

WALKING with God and the Kids

In today's world of working parents and the internet, being disconnected from our children can be a common experience. Whether that disconnect is a matter of hours, days or weeks, one great solution is to walk together. The following fun walks are sure to help parents or guardians bond with their children. For best results invite God to join you and indulge daily.

THE BACKWARDS WALK

The two walkers face each other. One walks backwards and the other forwards. Keep a light heart and this walk will be one of your most enjoyable. The message to adult and child alike is that we are to walk through life facing the future, not the past. We must release the past, forgive those we need to forgive and then turn around and move forward.

Even a short Backwards Walk can help us turn around and face the future. 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' (Jeremiah 29:11).



BLINDFOLD/LISTENING WALKS

Used safely, a simple blindfold can make a walk a lot more fun. Walking blindfolded helps us to listen and makes us aware of our walking partners. They are walks of trust. There is nothing like these walks to restore a broken or distant relationship and get us back in tune. 'Finally, all of you must live in harmony, be sympathetic, love as brothers and be compassionate and humble' (1 Peter 3:8 *International Standard Version*).

THE BRISK WALK Walking is a great way to get children into the habit of exercise. This can be exaggerated and comic with stiff arms and legs, or a real cardio exercise. A short, brisk walk is sure to use up some of a child's energy and leave them calmer...a sanity saver for weary grown-ups.

THE LOOKING UP WALK There is something about looking up that slows the heart rate and eases the mind. It is the only direction we can look that sets us free of our worries and fears. Never look directly at the sun, but looking at clouds and tree branches can remind parent and child alike of God's greatness. Looking Up Walks can be especially fun at night. Helping children to find God's peace can start with them simply looking up. 'For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens' (Psalm 96:5).



THE BIRDWATCHING WALK This walk is most memorable if you check out a book of birds from the library. Seeing and identifying a different bird every time you walk can make each outing unique. You could even make or buy some inexpensive bird feed as a reminder that God cares for us all. 'Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?' (Matthew 6:26).

RAINY WALKS

I personally carry an umbrella every time I go for a walk, especially in a new neighborhood. Not because I am part British, but for protection. The umbrella protects me from the rain. The lesson to take away from walking in the rain is that children will need their own umbrellas if they are to be safe. No matter how big our umbrella is, it will not be big enough to cover them their whole lives. The umbrella that keeps us truly safe is faith in God, with the spokes of the umbrella being prayer, Bible study, love and fellowship. ‘Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one’ (John 17:11).



PAPER AEROPLANE OR BUBBLE WALKS

The key word for this walk is ‘invisible’. Make a simple paper aeroplane or buy a bottle of bubbles. What holds them up? Children will see quickly that air surrounds us all a first step to understanding that just as the invisible air supports the planes and bubbles, our God surrounds us and supports our spirits. Just as we breathe air, we must fill our souls with God by reading Scripture and praying. ‘The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms (Deut. 33;27)

Walking is a great way for any parent or guardian to introduce children to God’s world and his word. No matter which walk you choose, may it bless you.

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