

# Activity Page for Kids

## What if your home was on a ship?

Have you visited your parents at their workplace? What if your family lived where they worked? That might happen if your father was the captain of a sailing ship. When sailing ships like *Balclutha* went to sea, sometimes the captain brought his family. Let's think about what life would be like on a sailing ship.

*Balclutha* would be at sea for five months without stopping at land, and away from home for over a year. You might sail around the world! You would spend most of your time on the ship. You would only be allowed in a small part of the ship – the family cabins and the deck above.

Do you think you could play sports or ride a bike while at sea? The ship would always be rolling – while you were sleeping, eating (Hold on to your plate and cup!), or doing anything. Imagine if your house was always rolling around and rocking back and forth? How would your life be different?

*Balclutha* was a working ship and so you had to stay out of the way of your father and the sailors. In nice weather you could go on deck, but in storms you would have to stay below. Do you have brothers or sisters? Are you an only child? What if you had no other kids to play with but your brother or sister, or no other kids at all?

You would still have to go to school. Your parents would be your teachers. Lessons would be the same as today – math, science, history, and more. Seeing the world would be another lesson! Your father might teach you how to find your way using the sun and stars and a sextant. You might learn to help with the signal flags so your ship could send messages

to other ships because there were no cell phones, radios, and no electricity of any kind.

No electricity?! That means no refrigerator! Think about the food in your refrigerator. None of that stuff could come with you on a long ocean voyage. You would eat like a sailor. Salted meat and no fresh bread, only hard-tack, that sometimes had bugs in it. Yuck!

Ships can be very dangerous and it's easy to get hurt. What if you got sick? You couldn't go to the hospital. There were few medicines and some tasted bad! Your parents would be your doctor. Kids were born on ships, too. A baby girl was born on *Balclutha* when the ship was sailing from India to San Francisco, so her parents named her Inda Frances. What if you were named for the place where you were born? Years later Inda Frances returned to the *Balclutha* after it had been restored.

Many people worked together to fix up *Balclutha*. That job continues today and that is why she is not at the park for few months. But she will return ready for kids to explore her again and learn what life was like at sea.

Kids' Page created by Brendan Wilson, Park Guide



This is the kids' room on *Balclutha*. Does it look like a kids' room? Why? Does it look like your room? How is it different? How is it the same? Can you find things that make this room special because it is on a rolling and rocking sailing ship?