BOARDING, THE SAFETY DRILL AND THE SHIP'S HORN



I Am Going on a Cruise

A social story to read before and during the trip

This story is about me: _____

My trip is on: _____

Magic Bean Travel Co.

Written by Bonnie Nofsinger, IBCCES Certified Autism Travel Professional and mom of two kids on the spectrum. Free to print, edit and share with families.

1



Photo idea: Our ship · glue or tape your photo here

I am going on a cruise. A cruise ship is a very big boat with rooms, restaurants and pools.

2



Photo idea: The cruise terminal · glue or tape your photo here

First we go to a big building called the cruise terminal. There are lines and lots of people.

3



Photo idea: The check-in desk · glue or tape your photo here

A worker looks at our papers and takes my picture. Then we walk onto the ship.

4



Photo idea: Our stateroom · glue or tape your photo here

Our room is called a stateroom. It has beds, a bathroom and maybe a window. It will be our room the whole trip.

5



Photo idea: The safety video on the TV or app · glue or tape your photo here

Before the ship leaves, everyone learns how to be safe. We watch a short safety video on a phone or TV.

6



Photo idea: Our assembly station · glue or tape your photo here

Then we walk to a meeting spot called our assembly station. A crew member checks us in. It only takes a few minutes.

7

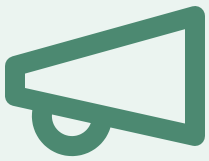


Photo idea: The ship's horn (smokestack), or my headphones · glue or tape your photo here

The ship has a horn. The horn is very loud, and it usually blows when the ship leaves the port. I can cover my ears or wear my headphones. A loud horn is normal on a ship.

8

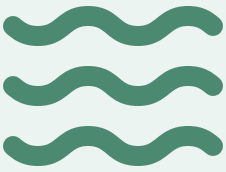


Photo idea: The ocean from the ship · glue or tape your photo here

When the ship moves, the floor might feel a little wiggly. That is okay.

9



Photo idea: The daily schedule in the app or on paper · glue or tape your photo here

Every day there is a schedule. It tells us what happens today.

10



Photo idea: A port we will visit · glue or tape your photo here

Some days the ship stops at a new place. We can get off and explore, or we can stay on the ship.

11

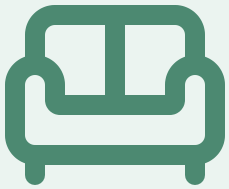


Photo idea: My quiet spot in the stateroom · glue or tape your photo here

I can take a break in our stateroom whenever I need to.

12



Photo idea: Our bags, or our house · glue or tape your photo here

At the end of the cruise, we pack our bags, get off the ship, and go home.

For grown-ups

This story is written in the first person, in a calm, matter-of-fact tone. It names the hard parts honestly and pairs each one with something that helps. Words like “might” and “usually” leave room for real-life changes.

How to use this story

Start one to three weeks before the trip.
Read it daily at first, then less often once your child knows it. Some kids get anxious hearing about a trip too far ahead. You know your child best.

Add real photos.
Glue or tape a photo over each frame. A photo of the real place beats a drawing. The icons are there if you can't get a photo.

Edit freely.
Cross out and write in your own names, ship, hotel and comfort items. A story that matches your real trip works better.

Bring it with you.
Read it again in the moment, like in the security line or while you wait for the parade. That's when it does the most good.

Before you print: cruise notes

- **Sailing Royal Caribbean?** Its free “All Aboard My Cruise” booklets cover Oasis Class and Icon Class ships. Use their booklet for the ship details and this story for your family's own day.
- **The muster drill varies by line.** Royal Caribbean's is self-paced: you review safety information in the app or on the stateroom TV, then check in at your assembly station before the ship departs. Other lines handle this differently. Tell me your ship and I'll tell you what to expect.
- **For you, not your child:** the general emergency alarm on ships is seven or more short blasts followed by one long blast. You won't hear it unless there is a real emergency or a crew drill, but it's good to know before your child does.
- **Ask about accommodations.** Some lines offer expedited check-in, boarding and departure for guests with autism.

Photo checklist

- [ ] 1. Our ship
- [ ] 2. The cruise terminal
- [ ] 3. The check-in desk
- [ ] 4. Our stateroom
- [ ] 5. The safety video on the TV or app
- [ ] 6. Our assembly station
- [ ] 7. The ship's horn (smokestack), or my headphones
- [ ] 8. The ocean from the ship
- [ ] 9. The daily schedule in the app or on paper
- [ ] 10. A port we will visit
- [ ] 11. My quiet spot in the stateroom
- [ ] 12. Our bags, or our house



Want help filling in your real details?

I'm Bonnie Nofsinger, a Rockford mom of two kids on the spectrum and an IBCCES Certified Autism Travel Professional. I help families plan the trip and the accommodations behind the story. Planning is free to you. **Call or text (815) 904-9755** or visit **magicbeantravel.com**.