



## Let's Start a Backyard Camp - Day 1

In the summer, MCM hosts a special week of Backyard Camp, and we're sharing our plans for you to experience your own Backyard Camp. Begin by creating a gardening journal to keep track of your discoveries and observations. Our lessons are divided into days, with two activities per day, and broken down by age on our website, so you can tailor the lessons for the ages of your children. This is just one more way you can enjoy MCM at home!

**Morning | Food Scrap Planting:** Gather potato pieces with eyes, carrot tops, ends of green onions, garlic sections, or tops of pineapples. Plant them, water them, and watch them grow.

- **Pre-K:** With the help of your grownup, plant and water your food scraps. Check on your plants during the week. How is your plant changing?
- **Grades K-2:** Same instructions as above. In your journal, draw pictures of what you think your plant will look like. Check it every day and see how it changes. Use a ruler to measure the growth.
- **Grades 3-5:** Same instructions as above. Use your journal to describe your plants. Draw what is happening to the different plants and how they change over the course of a few weeks. Why do you think this is happening? With your grown-up's permission and help, research these plants.

**Afternoon | Excavation Sites:** Mark a few spots in the yard and dig with an appropriate tool to see what's under the dirt. Visit this spot every other day. What do you notice? Did it rain? Are there leaves?

- **Pre-K:** Parents can hide a few toys in the dirt and the children can "discover" them.
- **Grades K-2:** What did you find in the dirt? Draw it in your journal.
- **Grades 3-5:** Write about what you found at your site in your journal. What has changed from day to day? What type of weather have you had? Has the temperature made a difference to the area? What is on the surface of the site versus underneath the soil?

Please tag us on social media, [@mschildsmuseum](#) on Instagram and [@MississippiChildrensMuseum](#) on Facebook, using the hashtag [#mcmathome](#). You may also send us an email with any questions or ideas at [programs@mcm.ms](mailto:programs@mcm.ms)



## Let's Start a Backyard Camp - Day 2

---

In the summer, MCM hosts a special week of Backyard Camp, and we're sharing our plans for you to experience your own Backyard Camp. Begin by creating a gardening journal to keep track of your discoveries and observations. Our lessons are divided into days, with two activities per day, and broken down by age on our website, so you can tailor the lessons for the ages of your children. This is just one more way you can enjoy MCM at home!

**Morning | Bug Search:** Bugs are living creatures and outside is their home. Investigate them with care. What kind of bugs can you find? Are bugs insects? What about arachnids? How many body parts does a bug have? How many legs does a bug have?

- **Pre-K:** Hunt for different kinds of bugs and describe their colors and shapes. Talk about how to be kind to nature and that every part of nature has a purpose, even bugs we may find gross.
- **Grades K-2:** In your garden journal, draw pictures of the bugs you find. Identify what kind of bugs you find. See if you can label the different parts of your bugs.
- **Grades 3-5:** Find bugs and draw them in your garden journal. Identify what kind of bugs they are and their different body parts. Identify each bug's purpose and how we can protect them.

**Afternoon | Evaporation Station:** Label several identical cups and pour an equal, but small amount of liquid in each one – water, orange juice, salt water, or Capri Sun. Place them in a sunny spot outside. Set a timer for 1 hour and check the cups. Do you notice a change? Keep checking every hour and discuss any changes.

- **Pre-K:** Help pour the liquids into the cups.
- **Grades K-2:** Mark where the liquid is on your cups as each hour passes. Discuss any changes.
- **Grades 3-5:** Discuss how evaporation works. What do you know about the water cycle? Do you think sugar or salt make a difference on how fast the liquid evaporates? Does the liquid evaporate faster in the sun or in the shade? Write what you see in your journal.

Please tag us on social media, [@mschildsmuseum](#) on Instagram and [@MississippiChildrensMuseum](#) on Facebook, using the hashtag [#mcmathome](#). You may also send us an email with any questions or ideas at [programs@mcm.ms](mailto:programs@mcm.ms)



## Let's Start a Backyard Camp - Day 3

In the summer, MCM hosts a special week of Backyard Camp, and we're sharing our plans for you to experience your own Backyard Camp. Begin by creating a gardening journal to keep track of your discoveries and observations. Our lessons are divided into days, with two activities per day, and broken down by age on our website, so you can tailor the lessons for the ages of your children. This is just one more way you can enjoy MCM at home!

**Morning | Natural Color Wheel:** Take a walk and find items of different colors – place them on the ground in the shape of a rainbow.

- **Pre-K:** Identify basic colors of the items you found.
- **Grades K-2:** Discuss what color combinations make new colors. Lay out what you've found to represent these combinations. (For example, a blue flower and a yellow pollen pod with some green grass in between them.)
- **Grades 3-5:** Use the different colored items to create a collage. It can be abstract or a picture of something specific.

**Afternoon | Ice-y Time:** Collect a few items from your yard – fallen leaves, a flower or a rock. With the help of a grown up, put these items in a reusable container and cover with water. Place the items in the freezer. Do the items change when frozen? Do their colors change after they have thawed?

- **Pre-K:** Ask them to touch the items and describe how they feel. Can they see a color change?
- **Grades K-2:** What color were your items are when you first found them? Do they feel warm or cool? What else can you identify through touch? Do they change any when you put them in water? How do they change after they are frozen? After they are thawed?
- **Grades 3-5:** In your journal, keep a detailed log of how your items change with each stage of the process. Draw your items and write down any changes.

Please tag us on social media, [@mschildsmuseum](#) on Instagram and [@MississippiChildrensMuseum](#) on Facebook, using the hashtag [#mcmathome](#). You may also send us an email with any questions or ideas at [programs@mcm.ms](mailto:programs@mcm.ms)



## Let's Start a Backyard Camp - Day 4

---

In the summer, MCM hosts a special week of Backyard Camp, and we're sharing our plans for you to experience your own Backyard Camp. Begin by creating a gardening journal to keep track of your discoveries and observations. Our lessons are divided into days, with two activities per day, and broken down by age on our website, so you can tailor the lessons for the ages of your children. This is just one more way you can enjoy MCM at home!

**Morning | Natural Paint Brushes:** Attach a piece of nature to a stick using an elastic band or a piece of string. Lay out a roll of paper and use watercolor or other paint. Explore different patterns and textures each of the paintbrushes create.

- **Pre-K:** Children at this age will need a lot of hands-on guidance for this activity. Parents can be involved in helping picking out the materials, helping create their paint brushes, and guiding the careful use of paint.
- **Grades K-2:** Go outside and choose your materials for your paint brushes. Think about the different textures you can achieve by choosing different types of materials.
- **Grades 3-5:** Considering what materials to make your paint brushes from. Think about variables, such as how your paint brush will be different if you use a fresh leaf versus an old one, or a wet leaf versus a dry one. Can you think of anything unusual you could use for your paint brushes? What kind of materials could you add to your painting that could not be attached to the brush, such as sand?

**Afternoon | Leaf Identification:** Pick up different kinds of leaves off the ground. Look up these new vocabulary words: symmetry, conifer, deciduous, monocot or dicot, and see how they apply to your new leaf collection.

- **Pre-K:** Find different types of leaves. Can you identify colors, patterns, and shapes?
- **Grades K-2:** Draw pictures of your leaves in your garden journal and label the different parts. See if you can identify what kind of leaf it is.
- **Grades 3-5:** Create leaf rubbings in your garden journal. Label the different parts of the leaf and identify what kind of leaf it is.

Please tag us on social media, @mschildsmuseum on Instagram and @MississippiChildrensMuseum on Facebook, using the hashtag #mcmathome. You may also send us an email with any questions or ideas at [programs@mcm.ms](mailto:programs@mcm.ms)



## Let's Start a Backyard Camp - Day 5

---

**Morning | Cloud Drawings:** Read "It Looked Like Spilt Milk" by Charles Green Shaw. If you can't easily find a copy, there are a lot of great reading options on YouTube. Step outside and observe the clouds..

- **Pre-K:** Talk about what clouds look like. Use a white pencil, crayon, or chalk and draw the shapes you see in the clouds.
- **Grades K-2:** Use a white pencil, crayon, or chalk and draw the shapes you see in the clouds. Discuss the shading and shapes. Think about the weather. Is it going to rain? How do clouds change color? Are the clouds moving? Revisit the idea of evaporation from earlier in the week.
- **Grades 3-5:** In your garden journal, use a white pencil, crayon, or chalk and draw the shapes you see in the clouds. Color in the shading and pay attention to the shape. Are they cumulus, stratus, or cirrus? Investigate the different cloud types and what conditions they might appear under.

**Afternoon | Tree Rubbings:** This is a great chance to explore the parts of a tree without hurting the tree. You can also do this with fallen leaves. Unwrap the paper on a few crayons and use white paper. For children with smaller hands, adults may need to hold the paper against the tree trunk while the child uses the long side of the crayon. Older children may be able to maneuver on their own. Leaves are best done on a smooth, solid surface like a tabletop or desk.

- **Pre-K:** Identify the parts of a tree. Use new vocabulary words: roots, trunk, branches, and limbs. Use descriptive words when touching the plants.
- **Grades K-2:** What do plants need in order to grow and live? What is similar between your own body and a plant? (We both need food, water, and a protective covering.) Use a crayon and paper to take a rubbing of the driveway. What textures do you find? Compare them to the textures you found on the tree. Bark protects and holds up trees and helps them transport nutrients. Leaves make and store food for trees. What different textures do you see on the leaves?
- **Grades 3-5:** After creating rubbings of bark and leaves, use online resources to identify the names and characteristics of each plant. Use your vocabulary from earlier in the week: symmetry, conifer, deciduous, monocot, and dicot.

Please tag us on social media, @mschildsmuseum on Instagram and @MississippiChildrensMuseum on Facebook, using the hashtag #mcmathome.



## Backyard Camp Snacks

---

### Make Your Own Popsicles

- Gather ingredients already in your kitchen: juice, water, yogurt, and/or fruit.
- Use popsicle sticks and small cups or popsicle molding kits.
- Brainstorm flavors you like – strawberry and banana, blueberry and lemonade, orange and pineapple.
- Cut up fruit, mash the pieces in a bowl with a fork, and stir in your liquid of choice – or use a blender!
- Pour a few ounces of the mix into each cup or mold, cover with aluminum foil or plastic wrap, and insert a popsicle stick.
- Freeze overnight and enjoy your tasty treats!

### Camouflage Cookies

- Make a batch of plain sugar cookie dough and divide it in thirds.
- Work some cocoa powder into one third.
- Work some green food coloring into one third.
- Recombine as a whole – roll, cut, and bake!



### Smores Mix

- Graham Crackers (shaped snack sized grahams, graham flavored cereal)
- Marshmallows (mini or cut up big ones) and Chocolate Chips/M&Ms
- In a zippered plastic bag put some whole or already broken graham crackers. Crunch them up with hands into bite size pieces. Open the bag and add a shake or two of marshmallows and a shake or two of chocolate chips.

### Animal Pancakes

- It's an excellent time to play with your food. Cut up some fruit and add a few slices of bacon or sausage.
- Let the children make banana slice ears and blueberry noses on some round pancakes. How about wiggly bacon bunny ears? Can you make an owl? What about some thin apple slices for kitten whiskers?



Please tag us on social media, @mschildsmuseum on Instagram and @MississippiChildrensMuseum on Facebook, using the hashtag #mcmathome. You may also send us an email with any questions or ideas at [programs@mcm.ms](mailto:programs@mcm.ms)