



Children's Outside Guide

Exploring Nature Together: A Salvation Army
Guide to Outdoor Adventures for Children.

2026



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Get Outside Today



Getting out in nature is so important for all of us. It boosts our mental wellbeing, promotes physical activity, enhances learning and creativity, and strengthens social skills. Care for creation is one of The Salvation Army's mission priorities and spending time outdoors helps us to appreciate why that is so important. In this guide you'll find fun and practical ways to encourage children to spend time outside in the great outdoors.

You'll also hear stories from real people who The Salvation Army has supported through their extensive support schemes run at many churches and centres across the UK. From parent & toddler groups, to after school clubs and summer camps, The Salvation Army provides a lifeline for many families and couldn't do what it does without your support.



Go for a walk in the park

Listen to a bird singing

Spot some unusual clouds

Have a picnic

Smell freshly cut grass

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you to tell children and young people not to touch bees and wasps, and to be careful of brambles, stinging nettles and other potentially harmful things found outside

Nature Spotting



Get your eyes ready and your explorer hat on, it's time to head outside and see what amazing animals you can spot!

Can you find all of these?



☐ Blackbird

Listen out for their beautiful singing! Blackbirds love hopping around on the grass looking for worms.



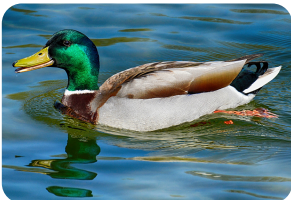
☐ Squirrel

Quick and cheeky! Squirrels can be spotted darting up trees or nibbling on acorns.



☐ Robin

Look for a little bird with an orange chest — robins are curious and often come quite close!



☐ Duck

Ducks love ponds and rivers. Watch them paddle across the water or waddle along the edge.



☐ Swan

These big white birds glide across the water like royalty. Be sure to watch from a distance!



☐ Butterfly

Fluttering through the air with beautiful wings — butterflies love sunny days and colourful flowers.

How many can you find on your walk today?

Tick each one off as you spot them! | Bring a pencil and some snacks.

Don't forget to look up, down, and all around!

An Award-Winning Allotment



For many young people, opportunities to connect with nature in urban settings are limited. Without early experiences in nature, children may grow up feeling disconnected from the natural world around them.

The Salvation Army in Watford recently won the Congregation and Community category at the 2024 Green Church Awards. Led by Captain Mark Scoulding, the project welcomes up to 120 pupils, parents, and staff each week and features raised beds, a mini orchard, a wildflower meadow, and a wildlife pond.

“All the pupils live in an urban environment with limited access to outdoor space. We teach the children to garden fruits, vegetables and flowers.”

Captain Mark Scoulding



The allotment is managed for the benefit of wildlife and environmental methods used to reuse and recycle waste.

Mark hopes the allotment will inspire a life-long love of nature in the children who visit it.

Our work with communities wouldn't be possible without your support. Just £4.70 could pay for an activity pack to keep a young child busy and interested over the school holidays.

DONATE TODAY



Dot-to-Dot

Join up all the dots to reveal a creature who's very busy at this time of year. Don't forget to colour them in once you've finished.



A Mum's Lifeline: Summer Camp



Here at The Salvation Army, we believe every child needs fresh air, exercise and nutritious food if they're to grow into healthy young adults. Too many parents like mum-of-four Natasha, however, are dreading the extra expense and worry that the summer holidays bring.

Natasha's family lives in a small, rented home. Her three older children share one bedroom, while Keira sleeps in a travel cot in Natasha's room. As Natasha explains, summers are tough:

"Once the bills and necessities are paid for, there isn't much money left. Treats and special days aren't a possibility, the costs are just too much."

Natasha's children have been attending Salvation Army Summer Camps for a few years now and, as she explains, it's changed their lives:

"Attending allows my children to not be secluded, not isolated and feel involved. The Salvation Army has provided my children with experiences they wouldn't be able to get otherwise and above all provided them with lasting memories."



Across the UK, The Salvation Army runs a range of summer activities for children. As well as ensuring children keep active and have fun, these activities are about providing them with life skills like independence and self-reliance that they need to develop into well-rounded young people.

With your support today, children can enjoy exciting activities, perhaps visiting the seaside, or a forest, for the first time ever. Please give what you can afford so children don't miss out. Just £28 could contribute to a child attending Summer Camp for a week.

DONATE TODAY

Cloud Spotting



This activity will need to be done on a dry day when the sky is blue, there is some sunshine and lots of clouds in the sky.



What you will need

A big blanket | A pencil and colouring crayons
A few sheets of paper | Sunglasses if it's a very sunny day

Head outside to a green space. This could be your garden, a park, a wood or any other green space. Get a blanket that is big enough to lie down on and put it down on a grassy area away from trees.

Now lie down on your back and look up at the sky.
Don't forget to wear your sunglasses if it's too bright to look at the sky!

Think about these questions

What shapes can you see?
Do they look like animals or objects?
Are the clouds moving quickly or slowly?
Which way are the clouds moving?



When you've found a few shapes, try drawing them on your paper.
If you're feeling creative you can add extra detail to the outlines or colour them in.

FUN FACT Some caterpillars have 12 eyes!



Quiz

How many can you get right?



1. What do plants need to grow?

- ☐ A. Sunshine, water, and soil
- ☐ B. TV and snacks
- ☐ C. Toys and games

2. Which of these is a good reason to spend time outside in nature?

- ☐ A. It helps you feel happier and healthier
- ☐ B. You get to do more homework
- ☐ C. You can watch more TV

Answers on
page 13

3. What is a bug hotel used for?

- ☐ A. A place where bugs check in to watch movies
- ☐ B. A shelter to help insects live and stay safe
- ☐ C. A place to store gardening tools

4. Which of these activities can you enjoy in green spaces?

- ☐ A. Watching the birds
- ☐ B. Feeding the ducks a healthy treat
- ☐ C. All of the above

5. Why are trees important in parks and forests?

- ☐ A. They play music
- ☐ B. They glow in the dark
- ☐ C. They clean the air and provide homes for animals



Give A Child A Summer To Remember



£4.70



£4.70 could pay for an activity pack to keep young children busy and interested over the school holidays. Your gift will help ensure children try new games, activities and puzzles.



£28



£28 could help a child attend Summer Camp for a week. Instead of being stuck indoors, they can make friends, enjoy outdoor fun, healthy food, adventures and special days by the seaside or in the countryside.

£52



£52 could help more children attend Breakfast Book Club. Helping them to start their days with a healthy meal and the chance to read together.

£100



£100 could buy food parcels to feed five families who are struggling to feed their family over the summer holidays.

DONATE TODAY

Awaken Your Senses



Sensory play is vital for children's emotional growth, helping them identify which sensations soothe them best. Exploring sounds, smells, and textures together can greatly support their mental and spiritual wellbeing.

Begin by finding a peaceful green space, then have the child sit and close their eyes. Guide them through the box breathing technique - inhale, hold, and exhale for 4 seconds each, repeated a few times - in a quiet setting to help calm their mind.



Hear

Encourage the child to close their eyes and listen carefully. Ask them to identify all the sounds they hear, then write them down.

Touch

With their eyes closed, guide the child to explore textures around them — like grass, leaves, or stones — and describe how each one feels.



Smell

With their eyes still closed, invite the child to take a deep breath through their nose and focus on identifying any scents around them - like grass, herbs, or flowers.



See

Now ask the child to open their eyes and tell you what they can see. Are there any flowers or insects around them? What colours are the leaves on the trees?



Sometimes the day can be very busy so it's good to take a moment to be grateful for the amazing nature all around us.

FUN FACT a worm can eat its own weight in soil in one day!

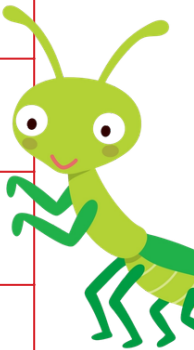


Wordsearch

Find the 10 hidden words below



D	M	L	D	I	G	T	H	G	Z	I	E
E	C	H	A	P	P	U	Z	K	G	S	G
E	M	I	W	H	O	I	S	E	O	Q	N
R	A	A	N	W	O	R	F	S	H	U	B
D	H	R	A	Z	A	O	P	N	E	I	A
C	W	E	F	O	X	L	B	D	G	R	D
M	O	U	S	E	D	T	O	R	D	R	G
F	U	V	O	H	D	T	W	A	E	E	E
R	A	B	B	I	T	R	L	E	H	L	R
B	I	R	D	R	E	V	A	E	B	I	H



BADGER

RABBIT

DEER

HEDGEHOG

BIRD

OWL

FOX

MOUSE

SQUIRREL

BEAVER

Summer At Hadleigh Farm



Nestled in the scenic Essex countryside is Hadleigh Farm. A 900-acre working farm owned and operated by The Salvation Army since 1891. Visitors can enjoy the scenic landscape, explore the rare breeds centre, or relax at the tearoom, all while supporting a site with a deep-rooted mission of empowerment and inclusion.

Each year, The Salvation Army hosts family camp, a unique and inclusive experience for children and young people looking for fun, friendship, personal and spiritual growth. Set against the backdrop of Hadleigh's rolling hills and historic farmland, the camp offers a mix of fun and reflective moments, including team games, nature walks, arts and crafts sessions, and confidence-building challenges that help young campers develop independence and social skills in a relaxed, welcoming setting.

“The Family Camp at Hadleigh Farm has given me a safe space for me and my family, I’ve really enjoyed being with my boys and not had to worry about anything. Everyone cares and the team are great!”

Rebecca, a mother of two who attended the camp with her children.



Hadleigh Farm is open throughout the year and is the perfect day out for the little ones to connect with nature.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Spot The Difference

Can you spot the 5 differences in the two pictures below?



Create A Flower Vase



Get creative and bring your flowers to life with a colourful card vase
- it's a fun and imaginative way to turn nature into art!

What you will need

Piece of cardboard (a cereal box will work perfectly)

Marker pen | Pencil or sharp object

1

Draw a vase

On your piece of cardboard draw the outline of a jug or vase.

2

Poke holes

Ask an adult to poke some holes with a pencil or sharp object above the vase with one cm or more between holes.

3

Pick some flowers

Go on a walk and as you see daisies and buttercups pick them, making sure you keep the stem as long as possible!

4

Thread the flowers through

Carefully poke the stems through the holes in the cardboard.

5

Observe

Admire your beautiful vase of flowers!



Make sure you ask an adult before you pick flowers in your garden or someone else's garden.

Find out more about The Salvation Army

We hope you've enjoyed reading our Children's Outside Guide and hope you have found it useful in getting the young people in your life outside. If you need support from The Salvation Army, please visit our website to find your local Salvation Army church and community centre who will be able to assist you, or call us on 0207 367 4500.

We couldn't do what we do without support from people like yourself. Just £4.70 could pay for an activity pack to keep young children busy, interested and full of life over the school holidays.

DONATE NOW

To learn more about The Salvation Army's latest work and how we help vulnerable people in communities across the UK, visit salvationarmy.org.uk

Stay connected with us



@salvationarmyuk

to share your creations with us using the hashtag #childrensoutsideguide

A Christian church and registered charity in England (214779), Wales (214779), Scotland (SC009359) and the Republic of Ireland (CHY6399).

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Case studies reflect the true stories of people that we help every day. Names may have been changed and models used in some photographs to protect the privacy of the people concerned.

