

Outdoor Learning Ideas

MJK Educators | Hands-on learning for Kenyan homes, for every curriculum

The world is the best classroom. These activities get children outside: exploring, observing, moving, and connecting with nature, community and place. They are designed for Kenyan families, with adaptations for urban, peri-urban and rural settings, and work with the Kenyan Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), IGCSE / Cambridge, the IB (PYP, MYP and DP) and other programmes.

What's inside: 15 ideas across four categories: Nature Study, Community & Place, Physical & Adventure, and Service & Stewardship.

Age Bands

- **Early (ages 4 to 7):** roughly CBC Pre-Primary and Lower Primary, IB PYP early years
- **Middle (ages 8 to 12):** roughly CBC Upper Primary, IB PYP, Cambridge Primary
- **Older (ages 13 to 18):** roughly CBC Junior and Senior School, IB MYP and DP, Cambridge Lower Secondary and IGCSE

Curriculum Links

Each idea has a short note showing where it fits. These are guides, not official alignments. Check your syllabus or scheme of work for exact outcomes.

- **CBC:** competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, digital literacy, self-efficacy, citizenship and learning to learn
- **IGCSE / Cambridge:** assessment objectives such as knowledge, application, analysis and practical skills
- **IB:** approaches to learning (thinking, research, communication, social, self-management) and inquiry cycles

Record it: Take photos, keep work samples and note what your child learned. These make useful portfolio entries (see our Record Keeping Template).

How to Use This Guide

	For CBC families	For IGCSE / IB families	For faith-based families
Why use it	Links to Science, Social Studies, PE and core competencies	Fieldwork, data collection and environmental systems	Wonder, stewardship and gratitude
Evidence	Nature journals and field notes	Practical skills and primary research	Reflection and connection to creation

Before You Go

- Tell another adult where you are going and when you will return.
- Check the weather, sun exposure and local conditions.
- Carry water, snacks, hats, sunscreen, a first-aid kit and a phone.
- Respect private land, wildlife, local customs and rules. Ask permission before photographing people.
- Take only photos and leave only footprints. Do not remove plants, animals or cultural objects.
- Keep away from open water, steep ground and wildlife, and use only reputable, licensed guides when visiting parks or reserves.
- Wear closed shoes and long sleeves in long grass or bush, and teach children not to touch unfamiliar plants, insects or animals.

Category A: Nature Study

Idea 1: Backyard Biodiversity Count

Ages: Early to Older (4–18) | **Time:** 30–45 minutes | **Materials:** Clipboard, paper, pencil

THE ACTIVITY

Count and record the different plants, insects, birds and animals you can see in your yard or local green space. Repeat monthly and compare.

ADAPTATIONS

- **Early (4–7):** Draw what you see
- **Middle (8–12):** Tally and graph
- **Older (13–18):** Identify species; discuss biodiversity

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Science & Technology (living things, environment)
- IGCSE: Biology (ecosystems, classification)
- IB: Environmental systems
- Charlotte Mason: Nature study

Idea 2: Weather Station

Ages: Middle to Older (7–18) | **Time:** Ongoing | **Materials:** Thermometer, rain gauge (a straight-sided jar), wind vane (paper and pin), notebook

THE ACTIVITY

Set up a simple weather station. Record temperature, rainfall and wind direction daily, and look for patterns across the seasons.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Science & Technology (weather)
- IGCSE: Geography (weather and climate)
- IB: Environmental systems

Idea 3: Tree Study

Ages: Early to Older (6–18) | **Time:** 30–60 minutes | **Materials:** Measuring tape, paper, pencil, crayon

THE ACTIVITY

Choose a tree. Measure its trunk, estimate its height, sketch its leaves and do a bark rubbing. Return each season to observe changes.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Science & Technology (plants)
- IGCSE: Biology (plants)
- Charlotte Mason: Nature study

Idea 4: Soil and Compost Investigation

Ages: Middle (8–14) | **Time:** 45–60 minutes | **Materials:** Trowel, jars, water, magnifying glass

THE ACTIVITY

Dig a small soil sample. Examine texture, colour and living things. Start a compost bin and observe decomposition. Wash hands well afterwards.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Science & Technology (soil, decomposition)
- IGCSE: Biology (decomposers, nutrient cycles)
- IB: Environmental systems

Category B: Community & Place

Idea 5: Local Walk and Map

Ages: Early to Middle (6–14) | **Time:** 45–60 minutes | **Materials:** Clipboard, paper, pencil

THE ACTIVITY

Walk a familiar route. Draw a map showing key features such as shops, trees and landmarks. Add a key.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Social Studies (community, mapping)
- IGCSE: Geography (maps, fieldwork)
- IB: Interdisciplinary (local and global)

Idea 6: Interview a Community Member

Ages: Middle to Older (9–18) | **Time:** 45–60 minutes | **Materials:** Notebook, questions, optional recorder

THE ACTIVITY

Interview a grandparent, neighbour or local worker about their life, work or memories of the area. Prepare questions beforehand and ask permission before recording.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Social Studies (community, culture)
- IGCSE: History (oral history), English (interviewing)
- IB: Interdisciplinary (cultural understanding)

Idea 7: Market Visit and Maths

Ages: Middle (8–14) | **Time:** 60–90 minutes | **Materials:** Small budget, list, calculator

THE ACTIVITY

Visit a local market with an adult. Compare prices, calculate totals, practise Kiswahili and make a simple purchase.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Mathematics (money), Kiswahili (language), Social Studies (trade)
- IGCSE: Maths (number, finance), Business (trade)

Idea 8: Mapping Your Family's Food

Ages: Middle to Older (8–18) | **Time:** 30–45 minutes | **Materials:** Paper, pencil, labels

THE ACTIVITY

Investigate where your food comes from. Map the journey of a meal from farm to plate.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Social Studies (food systems), Science (nutrition)
- IGCSE: Geography (food systems), Biology (nutrition)
- IB: Global contexts (sustainability)

Category C: Physical & Adventure

Idea 9: Obstacle Course

Ages: Early to Middle (5–12) | **Time:** 30–45 minutes | **Materials:** Household items, rope, cones

THE ACTIVITY

Design and run an obstacle course. Time each attempt. Improve the design.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Physical Education (movement)
- IGCSE: PE (physical activity)
- Life skills: Persistence, problem-solving

Idea 10: Nature Scavenger Hunt

Ages: Early (4–10) | **Time:** 20–30 minutes | **Materials:** List or pictures, bag

THE ACTIVITY

Find items on a list: a smooth stone, a yellow leaf, a feather, something that smells good.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Science & Technology (observation), PE (movement)
- Charlotte Mason: Nature study

Idea 11: Cycling or Walking Challenge

Ages: Middle to Older (7–18) | **Time:** 30–90 minutes | **Materials:** Bicycle or walking shoes, water

THE ACTIVITY

Set a weekly distance goal. Track progress. Explore new routes. Choose quiet, safe routes and wear a helmet when cycling.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: PE (fitness), Mathematics (data)
- IGCSE: PE (fitness), Maths (data)

Category D: Service & Stewardship

Idea 12: Litter Pick and Sort

Ages: Early to Older (5–18) | **Time:** 30–45 minutes | **Materials:** Gloves, bags, tongs

THE ACTIVITY

Clean a local area. Sort what you collect into recyclable and non-recyclable. Discuss waste management. Never pick up glass, needles or medical waste: leave these for an adult.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Science & Technology (environment), Social Studies (citizenship)
- IGCSE: Biology (pollution), Geography (environment)
- Faith-based: Stewardship

Idea 13: Tree Planting and Care

Ages: Early to Older (5–18) | **Time:** Ongoing | **Materials:** Seedling, spade, water

THE ACTIVITY

Plant a tree. Care for it weekly. Measure its growth over the year. Choose an indigenous species suited to your area, and plant at the start of the rains if you can.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Science & Technology (plants), Social Studies (environment)
- IGCSE: Biology (plants), Geography (environment)
- Faith-based: Stewardship, service

Idea 14: Community Garden

Ages: Early to Older (6–18) | **Time:** Ongoing | **Materials:** Plot or containers, seeds, tools

THE ACTIVITY

Grow vegetables. Share the harvest with a neighbour or use it for family meals.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Agriculture, Science (plants)
- IGCSE: Biology (plants), Design & Technology (food)
- Faith-based: Service, gratitude

Sack garden tip: Sack gardens work even in small spaces. Grow sukuma wiki, spinach, tomatoes, onions or herbs.

Idea 15: Visit and Support a Local Project

Ages: Middle to Older (8–18) | **Time:** Varies | **Materials:** Varies

THE ACTIVITY

Visit a local project such as a children's home, animal shelter, community centre or church outreach. Learn about their work. Find a way to help. Contact the project first and visit with an adult.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- CBC: Social Studies (citizenship)
- IGCSE: Global Perspectives (community)
- Faith-based: Service, compassion

Outdoor Learning Record Sheet

Item	Notes
Date and place	
Learning goal	
What we did	
What we observed or measured	
New words or facts	
Photos or drawings (file name)	
Curriculum link	
Safety notes and reflections	

Outdoor Learning Portfolio Evidence Checklist

- Nature journals
- Field notes and data
- Photos
- Maps and sketches
- Reflections: what I saw, what I learned, what I want to know next

Bringing It All Together

Cross-Curricular Project Examples

1. Our Compound Ecosystem (4 weeks)

A nature study (science), a measured map (maths), a field journal (English), an art piece based on your findings (art) and a presentation to family.

2. Clean Water Challenge (3 weeks)

Build a filter (STEM), research water sources in your county (geography), design a poster (art) and write a letter to a local leader (civics, English).

3. Mini Duka Enterprise (4 weeks)

Design a product (design), cost and price it (maths), make packaging (art), sell at a community event and reflect on profit (business and financial literacy).

Mapping Activities to Different Curricula

If you follow	Use these activities for	Evidence to keep
CBC	Competency development and community service learning	Learner portfolio, observation notes, projects
IGCSE / Cambridge	Practical skills, coursework preparation, fieldwork and investigations	Lab reports, sketchbooks, data tables
IB (PYP, MYP, DP)	Inquiry units, service, design cycle, internal assessment practice	Process journals, reflections, project logs
Other or blended	Skills practice and enrichment	Work samples and reflections

Tips for Parents

- Start small: one challenge, craft or outdoor trip a week is enough.
- Let children choose some projects. Ownership increases motivation.
- Ask open questions: what do you notice, what do you think will happen, why?
- Celebrate mistakes as part of the learning process.
- Mix ages: older children can mentor younger ones.
- Link activities to goals in your learning plan so they count as real learning, not just fun.
- Join other homeschool families for group projects, which also builds social skills.

MJK Educators provides these ideas for general educational use. Always supervise children, assess risks before each activity, and adapt to your child's age, ability and needs. Curriculum links are guides, not official alignments: check your syllabus or scheme of work for exact outcomes.