

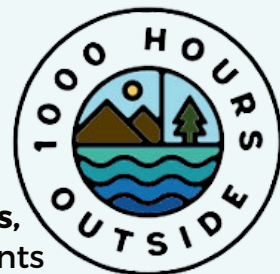
Be Smart

Reignite your faith and
strengthen your family bond

MAY 2024

1000 HOURS OUTSIDE

The brainchild of a Michigan mom named Ginny Yurich, **1000 Hours Outside** is a global platform for those who wish to reclaim childhood, reconnect with their family, and live a fuller life. **The premise of 1000 Hours Outside is simple and straightforward: if your kids can spend four hours a day in front of screens, they can spend a roughly equal amount of time outside.** Yes, even if both parents work and even if you live in a place with hot, humid summers. 1000 Hours Outside helps your family to create a simple plan to get your family outside more often. In an interview, Ginny explained that, "It's not really about the number, it's about the intention. **The average kid is getting an average of 4-7 minutes a day of unstructured outdoor time, so whatever you do, you can be proud of.**"



The **1000 Hours Outside** website provides resources, trackers, podcast episodes, and more to help families reconnect with the great outdoors! www.1000hoursoutside.com

BEHOLD GOD'S CREATIONS

God's creation is filled with marvels that have long captivated humanity, as King David expressed in Psalm 8. This fascination persists today, as demonstrated by the numerous families who traveled to witness the total solar eclipse across the United States on April 8th. According to St. Bonaventure in *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, creation acts as a mirror reflecting the Trinity, encouraging us to delve deeper into why certain aspects of nature delight us.

Consider children marveling at a nest of chirping baby birds; such moments, reflective of God's joy in His creations, help them understand God's care as emphasized by Jesus in Matthew 10:29. Similarly, Luke 12:27 highlights God's effortless creation of beauty, offering opportunities to discuss how outdoor experiences and creative expressions can mirror God's joy in our happiness. These reflections can deepen children's spiritual appreciation and understanding of the natural world, aligning their enjoyment with God's divine intentions.

Encouraging your children to reflect on times they've created something special for others can lead to deeper insights about how our enjoyment of the world aligns with God's intentions. This perspective can significantly enrich their spiritual understanding and appreciation of the natural world.



"When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars that you set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him and a son of man that you care for him?"
Psalm 8: 4-5

NOURISHING THE SOUL

It's easy to get swept up in the allure of instant gratification, losing sight of the world that God created for us. Research underscores the benefits of spending time in nature. In addition, our smartphones often distract us from our families and even from God.

To counter this, here are some practical methods for you and your family to enjoy the outdoors, while simultaneously enriching your prayer life and deepening your relationship with God.

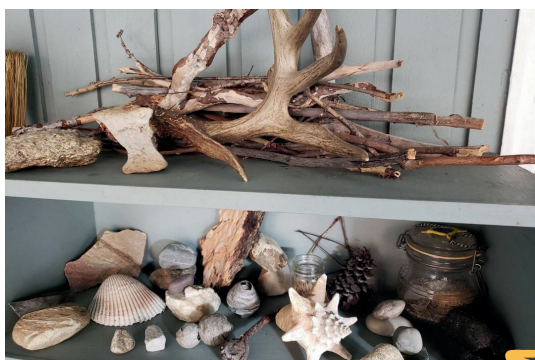
- 1. Set up a prayer space.** Find a place either inside or outside that you would enjoy praying in regularly. This space can simply be a chair at your kitchen table, the sofa near a window or even your front doorstep! Keep it simple, comfortable, and with a view of nature. You can switch it up if you are not feeling drawn to that space after trying it for several days.
- 2. Set up time to pray.** Our family obligations can fluctuate from week to week so it is good to look at the week and intentionally set some time to spend with God. Be realistic with the time allocated to prayer. There is no shame in starting small and adding more time later.
- 3. Make it a family event.** The family is the first place where children encounter God. It will take some effort, but coordinate schedules to make it a family outing or strive to collectively pray before each family meal in a way that allows each family member to participate.
- 4. Turn off the phone.** God will not send you a notification, but your apps will. Turn off the phone or any devices that may take away your focus from prayer.
- 5. Allow nature to fill you with awe.** Prayer can simply be a glance of the heart towards Heaven. If you find yourself struggling with distractions, let God's creation fill you with wonder and awe, and then give thanks for God for it.

CONSCIOUSLY ROOTED

Life often whirls by in a flurry of activities—school, sports, homework, and family time—leaving us feeling as though there aren't enough hours in the day to find those moments of rest and restoration. Spending time in nature can be a source of peace and rejuvenation amidst our bustling schedules.

A paper published in the journal, Scientific Reports, found that **Spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated with good health and wellbeing.** This works out to be just under 20 minutes per day. Whether you find time in the week to go on a couple of one-hour walks as a family, or break up the 120 minutes into smaller blocks of time, being intentional with planning ways to engage with nature will help you achieve this more easily.

If venturing outdoors into nature proves difficult, consider exploring strategies to invite nature into your indoor spaces! Take Them Outside provides a variety of indoor nature activities to encourage your child to engage more with the natural world.



Sprouting seeds
Indoor nature shelf

