



10-Minute Quests for Kids/Teens & Adults
To Do Together



TODAY YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS

Welcome to the Family Nature Challenge!
Are you ready to:

- get active outside?
- create memories?
- learn to think like a naturalist and scientist?

Print the activity tracker on the next page
to keep track of your experiences!

THE 7 QUESTS

Find Your Spot
Search for Mysteries
Make a Messy Sketch
Tune In to Nature's Radio
Tell a Story
Nature Buddies
My Favorite Plant Is...



Track Your Experiences



Write or draw a picture: what was your favorite part of today's quest? Or, answer one of that day's discussion questions.

Name	Quest #1	Quest #2	Quest #3	Quest #4	Quest #5	Quest #6	Quest #7



Quest #1: Find Your Spot

Step 1: Choose a spot or area near your home where you can observe nature together. You will come back here often on your quests. If you live in a city, this can be as simple as a street tree or some plants in the sidewalk.

Step 2: Spent at least 5 minutes exploring your spot, and make observations with your senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, (and taste if you already know some wild edible plants...otherwise, maybe save taste for later!)

Step 3: Share. Point out what you find to each other as you go, or observe on your own and share together at the end. Did your family member notice anything you didn't?

Step 4: Check-in. How do you feel after spending 5-10 minutes paying close attention to nature? Do you notice any changes in your mood or emotions?

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**Discussion Question:** What is the most interesting thing you noticed in your spot today? Did any of your observations surprise you?



# Quest #2: Search for Mysteries

**Step 1:** Return to the spot you chose yesterday. Use your 5 senses to make more observations.

**Step 2:** Search for nature mysteries. To do this, pay attention when you realize you don't know something. Ask questions based on your observations. Start with the words "Who, what, when, where, why" and "how." Ask as many questions as you can. If you like, write them down.

**Step 3:** You can learn ways to investigate in search of answers, but for now, just let yourself wonder! Don't look it up on Google yet. You don't have to know everything, even if you're a grownup. You will notice more and remember your exploration better when you spend some time thinking about the mystery on your own. This can lead you to make discoveries that scientists might have even overlooked!

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Discussion Question: What piqued your curiosity today? What questions would you like to investigate more?



Quest #3: Make a Messy Sketch

Materials needed:

Paper, pencil/marker/crayon;

A clipboard or something hard to write on.

Step 1: Return to your special spot. Find something in nature that you want to sketch. This could be related to a mystery you found on day 2, or something new. Observe it for a minute.

Step 2: Make a "gesture sketch": a loose drawing that captures the overall form or motion of the subject. Start with basic shapes and outlines, then fill in some details if you have extra time. The goal of the drawing is not to look pretty, but to help you notice more about the world around you. Messy is good!

Step 3: Share your drawings with each other.

Optional step: Make a collage and combine all your drawings into one picture.

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**Discussion Question:** How did the process of sketching help you learn more about this organism/ natural object?



# Quest #4: Tune in to Nature's Radio

**Step 1:** Return to your spot. Find a place to sit or stand, and get comfortable. Set a timer for five to ten minutes.

**Step 2:** Close your hand into a fist and close your eyes. Every time you hear a new type of nature sound (such as an animal, wind, or running water) lift up one finger. For example, if you hear a bluebird, a cardinal, and then a cricket, you should be holding up three fingers. If you hear a bluebird, a cardinal, and then a bluebird again, only hold up two fingers. You do not have to know the names of any species you hear. Just notice that they are different.

**ALTERNATE ACTIVITY:** If sound-based activities are not accessible for a member of your family, set the timer and search for different colors, shapes, textures, or scents.

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Discussion Questions: How many sounds did you hear? How does limiting one sense help us focus on another? Why do you think animals make the sounds they do?

This quest is based on the "Sounds and Colors" activity from the book Sharing Nature with Children by Joseph Cornell.





Quest #5: Tell a Story

Step 1: At your spot, search for a live animal or tracks/sign of an animal. (If you get stuck, remember that insects are animals too!)

Step 2: Observe the animal or the animal tracks.

Step 3: If you are observing tracks, think about what the animal might have been doing and where it was going (even if you don't know what type of animal it is). Follow the trail for as long as you can.

If you are watching an animal in real time, ask questions about why it is doing what it is doing.

Step 4: Act it out: mimic the animal's behavior. Don't be afraid to be silly! Or, take turns to make up a story about the animal.

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## **Discussion Questions:**

Why do animals act the way they do?

How much can you learn about animals when they aren't there in front of you?



# Quest #6: Nature Buddies

**Step 1:** Search for two species that rely on each other in some way.

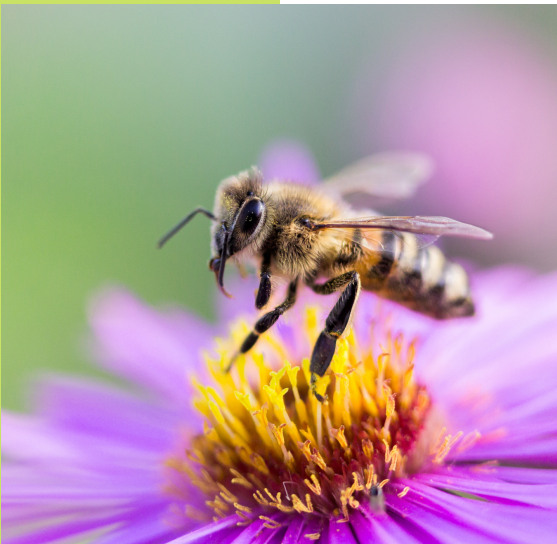
*Examples: squirrel and tree, bee and flower, bird and insect*

**Step 2:** Use one of the methods from a previous quest to help you learn more about this relationship:

- Make observations and ask questions
- Sketch a picture
- Listen carefully
- Act it out or tell a story

**Step 3:** Share what you found with your family members.

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Discussion Questions: What kind of relationship do these two species have? Do both of them benefit, or just one of them?

Can your family learn anything from these species about how to get along (or, how *not* to get along)?



Quest #7: My Favorite Plant Is...

Step 1: Go to your spot. Spend a few minutes observing the plants that live there. How are they similar or different? What do all plants need to grow?

Step 2: Think about the plants that have been special to you during your life. These could include a tree you climbed as a little kid, a flower that someone gave to you, a plant that is a part of a story, or even a plant in a favorite meal that your family has always made (food plants count!).

Step 3: Let each person take turns telling a story about your favorite plant and why it matters to you.

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**Discussion Question:** What makes something memorable? How did you grow to care about this particular plant so much? Could any of the plants growing in your spot become special to you, too?



# Recommended Resources

All About Birds

<http://www.allaboutbirds.org/>

Children & Nature Network

<https://www.childrenandnature.org/>

8 Shields: Rebuilding Nature-Connected Communities  
Worldwide

<http://8shields.org/>

John Muir Laws Nature Journaling

<https://johnmuirlaws.com/>

Nature Journaling Week

<https://www.naturejournalingweek.com/>

Journaling with Nature

<https://www.journalingwithnature.com/>

iNaturalist

<https://www.inaturalist.org/>

Finding Urban Nature

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/idea/finding-urban-nature/>

10 Ways to Find Nature in Urban Settings

<https://www.brighthorizons.com/family-resources/10-ways-find-nature-urban-settings>

# Congratulations, you completed the 7-Day Family Nature Challenge!



Your family's adventure has just begun! When you're a naturalist, there is always more to explore.

You can learn more about Forest School-to-You programs, activities, and online workshops at:

**Website:** [www.rebeccarolnick.com](http://www.rebeccarolnick.com)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/ForestSchoolToYou>

**Instagram:** @Forestschooltoyou

**Youtube:** Forest School-to-You

