



Get out and Go!

SHARING AND CARING FOR NATURE TOGETHER

Sharing adventures in the natural world can create great family memories and foster respect for the world we live in. Here are some ideas for getting outside with your family, along with tips for serving your community:

Get outside

Quality tent time. Pitch a tent in your backyard and have a camping sleepover with just the family! Or get more adventurous and go for an overnight trip in a nearby park that allows camping. Make it a low- or no-electronics event (leave computers, MP3 players, etc., at home) and fill the time by telling stories, singing songs, and playing (unplugged) games. Or just talk!



Night noise. Go on a night hike in your neighborhood and listen for evidence of nighttime



creatures. How many different kinds of insect sounds can you hear? Can you hear creatures skittering beneath the brush and leaves?

Go fly a kite! As long as you're at it, why not fly two kites?

A day in the park. Set aside one day a month to explore a new natural area with your family or to share a new experience in an area you're already familiar with. For example, one month you could have a picnic in a park. The next month you could have a picnic in another park, or explore hiking or biking trails that you've never been on before.

Around Town

"In this spot..." Locate any historical markers in your community and read them with your kids. Talk about what life might have been like for kids living in the time highlighted by the marker. Also talk about differences in the environment. Have the natural surroundings changed much since the time mentioned in the marker? How might the local environment continue to change in the next 50 to 100 years?



pennies for the planet!

Get Out and Go!

Zoo clues. Go on a scavenger hunt at the zoo! In advance, make a list of animal-related items that your kids can try to find. Provide paper, pencils, and clipboards so your kids can write down the answers.

Let it go. Have each member of the family (including adults) identify at least three items that he or she would be willing to donate to charity. These shouldn't be throwaway items, but good quality things that someone else could use, such as clothes, toys, or electronics. (Perhaps at least one of the items could be something that the owner is tempted to keep but is able to part with for the sake of another in need.) Then locate one or more charitable organizations in your community that will take these items on behalf of people who are homeless or struggling economically.

Hands On

Volunteer. Go to togethergreen.org and find out about volunteer days. Sign up for one.

Go native. Help your kids choose and plant several kinds of native flowering plants in your yard. When they're in bloom, have your kids make a chart showing how many kinds of insects visit



the different plants. (This could be as simple or elaborate as you want—for example, “3 kinds of big butterflies, 2 kinds of little bees” versus a listing of specific species.) Do some insects prefer certain plants? Do some plants attract more insects than others? A native plant society based in your state or region can help you choose plants that are appropriate for your yard.

Trash busters. Organize a neighborhood cleanup and invite other families to join you and your kids as you pick up trash in your community.

Weed whackers. Learn about nonnative invasive plants in your area and join a group that removes invasive plants from local parks or other natural places. Commit to helping these groups on a regular basis.

Print