



THE COMPLETE STARTER GUIDE

The Nature *Journal* Guide

How to spark a lifelong love of God's creation in your homeschool — through drawing, writing, and wonder-filled observation.

FROM THE TEAM AT

Wildroot Academy

Rooted in Faith. Alive with Wonder.

wildroot-academy.bywillo.ai

Dear Fellow Homeschool Parent,

There's a moment every homeschool parent knows — when a child looks up from a bug or a leaf or a winter sky and asks a question so beautiful it takes your breath away. *"Did God make every single snowflake different, Mom?"*

That moment is exactly what nature journaling protects. In a world of screens and curricula, a nature journal is an anchor — a place where science, art, language, and faith come together around the altar of God's own handiwork.

This guide gives you everything you need to start — regardless of your children's ages, your art skills, or how much time you have each week. Whether you're brand new to nature study or looking to deepen what you already do, these pages will meet you where you are.

"For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made."

— Romans 1:20 (ESV)

Let's go outside together. 

— *The Wildroot Academy Team*

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Science, history, writing, and art in one notebook



Bonus: 30 Journal Prompts

Printable prompts for all ages

Why Nature Journaling?

Charlotte Mason called nature journals "the most important books in the schoolroom." That's a bold claim — but it holds up. Here's why.

When a child sits still long enough to draw a caterpillar, they develop **attentiveness** — the foundational habit of all learning. When they write down what they observed, they practice **narration**. When they notice something changed since last week, they practice **scientific thinking**. And when they marvel at what they see, they practice **worship**.



Science Skills

Observation,
classification, hypothesis
— the scientific method
in action



Language Arts

Descriptive writing,
narration, vocabulary,
and penmanship all in
one



Faith Formation

Creation reveals the
Creator — wonder is the
beginning of worship

The research backs it up too. Studies show that children who spend regular time in unstructured nature observation demonstrate stronger attention spans, lower anxiety, improved memory retention, and higher creativity scores than peers who don't.

"Nature is the most patient teacher. She never rushes, never scolds, and never runs out of lessons."

Supplies & Getting Started

The best supply kit is the one your child will actually use. Start simple. You can always add materials as enthusiasm grows — and it will.

MUST-HAVE

- ✦ Blank or dotted notebook
- ✦ #2 pencil
- ✦ A few colored pencils
- ✦ A magnifying glass
- ✦ Curiosity (free!)

NICE TO HAVE

- Watercolor set
- Fine-tip black pen
- Field guide (local birds, plants)
- Small ruler
- Binoculars

Choosing a Journal by Age

Ages 4–7

Mostly blank pages — big space to draw, one line for dictated words. Don't require writing yet.

Ages 8–11

Half-blank, half-lined. They can draw above and write a paragraph or narration below.

Ages 12+

Dotted or grid notebook. Encourage more scientific notation, Latin names, and detailed sketches.

Your First 5 Sessions

Each session is 20–30 minutes. Go outside. Find something. Sit with it.

1

The Sky Watch

Lay on your back for 5 minutes. Draw exactly what you see — clouds, birds, branches. Write one sentence: *"Today the sky looked like..."*

2

The One-Leaf Study

Pick one leaf. Draw it as accurately as you can. Label the veins. Write: color, texture, smell. Look up its tree if possible.

3

The Bug Hunt

Lift one rock. See what lives beneath. Sketch one creature. Count its legs. Write: *"I found this under a rock, and..."*

4

The Weather Record

Record the day's weather: temperature, wind, clouds. Look up the weather pattern. Draw a simple weather symbol. Do this same day next week and compare.

5

The Free Wander

No prompt. Just go outside, find something that catches your eye, and document it. This is the most important session — it builds intrinsic curiosity.

CHAPTER FOUR

Connecting Faith & Creation

The nature journal isn't just a science tool — it's a discipleship tool. Every page is an opportunity to point your children toward the God who made what they're drawing.

Here are **Scripture Anchors** — one for each category of nature study. Read them before or after your session, then ask the reflection question together.

PLANTS & TREES

*"He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season."
— Psalm 1:3*

Ask: What does it mean to be "planted" somewhere? What do you need to grow?

BIRDS & ANIMALS

"Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap... yet your heavenly Father feeds them." — Matt. 6:26

Ask: If God takes care of every bird, what do you think that says about how He thinks of you?

WEATHER & SKY

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." — Psalm 19:1

Ask: What do you think the sky was "saying" today?

INSECTS & SMALL THINGS

"Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." — Proverbs 6:6

Ask: What can you learn from watching this tiny creature today?

One Journal, Every Subject

This is the secret power of the nature journal: it doesn't compete with your curriculum. It *amplifies* it.



Math

Measure a leaf. Count petals. Record temperature change. Graph rainfall over a month. Geometry in snowflakes.



Writing

Describe what you observed. Narrate a creature's "story." Write a poem about a season. Copy a nature-themed Scripture passage.



History

Research the naturalist who first classified what you found. Learn how a native tribe used this plant. Connect to historical exploration eras.



Art

Study contour drawing with leaves. Practice watercolor washes with sky studies. Use botanical artists like Pierre-Joseph Redouté as models.

PRO TIP

Don't try to hit every subject every session. Let one or two subjects emerge naturally from what your child found. Over a month, you'll find all the subjects appear organically — often more deeply than if you'd planned them.

BONUS SECTION

30 Nature Journal Prompts

Use these to spark sessions when inspiration runs low. Mix and match across seasons and ages.

1. Draw something that wasn't here last week.
2. Find three shades of green in nature.
3. Sketch an animal's home (nest, burrow, hive).
4. Draw something as if you were a tiny ant.
5. Record the sounds you hear in 5 minutes.
6. Find evidence that an animal was here.
7. Draw the same spot four times — one per season.
8. Sketch a cloud and name its type.
9. Count the petals on every flower you find.
10. Draw a spider web and label each part.
11. Write a "field report" like a scientist.
12. Draw the moon tonight. Note its phase.
13. Find something that smells. Describe it.
14. Sketch a cross-section of a fallen log.
15. Write a prayer of thanks for what you found.
16. Draw a bird — then identify it.
17. Make a bark rubbing and identify the tree.
18. Draw a seed. Research what it will become.
19. Find a pattern in nature. Draw it repeated.
20. Compare two similar leaves from different trees.
21. Record a sunrise or sunset in detail.
22. Sketch a puddle and what lives in it.
23. Find the oldest thing outside. Draw it.
24. Draw something that is camouflaged.
25. Write about something that surprised you.
26. Sketch frost, ice, or snow in close detail.
27. Draw a living thing and a non-living thing together.
28. Find something being eaten. Sketch the scene.
29. Draw the view from the ground up in a forest.
30. Write a letter to the creature you studied today.



YOU'RE JUST GETTING STARTED

Ready for *More?*

Wildroot Academy is your home for Christian homeschool resources
in nature, history, and science — crafted by homeschool families,
rooted in Scripture, alive with curiosity.

- ✦ Free printables, lesson guides, and unit studies
- ✦ Faith-integrated science, nature & history articles
- ✦ Premium resource packs for every season and age

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Join our community of homeschool families and get new resources
delivered to your inbox every week.

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