

Nature Notes

by Patricia Clark-Gray



Nature Gifts for Christmas

I am sure you are busy preparing for Christmas and shopping for gifts. So I thought I would help the parents and grandparents with some suggestions for nature related Christmas gifts. I remember when I was growing up I



When our kids were young I bought them nature books, rocks and minerals, and science kits.

Now, I think connecting our children with nature is even more important. In Richard Louv's book Last Child in the Woods- Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder he expresses concern that children today are not spending time outdoors like we did. He also emphasizes that when children spend time in nature they are less depressed and it will help with obesity. Research has also found that children with attention deficit disorder benefit from outdoor activities. So during the Christmas break be sure to take your children hiking and bike riding in our local and state parks. You can take along magnifying boxes to put bugs in to look out. You could also buy some inexpensive binoculars and a Bird Field Guide so you and your children can do some bird watching. Birds Color-In Book is a book where children can create their own field guide to learn to recognize many common birds. You can also encourage your kids to keep a nature journal when they go on nature hikes.

Some ideas for nature gifts are animals puppets such as black bears, skunks, and raccoons. You can buy games such as The Bug Game, Ocean Bingo, and the Solar System Game, and puzzles that kids can play during the cold winter days. These games can also be played as a family. A great resource is the Acorn Naturalists catalog. You can go to their website at www.acornnaturalists.com and order many of the items that I have mentioned in this article.

There are so many great children's nature books available that you can purchase at Borders, The Monterey Bay Aquarium, Elkhorn Slough Reserve Bookstore, or on-line at Amazon.com. Some great books are The Great Kapok Tree, a Tale of the Amazon Forest by Cherry and Stellaluna by Cannon which is a story about baby fruit-eating bat that gets separated from her mother before she is old enough to fly. Some books that would be appropriate locally would be In One Tidepool by Fredericks and Monarch Come Play With Me by Rea.

A fun activity for the family would be to get a rain gauge and keep track of the rain for the year. There are simple inexpensive rain gauges that you check, record and empty



Child in baby backpacks:
Our youngest son Wesley hiking with his dad every day. Or you could buy a wireless rain gauge that receives reception from an outdoor rain gauge and has a self-emptying feature. There are several books available through the Acorn Naturalist: Weather by Rupp, The Kid's Book of Weather Forecasting by Breen and Friestad, and Naturescope: Wild about Weather by NWF.

On Christmas morning, your children will be delighted when they open up your nature gifts. These gifts will be something your children will use and cherish for a long time. They might get interested in nature or science and pursue a career such as a Park Ranger, Astronomer or a Marine Biologist. And as your family plays the games and puzzles they will be creating life-long memories.

Doug our oldest son touching a snake when he was 9 months old would look through the Sears Roebuck catalog and circle the items that I wished for. I also remember later as I got older I enjoyed gifts like microscopes and chemistry kits.

Grand Re-Opening

Senior Produce Market

Tuesday, December 7, 2010 • 9:00 AM
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211 Hillcrest Avenue, Marina

Presented by : Episcopal Senior Services
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Questions ? Contact: Jackie at igorzales@ci.marina.ca.us or leave a message 384-6009

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