

Sharing God's World with Our Children

May one or more of these activities help your family break through the artificial barriers... Electronic games, television and busy-ness...that keep you and your children from experiencing the world God meant for us all, a world of harmony and growth, a world of living things, a world of planting and harvesting.

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How long has it been since you and a child/grandchild took a walk together, caught a bug, shared a magnifying glass, got up early to see the sunrise or stayed up late to look at the stars. To those who walk reverently and look carefully God's world offers a multitude of miracles BOTH visible and invisible. In Genesis God describes the perfect relationship with his children as walking with them.

1. **A perfect starting place is a magnifying glass.** It turns even the smallest bit of lawn into a wonder-full jungle of tiny bugs and flowers, little mushrooms and tiny seeds. It turns the human body into bits of hair and pores, wrinkles, big lips and funny looking eyes. There is nothing to help introduce creation so well as a magnifying glass or inexpensive microscope. These are the children who will learn to look closely at God and the world he made for us, the children who will become doctors, pastors, plant breeders, and a few, the curious ones, researchers...**the children who will see** God in the world around him.
2. **For second step try an egg carton museum.** If it fits in an egg carton you can keep it in your room until it starts to smell...things like: rocks, seeds and seed pods, bark from a tree, sea shells, acorns etc.. If it is *alive* you can keep it till dark in a peanut butter jar covered with a bit of nylon stocking and a rubber band. If it is a lightening bug you can keep it until midnight. Having a collection insures that a child will be looking at the world around him, always looking...always *expecting something NEW and wonder-full.*
3. **Another great tradition is flowers for the cook or Painting with flowers.** In parts of Russia it is a custom that those who don't bring a flower for the cook don't eat. This custom encourages children to notice and acknowledge what others do for them. We can't send them out to pick the neighbors flowers but a bit of grass, leaf or twig from a tree allow the child to **give** SOMETHING. A second great activity with flowers is to visit your flower shop on Monday, the day they pitch old flowers. In nearly all cases the shop is willing to donate these old flowers to parents or teachers. Give each child a few petals at a time and show them how to crush the petals between a thumb and forefinger until they are juicy. Then rub the colored

juice on a piece of paper. Painting with flowers helps a child connect God the creator to the world around him. He or she will see colors/flowers and all of creation in a new way. They will look deeper and **the creation will become more personal,**

4. **Walking** is another great tradition, a great model for relating to our children. It helps us view them as fellow travelers and not simply more baggage we tow through life. We hope the following thoughts give you at least a few thoughts for adding variety to your daily walk and making it a joy that bonds parent and child to one another and to our creator.

The number of walks is endless: Backward walks, blindfolded walks, speed walks, camera walks, man on the moon walks...very slow, bird watching walks, magnifying glass walks, walks in the rain, (no matter what kind of walk I always take and umbrella because of dogs. Open the umbrella in front of a dog and he runs away), **star gazing walks**, listening walks where you take twenty steps and close your eyes and listen, sunset walks, sunrise walks, cloud gazing walks, and last of all on Sunday a "Thank you God" for your wonderful world walk.

Without a parents sincere daily effort most children will never know what it is like to be immersed in the world God made for us...a daily dunk where they are free to touch and examine...to enjoy the wonders of the earth, wonders God intends for each of us. Walking just five minutes a day is a perfect first step to knowing God and the world he made...just for us. Walking is also the perfect way to CONNECT and RECONNECT to the children we love.

5. **Tire Garden.** Two key lessons for children are: If you want to pick flowers you have to plant seeds and if you want to harvest God's promises you have to plant faith. Almost any service station will give a child an old tire. Fill it with potting soil (garden soil is cheaper but does not work nearly as well). For a lesson on planting and harvest plant 5 or six cucumber seeds or a tomato plant. To draw butterflies and caterpillars sprinkle your garden with dill seed and maybe a butterfly plant or two (asclepias tuberosa). For instructions on an easy to make butterfly hatchery visit www.bibleparent.com and click on "Creation for Parents". May you plant "Hope" and harvest "Joy". If you don't have room for a tire garden most landlords or even a neighbor would let a child plant a daffodil or tulip bulb...OR...fill a small cup with soil and plant a little piece of garlic. The kids will watch it grown And can add a little to their food. Planting and harvesting is one of God's lifelong lessons...a lesson children will not fully understand if they have never grown anything, especially something they can eat.

Charles White is a retired Christian preschool teacher with a lifelong interest in living things. View other activities for children at www.bibleparent.com and click on "Creation for Parents".