

QUARANTINE CONNECTIONS

This week: The Layton Family

These past few months have been... *unusual, bizarre, scary*. More time at home does not equate to more “quality time” – at least not in our house. There are not enough hours in the day to balance Life. Work. School. House. Aging Parents. Kids. Pod Planning.

"And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer." - F.Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

This is a favorite quote of mine, too. For me, summer is all about “the sunshine” and “the great bursts” of... the joys of summer. We were blessed earlier this summer, for three weeks in July, to set off on a 12-hour road trip to Cape Cod in Massachusetts to spend some quality time with family (“cousin time is the best time!”). It was a trip that was good for the soul. Highlights included: battling the wind and waves along Cape Cod National Seashore; riding bikes past Blueberry Pond; chasing hermit and blue shell crabs at Dowses Beach (the thrill of the hunt!); ice cream (and more ice cream) ; tent camping in the yard with the cousins; puzzles and cards playing; and lots of slowing down, long walks, and cousin snuggles. We left with some great pictures, even better memories, and a renewed feeling of conviction and hope.



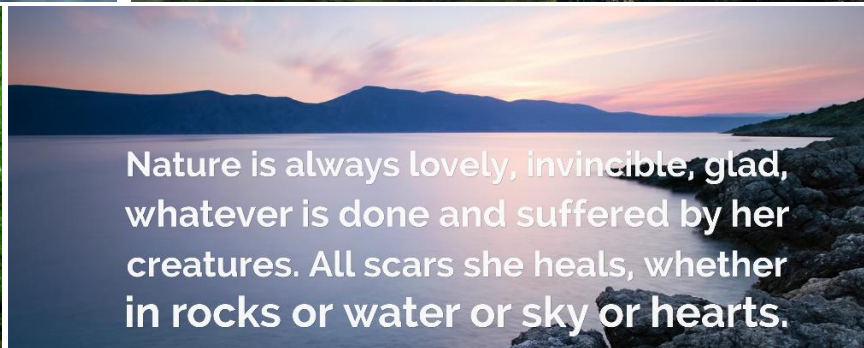
Back in Virginia, we’ve spent more time outdoors, and this is a blessing, as well.

John Muir, a founding father of national parks, knew the power and beauty of nature – the inspiring quotes from him are endless.

"Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine into trees." – John Muir

"In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks." – John Muir

These are two of our favorites and attached are a few other images with Muir quotes we find inspirational.



Nature and wildness are a source of solace and strength for us both (all!). I grew up hiking glaciers and national parks with my Dad out west. Our family has been doing lots of hiking and trail riding at local national parks, like Gaines' Mill, the Crater Battlefield at Petersburg, Five Forks – great for getting the wiggles out (and for naps in the car on the way home!), riding bikes to Lake Salisbury (fishing and catching tadpoles!), golfing (golf camp for the boys – *fore!*). Just being outdoors – traipsing through a sun-dappled forest, discovering new critters, jumping over babbling creeks, listening to the sound of a creek babbling or a dragon fly whizzing – whatever the activity, slowing down and taking in the solace and beauty of nature is a great reminder of what really matters. It, too, fuels the soul.

If anyone has a favorite hiking or camping spot you can recommend that's good for families, please share!

This hasn't much been a "lazy days of summer" kind of summer, but it's been filled with God's grace nonetheless. Counting the days until our blessings, once again, include Sundays at REM and backyard bbqs and dinner pot lucks and playdates... together in person.