

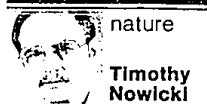
# Teach children uninhibited awe

**T**HE HOLIDAY season is a wonderful time of the year, particularly when we watch children gazing at Santa Claus or marveling at their new toys.

Children have a natural curiosity that often leads to wonder if properly nurtured. For instance, Santa is a wonder because of the stories that are told. But many things in nature make wonderful topics, too.

Adults need not be experts in natural history or identification of plants, birds or insects to evoke a sense of wonder. A stroll through the woods or forest can inspire exhilarations of many subjects.

Stopping to look at a tree and exclaiming about its size can stimu-



nature  
**Timothy Nowicki**

lating if approached with a sense of amazement. Then hold hands and see if you can reach around the tree to get a feeling of how big it really is.

**WITH THE USE** of a simple and inexpensive hand lens, a whole new world can be discovered for those uninitiated.

Look closely at a snowflake that has fallen on your glove and learn what the word "wonder" really means.

Or examine the network of veins in a partially decayed leaf.

Uninhibited awe of the marvels of shape, growth, complexity, color or any other facet of life should not be reserved for just children. Too often adults lose their sense of wonder, or inhibit it because it is frequently associated with children. But as history has documented, only men that wonder discover something new.

Natural subjects are excellent topics to instill a sense of wonder. They provide endless opportunities for interaction between parents and children, or for research among adults.

Wondering about something leads to further inquiry, which can lead to more questions. Developing a sense of wonder is a marvelous gift to give and an attribute that should last through the ages.

**RACHEL CARSON**, author of "Silent Spring," wrote an essay about the sense of wonder, and in it she said:

If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength."



A parent doesn't have to be a scientist to teach a child — just convey the wonder of nature by exclaiming at a tree's amazing size.

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