

ROSWELL KIDS

Get Outside



outdoor family devotions
vol. 2

Get Outside

Spring is here! It is the time of year when we typically experience a new energy as the birds begin to sing, the flowers bloom, and the trees bud. I am always reminded of the words from the hymn “For the Beauty of the Earth.” The opening lines are:

“For the beauty of the earth
For the beauty of the skies
For the Love which from our birth
Over and around us lies.”

It then goes on to sing of the beauty of the hills and valleys, the trees and flowers, the sun, moon, and stars. It is a beautiful hymn of praise that reminds us that God is Lord of creation and Lord of our lives. Christ is always with us.

Yet, this spring is also different. We are living in times unlike ones we have ever known. Many of us are learning to homeschool our children. We are spending almost all of our time together as families, and we are trying to shelter our children from a broken world and allow them to still be children. We’re spending more time on screens than ever before doing school, extra activities, video chat and work.

It is in that spirit that we offer these devotions to you and subsequent volumes. They are designed to help your family connect and center on God and faith through scripture, conversation, nature, and fun. Each day you will find a scripture reading, a reflection, and several ways to respond. We hope they will help your families experience God’s love and presence as well as encourage you to get outside and enjoy spring!

Peace and Blessings,
Rev. Melissa Kime-Hall
RUMC Associate Pastor
Children and Families

**written & designed with love from
your RK staff**

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the children’s ministry at Roswell United
Methodist Church

Creation Care

“God saw everything he had made; it was supremely good.”

Genesis 1:31, CEB

Read: Genesis 1

Reflect: Genesis chapter 1 walks us through one story of creation in the Bible. (If you have older kids, and want to dive in deep, read Genesis chapter 2 and compare.)

Read verses 29 – 30 again.

“Then God said, “I now give you all the plants on the earth that yield seeds and all the trees whose fruit produces its seeds within it. These will be your food. To all wilderness, to all the birds in the sky, and to everything crawling on the ground—to everything that breathes—I give you all the green grasses for food. And that’s what happened.”

Know who the “you” is in that verse? It’s us – all the humans of the world. God trusts us to take care of all the things God created. I don’t know about you, but I feel pretty honored that God trusts me enough to take care of the plants and animals that God loves. Have your parents ever trusted you with something special? Something that means a lot to them? And they let you take care of it?

Think about this exciting opportunity God has given us to care for creation. With spring in full bloom, there are new plants, new colors, and new things popping up each day. My prayer for you is that you don’t miss it. Pay attention to all the new things you see in the coming weeks. Look for ways to care for and honor God’s creation. Hasn’t rained in a few days? Ask your parents if you can water the plants. Notice a lot of birds outside? Make a bird feeder to help them eat. And repeat this prayer as often as you need.

“Dear God, open my eyes so that I see all the beautiful new life around me. Show me ways I can help care for all of creation during this time. Amen.”

Respond: Go outside and look around. Are there things in your yard that need to be cared for right now? Maybe there are some weeds in the flower beds. Or you see some bird looking for some food. Identify one thing you can do in your yard to help take care of creation.

Take it further by making a list of outdoor things you can continually do to take care of your yard, your neighborhood, your city, and of God's creation (in general).

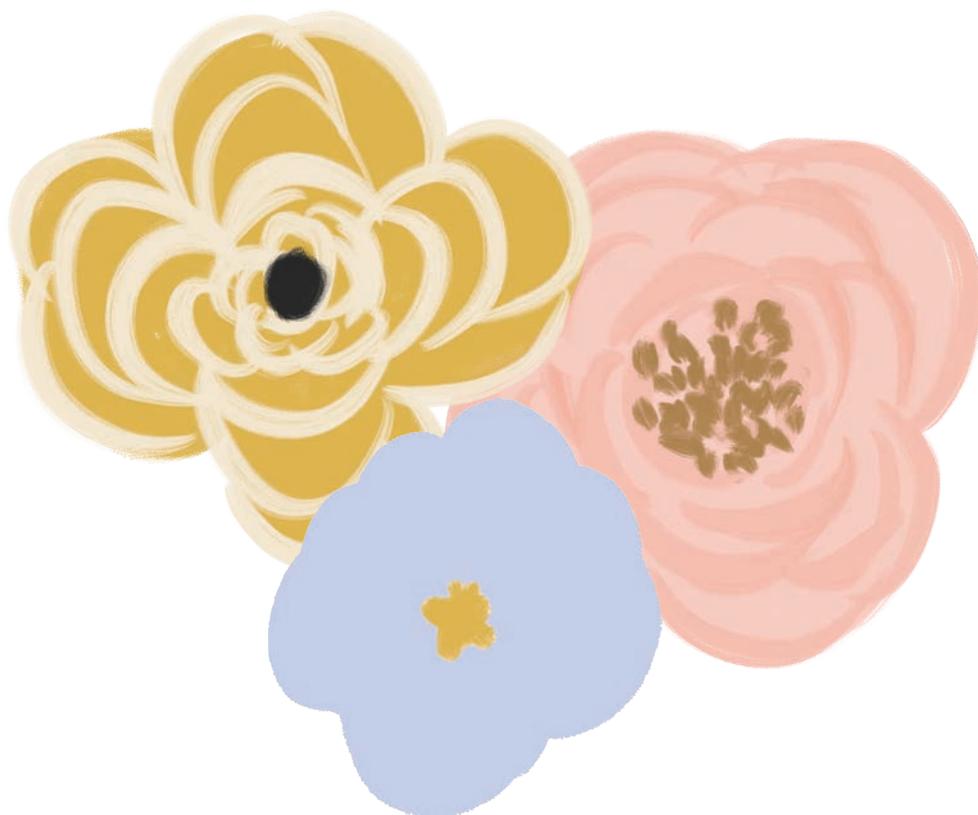
Take it further with fun: Explore your yard or go on a walk. Count the objects and colors you see while exploring. When you are done, you could make a bar graph of colors or types of flowers or animals you saw.

Collect items from your walk to make an art project. God showed off God's creativity when the world was created. Encourage your child to show off theirs with God's creations.

Indoor Option: Look out the window and discuss different things you see. Go throughout the house to different windows to do the same. Note what changes and what stays the same.

Draw a picture of your favorite things you saw from the windows.

Meghan Walter



Perspective

“Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house because he too is a son of Abraham. The Son of Man came to seek out and save the lost.’”

Luke 19:9-10, NRSV

Read: Luke 19:1-10

Reflect: I am not very tall. This has been the case most of my life. For as long as I can remember, I needed an extra boost to see over people’s heads, needed to sit in the front row to see a stage or a screen, or needed to stand on a chair or ladder to get things beyond my 5’ 3” reach. For me, this has sometimes been frustrating. On the other hand, it has also allowed me to see things that others may not be able to see.

I learned this early in life when I played outside. You see, one of my favorite activities was climbing trees! I climbed small ones and big ones. I especially liked to find ones that had places in their branches for me to sit and watch the world below me. One of my favorite trees was in my front yard. It had lots of branches so it was easy to climb and about halfway up there was a big branch where I could sit and watch many of the yards near my house. It is here that I learned about a family of birds living in my neighbor’s hedge and about the squirrels that used my house’s roof as a launching pad to the backyard trees. It is also from here that I learned to see my dad’s truck coming home from work before it even came up our hill. As I have grown, I realized that sitting in this tree taught me that when I see things from a new perspective, I can learn things I might not know otherwise.



Zacchaeus, I think, understood how seeing things from a new perspective can make a difference in how we understand them. On the day that Jesus was passing through Jericho, Zacchaeus ran with all his might to a tree so he could climb it and see Jesus. Like me, he was short and seeing over the crowd was impossible. Yet, he wanted “to see who Jesus was.” We don’t know why he wanted to see Jesus, maybe he had heard stories about him healing or eating with people others ignored. Maybe he heard that another tax collector had become one of Jesus’ followers. We don’t know, but what we can know is that he believed that seeing Jesus was important. I think he knew amazing things happened with Jesus. When Jesus came to the tree, he looked up, and invited Zacchaeus to come down and eat with him. Jesus wanted to share a meal with him and that changed everything for Zacchaeus. He no longer wanted to take money but to give it back to people. He did not want to be unfair with people but to treat everyone fairly. Seeing Jesus and experiencing His grace from a new perspective transformed his perspective on everything. Zacchaeus responded to Jesus’ invitation and began to live according to His ways.

How can does your family respond to Jesus’ invitation to follow Him each day?

How have you recently seen your neighborhood, community, or world in a new way?

Respond: Get a blanket and lay it on the ground. Stretch out on it and look at the ground. What do you see there? Bugs? Grass? Worms? Caterpillars? This is a whole piece of creation that we miss when we are walking around on the grass. Now, go find a high place (a hill, a rock, a tree) and look at the world from this new height. What do you see that you might miss when you are on lower ground? Talk with your family about how changing our perspective can shape the way we see the world and people. Pray that you will have eyes to see the world from God’s perspective each day.



Take it further with fun: Play a game of “I spy” in your yard or as you walk through your neighborhood. Look for different colors and shapes. Try to see smaller details, like the shape of a window shutter or the color of a flower on a bush. Try to see the world in a different way. Talk with your family about how seeing things differently can help us love people better and serve God in new and different ways.

Indoor option: Go find a high place (an upstairs window, the top of the stairs) and look at the world from this new height. What do you see that you might miss when you are on lower ground? Talk with your family about how changing our perspective can shape the way we see the world and people. Pray that you will have eyes to see the world from God’s perspective each day.

Then, play a game of “I spy” in your house or while looking outside of the window. Look for different colors and shapes. Try to see smaller details, like the shape of a window or the color of a vase. Try to see the world in a different way. Talk with your family about how seeing things differently can help us love people better and serve God in new and different ways.

Rev. Melissa Kime-Hall



Soaring

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

Isaiah 40:31, NIV

Read: Isaiah 40:28-31

Reflect: Have you ever watched a bird fly? They are amazing! Sometimes they have to work hard, flapping their wings over and over in order to fly, but when they are able to catch the wind just right, they can relax and SOAR!

There are warm air currents that form in the sky called thermals that rise up from the ground that create a lifting action to the birds wings. The birds take advantage of this and are able to glide on top of the currents and maintain their height without having to flap their wings. We call that “soaring”.

Birds are also able to soar by climbing upward and then gliding downward which creates enough speed that they can glide upward again without having to flap their wings. It’s kinda like what happens when you ride a roller coaster. You climb the first high hill but the energy that you gain using gravity to go down is enough to push you up the next hill.

God made the birds with the amazing ability to fly and God gave them the wisdom to use the wind to help them soar.

We can also learn about wind currents when we fly a kite. Just like eagles use the wind currents to easily soar through the air, we can use the wind currents to make our kites soar. On a breezy day, our kites will rise easily into the air and stay there with very little work on our part.



But if we try to fly a kite on a day there isn't any breeze, we will have to work really hard to get the kite off the ground and it won't stay in the air unless we are running with it and our strength to keep it up will soon give out. If we want our kites to soar, we have to wait and hope for the wind to come. And when the breeze does come, our kites are able to soar effortlessly in the sky.

Our Bible verse is teaching us to learn about God by watching the birds. Just like the wind helps the birds to soar and helps us fly our kite; we can wait and trust that God is with us and will help us.

Sometimes we may feel like things are too hard for us and we may grow tired and weary. But like our verse tells us: If we "hope in the Lord", our strength will be renewed and we will be able to "soar on wings like eagles". Once you have seen an eagle soaring on it's wings, you will understand what God's strength can do for us. God will give us the strength to overcome even the most difficult times.

Just like we many have to wait for the wind to come to fly a kite or a bird may have to wait for the right wind conditions to soar, we have to be patient and know that God will give us what we need at the right time. God's timing is perfect and with God's strength we will run and not grow weary and walk and not faint.

Respond: Our creator God is amazing, God does not grow tired or weary like we do and we can know that God is with us and will help us no matter what we are going through.

Spend a few minutes praying together and thanking God for giving us strength.

Let's Go Fly a Kite!

Using the instructions from the NASA website, make and decorate simple sled kite and follow instructions to learn about how kites fly.

https://www.nasa.gov/pdf/205712main_Sled_Kite.pdf

For a more difficult version kites to make, you can use instructions at:

<https://www.my-best-kite.com/support-files/mbk-simplest-dowel-kites.pdf>

Indoor option: As a family you can watch eagles soaring! Here are a couple of amazing videos you can watch:

<https://youtu.be/azQJKhN1yNs>

<https://youtu.be/1S96gocyo0I>

Bev Bearden



God in the Bush

“The LORD’s messenger appeared to him in a flame of fire in the middle of a bush. Moses saw that the bush was in flames, but it didn’t burn up. Then Moses said to himself, Let me check out this amazing sight and find out why the bush isn’t burning up.”

Exodus 3:2-3, CEB

Read: Exodus 3:1-12

Reflect: The story of the burning bush is one that has always fascinated me. Can you imagine watching something burn without being destroyed? Fire is something that is really interesting to a lot of us but it’s also something that can hurt us terribly. But in this case, God appears to Moses in the form of a burning bush that, as the Bible says, didn’t burn up (Exodus 3:2). All that means is that the bush was fine even though it was on fire. It didn’t destroy the bush, it continued to grow after this conversation between God and Moses.

God used that burning bush to show Moses that no matter how impossible, difficult, or hurtful something may seem, and no matter how bad, worried or discouraged it may make us feel, God can overcome it and make it work for us as something amazing! The task that God had given Moses was to deliver the Jews out of Egypt. Moses doubted he could do it because Pharaoh was not going to make it easy. But God promised Moses that he would be protected and helped in order to make it possible. Appearing to Moses in the form of a burning bush that didn’t burn up was meant to remind Moses how amazing God is and how God isn’t stopped by the things of this world. It was meant to remind Moses of how capable God is.

Doing something new or making a change of any kind can be scary. Sometimes, the unknown can be the scariest thing of all! God was telling Moses – get going, because I have it covered! Fire didn’t stop God and neither would Moses’ fears about his own abilities. God had a plan for the people of Israel then and there is a plan for your own life now. Be fearless and know that God knows what God is doing!



Respond: Gather up some flashlights and/or lanterns from your house. Then, go on a family walk either at dusk or after it has gotten dark outside. Shine your lights into bushes, woods, puddles, etc. Then, describe what you see. Do you maybe see animals out that you don't see in the daytime? I know the bunnies like to come out at night in my neighborhood. Do the bushes look different? Do you see some flowers that maybe close at night? Listen for different sounds – crickets, tree frogs, etc. How do these things remind you that God is always present with us and showing us new things in life? Thank God for never leaving us and helping us to experience creation in new and different ways. Pray that we will pay attention to what God is showing us each day.

Take it further with fun: Sing the song “This Little Light of Mine” while playing outside. Try singing it in different voices – silly ones, deep ones, high ones, etc. Then, try singing it at different volume levels – loud, super loud, quiet, etc. Talk about how just as Moses saw God's light in the bush, we have the light of Christ living in us and want to live our lives in ways that help others see God's love for them.

Indoor option: Gather up some flashlights and/or lanterns from your house. Then, once it is almost dark or completely dark outside, turn off the lights in a room of your house. Take turns shining your lights around the room. Describe what you see. Do things look different in the dark with only a little bit of light shining on them? Do you see things in the room that you usually miss? Do you hear different sounds – crickets, tree frogs, etc. How do these things remind you that God is always present with us and showing us new things in life? Thank God for never leaving us and helping us to experience creation in new and different ways. Pray that we will pay attention to what God is showing us each day.

Sing the song “This Little Light of Mine”. Try singing it in different voices – silly ones, deep ones, high ones, etc. Then, try singing it at different volume levels – loud, super loud, quiet, etc. Talk about how just as Moses saw God's light in the bush, we have the light of Christ living in us and want to live our lives in ways that help others see God's love for them.

Esther Collins

Building Up

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Ephesians 4:29, NIV

Read: Ephesians 4:29-32

Reflect: Have you had someone tell you something nice? How did it make you feel? What is the nicest thing someone has said to you?

How did you feel when someone said something mean? It hurt, didn't it? It not only hurts your feelings, but also hurts your relationship with that person.

Sometimes, when we get frustrated or mad, we say things we don't mean that hurt others. Our words have power! They have the power to build someone up and make them feel good and grow or they have the power to tear someone down and make them feel bad.

We have to remember to use the Stoplight method we learned about in February when we talked about emotions.

Stop- don't react right away!

Think - about what you are feeling!

Act - in a way that honors God!

We honor God when we act in a way that builds others up and shares God's love, forgiveness, and grace.

As we spend some extra time with our family in small spaces, let's remember to use the Stoplight method so we can honor God by the way we love others and build others up.

Respond: As you have extra time with your family now, think about the words you use with them. Are they words that fill their bucket and make them feel good or help build them up? When you get frustrated and tired, do you use kind and respectful words or do you sometimes use mean words? If you get frustrated, remember to use kind words and not words that tear someone down. Encourage one another! Remember that we are all in this together. Take time now to go around in a circle and say one kind thing about each family member.

Take it further with fun: Go outside and role play. Act out how you might use kind words to build each other up and not use mean words. You can make props out of sticks, leaves, rocks, etc. if needed. You can use the following scenarios or make up some on your own.

- Your brother lost his soccer game and he's really disappointed.
- Your friend got a 100 on a test. You didn't do so well on your test even though you studied really hard.
- Your older neighbor is really lonely since her family can't visit her.
- Your mom made you a really good dinner. It was so delicious!
- Your friend is sad and worried because she has to move to another school.
- Your dad got a promotion at work and he's really excited!
- Your sister broke your favorite toy.
- Your friend is a little worried about getting sick.
- Your sister learned how to ride a bike while you had some extra time at home!

Indoor option: Find a pack of sticky notes (or paper and tape) and write notes that encourage each other and post them around the house. You could do this activity all at once or leave the notes out so people can do them as needed or as you see something that could be highlighted.

Lorin Tate

