

## Walking and Talking With Your Child

Parents recognize the importance of creating opportunities for learning and training their children. While schools help educate children, there is no substitute for the personal one-on-one sharing that takes place between a parent and a child. Taking a leisurely walk together provides one great way to enjoy talking and listening to one another.

Walking together provides an escape from the busyness and stress of household activities for a few minutes of relaxation. Most days are structured to meet the necessary demands of your job, car pools, meal preparation, laundry and all the required activity of life. Stepping out to enjoy God's creation with your child interrupts this routine and refreshes you mentally and physically.

### The Treasure of Time

A child of any age treasures having a parent's undivided attention. Having you alone to himself assures your child of his importance to you. Walking provides an opportunity for this one-on-one attentiveness. This becomes a time for listening to your child, uninterrupted by the phone, his siblings or the television. A special bonding occurs as the two of you discuss important and more ordinary, everyday-type things. An adult regularly schedules time to discuss significant or crucial matters in life. Why not designate a time when even the seemingly frivolous or trivial becomes valuable, because it is shared between the two of you?

### God's Creation

A leisurely walk is an opportunity for teaching and learning about all God has created. You can more readily view and appreciate the details of God's creation on foot and up close than from a seat behind a glass window in a car, bus or train. As you and your child walk along pathways, remind her of God's wondrous creativity. Ask her about the beauty, colors, textures and sounds she sees, hears and touches.

“Look at the bright pink color God painted that rose! How does that rose petal feel when you touch it? Do you love its beautiful soft smell? ... God gave different songs to the tiny sparrow and the loud blue jay, didn't He? ... Can you see the acorns God has growing on the oak tree? ... Did you know God made pinecones for a similar purpose?”

It will not be long before your child will be eagerly pointing out and naming the flowers and trees and birds that together you have talked about on your walks. “Look, Mom, yesterday's red tulip is still there!” You will have great joy seeing her delight and sharing the fresh excitement of God's creation with your child.

### Learning for Life

Walks can initiate a curiosity about specific details of God's creation that may become lifelong interests. Small children enjoy choosing items along the way to create their own “nature bracelet” (a piece of tape wrapped sticky side out around their wrist). Together, you can learn the names of spring wildflowers, sometimes picking them to press and keep in a scrapbook or to enjoy as a bouquet on the dinner table. Many a child, introduced to the variety of rock formations, has gone on to become an avid collector. Catching snowflakes on the mitten or studying the patterns of ice formations on a frosty puddle can stimulate an interest in the uniqueness of “scientific” wonders. Whether picking flowers, collecting rocks, gathering autumn leaves or catching snowflakes, the time shared concentrating together on God's creation will become a special life-long memory.

### Start Now

Evaluate the benefits to be gained by setting aside time for leisurely walks with your child. With a 2-year-old, you may only go to the corner and back as he stops many times to examine a “treasure.” Walking with your teenager provides rich opportunities for listening and growing in understanding and appreciation for one another. It is an activity that costs no money – only time – but provides relaxation and valuable bonding. Interactive walks enrich the relationship with your child while creating a pattern for lifelong opportunities for communication.

You and your child will grow in love, trust and devotion to one another as you regularly spend time walking and talking together in God's world. Your child will learn from you to love the Creator and to marvel at His creation. As you teach your child truths about Jesus within everyday conversations and situations, he will learn what it means to walk in His ways.