



Faithful Families Walking Challenge: Taking Steps to Reconnect

Welcome to week one! As we begin to imagine life beyond the pandemic, we want to focus on rebuilding connection. A great place to start is reconnecting with self! Take some time this week for self-care. How can you make walking an act of self-compassion? What practices best help you to achieve a sense of well-being? How can reconnecting with yourself help you re-engage with your community?

"The mind can go in a thousand directions, but on this beautiful path, I walk in peace. With each step, the wind blows. With each step, a flower blooms."

– Thich Nhat Hanh

Get inspired!

Check out success stories from the 2020 Faithful Families Walking Challenge on the **FF blog** or check out these inspiring **walking stories** from America Walks.

What is inspiring you this week? Let us know on social media **Twitter** and **Facebook**.



Connection Points

Remember that each connection counts as three points (or 30 minutes of walking!). Try these this week:

- Take pictures of the things you notice on your walk or jot down notes about your walking experiences.
- Download and use a new app for tracking your steps and distance.
- Find and listen to a new song that motivates you while you walk.
- Find an accountability partner and make a plan for encouraging one another.

Reconnect with Self

Here are some ideas for incorporating self-care into your walking practice and tips for making walking part of your daily routine.

Make a Plan

- Create a walking route that feels particularly peaceful or that includes spaces that have special meaning for you. It could be your faith community parking lot, a tour of landmarks around town or even just your neighborhood!
- Schedule time for walks as you plan your week to make it a priority. You can take a walk during your work breaks or at lunch or walk in 10 minute increments throughout the day!
- Take care of your body by making sure you wear comfortable clothes and shoes, drink plenty of water, and bring along any safety items you might need like a flashlight or reflective clothing. Take time to stretch before and after your walk!

Practice Mindfulness

- Think about what you need each day. If you need more quiet and calm, unplug and walk in silence. If you find you need a guide for your thoughts or motivation, listen to inspirational music, or a guided meditation, devotion, or podcast as you walk.
- Set an intention for your walk by finding and meditating on an inspirational quote, poem, song, scripture passage or even just a meaningful word. You might choose to write it down and carry it with you or recite it to yourself or out loud as you walk.
- As you walk take time to notice your surroundings and the things for which you are thankful. Use the rhythm of your steps to shape statements of gratitude – speaking them out loud or to yourself. Bring along a small journal or notepad to record your thoughts.
- While you walk, give 2 minutes of focus to each of your senses. Just notice without analyzing or assigning meaning. What do you see? Hear? Taste? Smell? Physically feel? If a guided practice is helpful, google the 5-4-3-2-1 technique.

Celebrate Successes

- Commit to texting a family member, friend or member of your faith community to celebrate your successes or remind each other to walk. If it is helpful to have a partner, invite them to join you or walk and talk with them on the phone!
- Download a free phone application to track your steps and distance and/or bring a watch or cell phone to keep track of time.
- Share your successes with your team and/or with Faithful Families! Submit a success story or tag us with your celebrations on social media.