

LET'S GO OUTSIDE: DISCOVER GOD'S WORLD AS A FAMILY

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How great it is that we get to be the tour guides, hike leaders, and swimming teachers as our kids discover God's world! The whole world is like God's classroom, and we can help our kids wonder about the natural world.

Watch an eagle soar! Hear a bird sing a new song! Touch a pine cone's bumpy ridges! Feel the cold temperature as you jump into the lake! When we go outside, we see God's work all around us.



“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1).

Go outside. Explore. Look closely. Talk about what you see. Try something new. As a family, consider how you can incorporate some of your regular activities outside.

1. **Meals outside.** On a weekend, try eating breakfast outdoors. Have a backyard cookout. Bring a camping stove to the park or woods and cook egg sandwiches. Sip coffee or juice while you watch the birds. In the evening, eat your dinner on your patio. Try it even in winter! Just bundle up with warm blankets and jackets. These moments make great wintertime memories.
2. **Pitch a tent.** Camping out in the backyard can be a fun family experience. Before you do it, get the whole family involved in the planning. Plan fun things like a movie night on a big screen outside, board games, or a scavenger hunt. Find the tent and practice pitching it with your kids beforehand. Bring sleeping bags, warm blankets, and even air mattresses for extra comfort. Don't forget lanterns, glowsticks, and flashlights, a cooler for snacks and drinks, and camping chairs. If a fire is possible, then try some campfire stories, sing-alongs, and of course, s'mores!
3. **Stargaze.** Find a place away from nighttime light pollution and check out a dark sky filled with stars. Search online for star maps to help find constellations. Read [Amos 5:8](#) together: ***“He who made the Pleiades and Orion and changes deep darkness into morning, who also darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth, the LORD is his name.”***
4. **Learn about local flora and fauna.** Try using an app like **Seek by iNaturalist** to discover what plants and animals live locally. Your family can earn badges for finding birds, amphibians, plants, and fungi. Some hikers use **Merlin Bird ID** to name the birds they hear. You'll start noticing bird songs more and more!

Watch the sunset together and count how many colours you see in the sky. Go for hikes in local parks. Visit a nature center. Ask how your family can help care for nature—maybe by planting trees or cleaning up a trail.

Let's be families that love and enjoy God's creation. God gave us a big, beautiful world! Let's go outside and explore it!

written by Ron VandenBurg