



**T**he Nature Center at Mt. Aetna is a Christian facility dedicated to the exploration of God's first book, nature. We believe that there are many life lessons that can be learned while considering the wonders of God's creations.

**T**he Nature Center is open to the public on Saturday afternoons from 2:00 to 5:00 PM. Admission is free. Additional hours may be added at any time. Weekday tours or rentals may be arranged by calling the office.

**A**t MACRC we have heated cabins and guest rooms to sleep up to 200, a cafeteria that seats 175, meeting rooms for groups large and small, a seasonal swimming pool, hiking trails, canoeing, basketball and of course, a fabulous nature center.

**W**e offer summer camp programs for children and youth, and outdoor school sessions in the spring and fall for 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. We also offer challenge course/team building programs for ages ten and up.

**T**he center is located just an hour northwest of Washington DC, an hour west of Baltimore, and only 3 miles off Interstate 70 at Exit 35.



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH  
[www.adventist.org](http://www.adventist.org)

**Mt. Aetna Camp and Retreat Center**

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# Will it eat me?

*A story of reconnection*

*A short  
story by  
Charlene  
Milam*



**D**ADDY, HOW DID THE LITTLE ANIMAL GET IN THAT shell? Was it born there?"

"Daddy, what's a hab — hab-it-tat?"

"Hey Dad! Look at that rhino! It must be big as our van!"



"Daddy, daddy! Can I feed the birds? Will they eat out of my hand? How come they don't fly away when I get close to them?"

I love being a dad, it's the most wonderful feeling in the whole world. But life has gotten so hectic just

trying to make ends meet, it seems like quality time with my children keeps getting pushed further and further down the priority list. If I don't make an effort now, my kids will soon be grown and gone. I don't want that to happen.

So we made a pact. At least once a month we go on what we like to call an "adventure." Today we've come to spend some time at the *Nature Center at Mt. Aetna* in Hagerstown, Maryland. It's just a short drive away and it's packed with fun things to see and do. I admit the chaos theory is always at work when our family goes anywhere, but here at this nature center, you will find only the footprints of God, no

evolution theories stain the majestic handiwork of our Creator.

You can wander slowly through the seven days of creation, one stained glass window at a time. Or stalk the tadpoles in the pond, where we also found frogs, turtles, geese and fish. So, we got a little muddy, nobody minded when we trekked inside to watch the birds feed in the one-way mirror room.



"Daddy," my six-year-old whispered, eyes huge as she encountered an eight foot tall grizzly bear. "Is that a real bear? Will it eat me?"

"Nah, silly! It's stuffed!" The ten-year-old scoffed, without letting go of my hand. "How do you tell the difference between a cheetah and a leopard, Dad?"

"You have to count the spots."

"Really? But you'd have to get awful close to do that?"

"No you don't," responded the six-year-old. "You use binoculars!"

We spent the whole afternoon exploring the grounds, watching a nature video, and wandering through the exhibits, talking about how things work; why God made

some of the things he did, like beautiful coral that lives way down at the bottom of the ocean where mostly only fish see it; and how wonderful it would have been to be there when God created our world.



**W**e ended up back at the stained glass creation windows for one last look before we left. They make a powerful statement, even to my six-year-old.

"Daddy, do you think God thought about our family while he was making the world?"

"You know honey, I bet He did."

