



THE ADVENTURE

Just Outside

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(Based on a true story)

A tiny parade of electronic ants ran across the screen on Rylee's tablet. Rylee smiled and started to count them quickly. *Seven, eight, nine . . .* This was one of her favorite math games!

"I thought you were coloring your bug book," Mom said as she came in the room.

Rylee looked up. "Oh. Yes, I was. But I got bored, so I started playing games instead."

"Have you been playing on the tablet this whole time?" Mom asked with a little smile.

Rylee checked the clock. It was a lot later than she'd thought! "Um, I guess so. But it's helping me learn math."

"Doing math is good for your brain," Mom said. "But



too much screen time *isn't* good for your brain. Or for the rest of your body. Your body needs lots of other things."

Rylee paused. "You mean, like good food?"

Mom nodded. "Yes! But that's just a start. Why don't we go on a walk? Maybe you can even see some real ants."

"OK!" Rylee put on her shoes. Mom and Rylee's little sister, Harper, were waiting for her by the door.

"Ready for an adventure?" Mom asked.

"Yeah!"

They walked to the park nearby. The sun was bright, and the leaves on the trees rustled in the wind. "Hey, look!" Rylee pointed to a line of ants marching across the sidewalk. "You were right, Mom."

"How many do you see?" Mom asked.

Rylee tried to keep count, but there were too many. She ran ahead and picked up a speckled rock. "It's like a ladybug. Look at all the spots!"

She slipped the rock into her pocket. "Let's pretend to be scientists," she told Harper. "We could show each other our discoveries!"

Together she and Harper found another cool rock, a pine cone, and an acorn. They saw some butterflies too.

"This is even more fun than my game!" Rylee said.

"Isn't it nice to be outside?" Mom asked. "And do you know the best part? It's really good for your brain."

Rylee tilted her head. "But I thought you had to study stuff to make your brain stronger."

"That's one way. But other things help it grow too. Like kicking the soccer ball with our family. Or talking with friends. Or spending time outside, like now. We need to grow and develop in all sorts of ways, like Jesus did."

The time zipped by as Rylee, Mom, and Harper explored the park. By the time they got home, Rylee's pockets were full of treasures from their walk. She lined them up on the floor to count them. *Seven, eight, nine . . .*

She smiled. She was glad there were so many fun ways to grow and take good care of her body. ●

