



Faithful Families Walking Challenge: Taking Steps to Reconnect

Welcome to week two! This week we will focus on reconnecting with nature and getting outdoors to walk. Connecting with nature and walking outdoors can help to improve your mental health and overall well-being.

"In nature, nothing is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways and they're still beautiful."
— Alice Walker

Consider the weather

- Wear weather-appropriate clothing. For warmer days, don't forget to wear sunscreen on skin exposed to the sun. Wear sunglasses or a hat and dress in light-colored clothing.
- For colder weather, wear a middle layer to insulate the heat. Microfiber fleece or wool are also good choices for warmth. Jackets with hoods will keep you dry on drizzly days, and don't forget your hat and scarf to retain the heat around your head and neck. You may also need mittens or gloves to keep your hands and fingers warm.

Reconnect with Nature

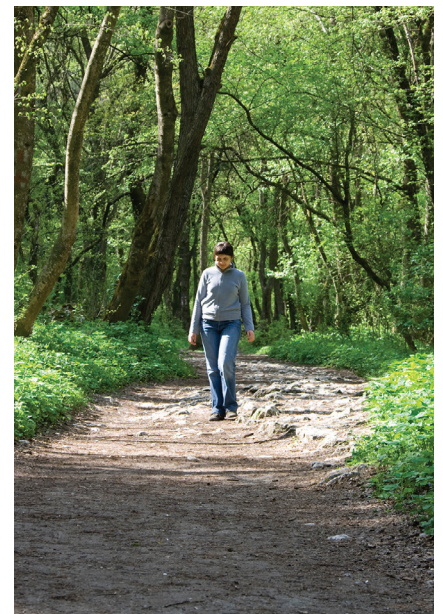
Now that you are taking time to walk and reconnect, try spending some time outdoors and explore different places to be physically active. Here are some tips for walking in new or familiar places in nature.

Enjoy the Natural Beauty of the Outdoors

Parks, greenways, and trails are excellent places for walking. These places are usually free, accessible, and provide a place to walk outdoors. Be sure to check state and local guidelines about whether these places are open.

Use Public Community Facilities

Walking tracks at a school are great places to walk. There is no need to cross streets or wait for traffic lights. Check out your local schools and see if there are walking tracks open and available for public use. Your faith community is a great place to walk as well. Consider walking outside in the parking lot.



Reduce Stress by Walking Outdoors

Research has shown that walking outdoors helps to relieve stress and manage anxiety. Consider joining an outdoor walking group, checking out nature walks offered by your local arboretum, parks and recreation, or other nature organization, or plan a day-trip to a local hiking destination. Even a few minutes outdoors can lift your mood and help you de-stress.

Find an Outdoor Hobby or Learn Something New

The COVID-19 pandemic has helped many of us to reconnect with the outdoors in new ways. Some have taken up hobbies like bird watching or nature photography. Consider asking a friend or your child/grandchild to join you in trying out a new nature hobby. Museums, parks and recreation organizations, and organizations like the Audubon Society have wonderful free resources to help you try out a new nature hobby that you can enjoy alone—or together!

Visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for guidelines on how to stay safe and healthy while walking in public spaces.

FAITHFUL FAMILIES Thriving Communities



Connection Points

Visit a new trail or take a hike in a natural spot near you.

- Take a picture of your nature walk and post in our walking challenge group or using the #WalkwithFF2021
- Take a kid, or an older adult, on a walk. Visit a natural area with someone outside of your age bracket. Share what you see and notice.