skating, the arena has something for everyone. Open for public skating year-round. A full-size rink as well as a smaller rink can be used for private parties or roller hockey during the summer. Public Skate Fee is $7 Skate Rental is an additional $4.

Splash Landings (Glenview, IL)
No matter what the season, there's always plenty of water fun at the Glenview Park District's four-pool indoor aquatic center. Bring the whole family to enjoy the Play Pool, sloping from zero depth to 3 ½ feet with waterslide and interactive water play. Keep fit by swimming laps; soak the stress of the day away in the whirlpool or just relax in the soothing warm water of the therapy pool. $7 for Residents, $12 for non-Residents.

LEGOLAND Discovery Center (Schaumburg IL)
Ultimate field trip! With 12 LEGO play zones. Schools can add-on a 30-45 minute age-appropriate workshop, which incorporates LEGO Education lessons to create a unique curriculum-linked STEAM learning experience in a hands-on environment that increases student engagement. Starting at $8 per Student.

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Acorn Academy	MAIN	708-687-9600	

SAVE THE DATE
THE
GREAT AMERICAN
BIG WHEEL
RACE
JULY 19, 2025
JOLIET MEMORIAL STADIUM

¡CONOZCA SUS DERECHOS!
Si Inmigración o la policía lo detiene:

- ✔ Pase la tarjeta al agente y guarde silencio.
- ✔ La tarjeta explica que usted quiere ejercer su derecho a no contestar preguntas sin consultar con un abogado

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!
If you are detained by immigration or the police:

- ✔ Hand the card to the official, and remain silent.
- ✔ The card explains that you are exercising your right to refuse to answer any questions until you have consulted with a lawyer.

ESTIMADOS SEÑORES:

Deseo ejercer mi derecho a guardar silencio y no contestar preguntas. Si me detienen, solicito comunicarme de inmediato con un abogado. Quisiera ejercer, además, mi derecho a no firmar nada sin consultar con mi abogado.

Gracias.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Please be informed that I am choosing to exercise my right to remain silent and the right to refuse to answer your questions. If I am detained, I request to contact an attorney immediately. I am also exercising my right to refuse to sign anything until I consult with my attorney.

Thank you.

2025 Good Shepherd Activity Guide