

HELP YOUR FAMILY SEE GOD IN NATURE THIS SPRING

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The last weeks of winter are always one of my favorite times of the year. I can finally get our kids outside again without putting on *every* article of winter clothing they own, and the sidewalks are clear enough to guide a stroller over them. But recently, that's as far as my family's appreciation for the outdoors right around us went.

Last spring, my family began to take notice of the world around us in a new way. Instead of just our human neighbors, we got to know the plants and animals that were living all around us. We learned the bird calls. We noticed which bugs were coming out at what time of year. And we even tried making some tea out of the dandelions that used to go straight in the yard waste pile.

This new appreciation of nature took time and adjustment, but I feel closer to God after spending a season of actually noticing some of the seemingly mundane parts of his creation. I get joy out of seeing the wonder and awe that my young kids express. It helped us realize that everything God made has a purpose, and we could discuss his love for all of his creation—from small weeds to large trees, and even for me and my family.



A Few Tips to Get Started

Psalm 19 tells us that we can learn all that we need to know about God simply by seeing his creation. Here are a few ways that you can learn to truly see what's right before you, even if you don't think you live somewhere that has a lot of nature.

- **Get a few apps on your phone, and then put it away.** I used to use walking time with my kids as an opportunity to catch up on my podcasts or listen to music. Those things can be good, but they were causing me to miss out on the sounds—and even some of the sights—of God's creation that were unfolding around us. That being said, I do still take my phone on walks. One app can identify plants just with a picture of its leaf. Another helps us identify birds simply by their call or by answering some questions about what they look like.
- **Plant a garden.** Even simple gardens can give kids a new appreciation for creation, food, and time spent outdoors. If you're planting flowers or non-edible plants, plant native plants. You'll be amazed at how quickly non-harmful insects or small animals will start to visit too, offering you as a family even more opportunities to observe God's kingdom.
- **Let your child teach you.** Oftentimes, I let my three-year-old lead the way on our walks. He will choose where to go, which things to admire, and how long to spend at each stop. Children are naturally better at stopping to appreciate the small gifts that God gives us each day, so let them lead the way—as long as it's not into the road.

Of course, these ideas aren't the only things you can do. We hope that they're a springboard for you and your family to find creative ways to enjoy the Creator's beautiful creation!

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article [Marveling at God's World](#).

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