

EVERYDAY ADVENTURES: EXPLORING GOD'S CREATION ONE STEP AT A TIME

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One day, I decided to go for a hike, inspired by my friends' stories and photos of their outdoor adventures. On that muddy April day, I walked for about an hour, not realizing it was just the beginning of an incredible journey. Forty hikes later, I had covered over 900 km (560 miles) through all kinds of terrain and weather, completing an entire network of trails called **The Bruce Trail**. Along the way, I joined a local hiking club and met wonderful individuals and families who share a love for the outdoors.



I hike because it's fun, but it can also be challenging. Some days, the best thing I take home is a story about the struggles of a tough trail. But I keep going because of the peaceful forests, the crunch of frozen ground in the winter, the breathtaking turquoise waters in the summer, and the colorful, leaf-covered paths in the fall. (Okay, even the muddy puddles in spring can be fun!) Most of all, I love hiking because of the people I meet, fellow hikers who share their laughter, passions, and inspiring stories.

Most people enjoy adventure and would love to have more of it in their lives. According to Alastair Humphreys's book *Microadventures*, adventure "is a state of mind, a spirit of trying something new and leaving your comfort zone. Adventure is about enthusiasm, ambition, open-mindedness, and curiosity." So, how can we bring more adventure into our daily lives and share it with our family and friends?

Here are a few simple, family-friendly microadventures that can make everyday outings feel special. They are inexpensive, easy to do, and offer opportunities to explore God's wonderful creation together.

1. **Neighborhood exploration.** Start by walking around your neighborhood in a 30-minute loop. By "walking" or "hiking," I mean getting outside and moving in whatever way works for you: walking, rolling in a wheelchair, or strolling with a stroller. Make the route slightly different each time to discover new places. Play "I Spy" as you go, or take a photo every five minutes to capture hidden beauty in everyday surroundings. Stop by the local park, school, or fire station, and take a moment to pray for your community.
2. **Walk back home.** Instead of driving, try walking home from church, a friend's house, or a doctor's appointment. Choose a route different from the one you might drive. Notice the fresh buds on the trees, the vibrant fall colors, or the twinkling holiday decorations, depending on the season. Create memories along the way, and perhaps enjoy a small treat when you arrive home.
3. **The "Big Five" safari.** Humphreys suggests looking at familiar places in a new way. Challenge your family to find these:
 - **Mammal:** Spot a deer, chipmunk, or rabbit on a local trail. What other mammals can you find?
 - **Bird:** Look for a hawk, eagle, or bright red cardinal. Listen for a woodpecker's tapping or the cheerful "cheeseburger" call of a black-capped chickadee. Use the Merlin Bird ID app to record bird songs.
 - **Tree:** Take pictures of the tallest trees. In the fall, collect colorful leaves and learn about different native trees.
 - **Insect:** Watch for a butterfly, a ladybug, or a praying mantis in the summer and try to capture a photo.

- **Reptile/Amphibian:** Listen to frogs at a local pond, spot a turtle sunning itself, or carefully observe a little garter snake. Where are the salamanders and newts?

Job 12:7-10 reminds us that if we want to learn about what the Lord has done, we should look to the animals, birds, flowers, and fish. One way to do this is by planning a **Family Adventure Night**, an evening of stargazing, a supper picnic in a new location, or a walk in a nearby park. Take time to reflect on God's creation and enjoy the adventure together!

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