

Blessings of Connection and Love between Children and Nature

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We have been outside for over five hours. Our feet are dirty and our pockets are heavy with treasures. All day, we have been out exploring the pathways and woods in this wondrous place we live. Along the way we have seen turtles, frog eggs, a butterfly, an egret, the great blue heron fishing, a hawk perched above us on a limb, crayfish, and dozens of types of flowers and plants. With tired bodies and full hearts, we climb the last hill into our backyard. Connecting with the local plants, animals, and geography gives the children a reference point for everything else they encounter in the world. A reference of where we fit into this vast universe.

Watching the same world change from season to season embeds a concrete understanding of the passage of time in our bodies and our minds. The universal rhythm of life, within ourselves and our families, within the trees and streams, is reflected back and forth. The little sapling grows in the shadow of the giant oak. Each ecosystem connecting to the next, even those within us.



Prepared to be outside in all sorts of weather comfortably, we are ensured that we will go out and enjoy ourselves. Being outside at the park in the sun is lovely but having everything we need we also go out in the rain (and see worms and the effects of erosion) or in the winter (to see the ice crystals on plants and feel frozen earth beneath our feet). We watch the sky and the landscape change colors season to season. Maybe we discuss what we see, maybe not. These observations are absorbed in our minds and hearts, becoming a truth we own.

Parent to child, sibling to sibling; our minds and bodies washed in the calm that comes from nature. Calm that opens the heart. It is hard to feel aggravation while the sound of the creek bubbles up to you. It is easier to invite your sister to join you in dragging that enormous log, then playing in your room. The children naturally want to share their finds. Imaginations blossom together or apart-because there is plenty of space for everyone.

When we pause in our exploration to gather for a meal, we share a blessing created to help strengthen the roots of gratitude that nourish our connection to and love of the natural world:

*Earth, Water and Sky,
We are nurtured day and night,
Our food is grown with love and care,
That each of us may have our share,
Blessed we are to sit in peace,
And enjoy this daily feast.*

Love is both the beginning and end of each connection; fostering nature's work and resulting from each reaction. In constant acceptance and reflection of nature's truth, there is love.

Images:

