



Brave Writer's *Seasonal Nature Walks*

Years ago, I was introduced to an idea that became important to me and my kids. Charlotte Mason, the English educator of the early 20th century, believed an emphasis on nature was critical to the development of a well-rounded person. She couldn't imagine that all various ills wouldn't be cured by fresh air, walking, and the ability to name the plants and animals in one's surroundings.

She contended that every child had a birthright: to know his or her environment, to love it, to cultivate even a postage stamp garden of one's own. Nature study became a happy part of my homeschool experience and an element of the [Brave Writer Lifestyle](#).

Every season offers opportunities to get outdoors with your children to explore nature. Use the seasonal nature walks in this PDF to inspire your kids, then let them loose to wander and follow their lead. After your walk, make notes in nature journals, sketch nature finds, and identify (as best you can) the names of your nature finds.

Grab your boots, sketchbook, and eyes ready to observe. Welcome to nature study!

Note: If you live in the city or have a difficult time getting outside with your little ones, we've added variations of these ideas that help you adapt the walk to your environment!



Spring

Searching for Sizes

Spring means budding trees and blooms, shoots, and new green leaves peeking into the world. Explore nature by noticing the big and small signs of spring. Enjoy observing the explosion of new life without plucking the sprouts or blooms.

Look for the tiniest bug, bud, flower, or leaf. Then, flip the script and **search for** (and point at!) a massive tree bursting with new leaves, the biggest rock covered in green moss, or the grandest puddle on the path. Use nature journals to write a poem inspired by a tiny (or large) nature find, or create a story in which the character grows from tiny to gigantic—or shrinks down to a speck!

Variations

- **City:** Look for tiny feathers floating through the air or thin blades of grass poking up through the sidewalk. Find the biggest tree in the park or the most colossal cloud in the sky.
- **Indoors:** Set up a scavenger hunt for large and small pairs around your house: shoes, spoons, books. Work together to organize the found objects from tiniest to biggest.



Summer

Framing Nature

Come summertime, nature is in full swing. Bring an artistic eye on your summer walk. Take a camera, an empty picture frame (one made out of cardboard would work), or create a frame with your fingers, and focus on nature by tuning into what's in the frame.

As you walk, “frame” the views you see around you. What looks different when it's framed? What surprises you? Can you zoom in and frame something so that other people can't guess what it is later? (You could write a poem to give clues about the object.) Take pictures or sketch what you see in your sketchbook.

Variations

- **City:** Take your camera or frame and look at the city around you using it to narrow your focus. Can you find nature peeking out between buildings or soaring overhead?
- **Indoors:** Use your frame to look at places (corners, ceilings, edges) that you don't typically notice. Is nature hiding in your home? What nature signs can you find at the library or museum? Can you pinpoint organic shapes or textures?



Fall

Texture Hunt

Have you ever thought about textures in nature? Now's your chance! Step out the back door, or find the nearest park or trail, and **look for** these textures: slimy, soft, rough, bumpy, spiky, fluffy, sticky, crisp, smooth, silky.

Put small (safe) nature finds in a variety of textures into a paper bag. Take turns reaching into the bag to feel an object. Can you describe the texture (slippery, silky, soft, rough, velvety, bumpy) and guess what it is before pulling it out of the bag? Invent words for the textures you find.

Variations

- **City:** Ask, "What looks silky? Slimy?" and have the kids point to those objects. Play "I spy a texture!" by describing a texture you see or feel. Encourage guesses until the object you describe is discovered. Take turns spying!
- **Indoors:** You can find all sorts of textures around your house, too. Give each child a piece of paper and a crayon, and have them fill the page with texture rubbings from indoor items. Guess the objects based on the textures.



Winter

I Spy Shapes

Winter is a great time to search for shapes on your walk—the skeletons of trees reveal shapes usually covered by leaves, rocks stand out against the bleak landscape (if they're not covered with snow), and the wind sculpts ice or sand into organic masterpieces.

Out on a nature walk **look for** heart shapes, faces (in tree bark, branches, clouds), spirals, letters of the alphabet, or let the kids share shape ideas and send the whole family on a shape hunt. Which shapes are easy to find? Which ones are difficult to spot? Let the shapes guide storytelling, or the creation of a poem—a concrete poem in the shape of the object could be fun!

Variations

- **City:** Look for shapes like faces or hearts in unexpected places like cracks in the sidewalk or the peeling poster on a bus stop.
- **Indoors:** Search for shapes in everyday objects like the toaster or a crumpled towel on the floor.

What's next?

You are off to a great start! If you've been inspired by these walks and are ready to learn more about how to incorporate nature study into your homeschool, check out this [nature journaling post](#) on the Brave Writer blog.

Our online [Nature Journaling class](#) is also a great next step to deepen an appreciation for nature and writing.

Brave Writer is designed to enhance the parent-child relationship through the teaching of writing and the addition of [Brave Writer Lifestyle](#) elements to your family life. Writers grow best when students feel free to risk and are supported in those writing risks. Parents feel best when they have strategies they can trust to advance their twin goals: **peace and progress in the writing process**. Enter Brave Writer's abundance of programs (both [self-teaching guides](#) and [online classes](#) with instructors) of which nature study is one of many!

If you have any questions about our programs, please reach out.

You can ask in our Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BraveScopes/>) or send a note to help@bravewriter.com.

Have a great year!



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