

FAMILY ACTIVITY: WATER WALK

Water is used in many more ways than we even realize. The average American family uses more than 300 gallons per day at home. Think of the ways we use water:

Teeth brushing: 1 gallon

Flushing the toilet: 2 gallons

Shower: 5 gallons per minute

Dishwasher: 6 gallons

Drinking: 1/2 gallon per person

Water is fundamental to life. What if our access was cut off? Imagine all the ways our daily routines would change. How much water does your family use? How many times would you have to go to the river or waterhole to get dirty water? The risks are huge — every day nearly 1,000 children die from diarrhea due to poor water, sanitation, and hygiene. But what is a mother to do if she has no alternative to dirty water?

Learn what it takes to get water for your basic needs. Play outside if possible. If you need to play inside, use a non-carpeted room, put down towels, and have a mop on hand to clean up spilled water. Expect to get wet! What you'll need:

2 buckets (or large mixing bowls)

2 large sponges (or plastic cups)

Towels

Play the game with your family

Place the buckets about 15 feet apart. One bucket is “home” and the other is the “watering hole” where you get the water. Your goal (either as one team or divide into teams and make it a race; just double your materials) is to bring water home — by carrying it in a sponge on your head, with no hands!

Place the empty sponge on your head at home and walk to the watering hole. Once there, take the sponge off your head, put it in the bucket, and let it soak up as much water as it can. Then put the full sponge on top of your head, remove your hands, and walk back home. Squeeze the water from the sponge into the bucket using your hands and give the sponge to the next person, who will repeat the steps. Continue until the watering hole is empty!

If at any time the sponge falls off your head, return to the line you left and start over. If you drop it on the way to the watering hole, start back at home. If you drop it on your way home, start back at the watering hole.

Play it forward: What did you learn?

How long did it take you to get all the water home? How would life change for someone who went from traveling hours each day to a watering hole to having easy access to plentiful, clean water?