

Underground Adventures

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED what it would be like to explore an underground cave? There are thousands of caves around the world, and many more are formed each day!

What Is a Cave?

A cave is a hollow space underground with a large opening. Caves can be narrow passages or huge tunnels that stretch for miles. Very large caves are also called caverns.

How Are Caves Formed?

Caves form in different ways. Most caves are solution caves, which form from limestone, a soft rock that breaks down easily in water. When water flows through small cracks in limestone, the rock dissolves, and the cracks get bigger. Over time these cracks become holes large enough for people to walk through! Ocean waves can also form sea caves.

What Animals Live in Caves?

You may have heard of bats living in caves, but lots of other animals do too. These cave creatures are called troglobites. Because there's little or no light in a cave, many of these animals are blind. Troglobites include some species of spiders, beetles, fish, millipedes, and salamanders.

Make Your Own Cave Crystals!

Have you ever heard of stalactites? They look like big icicles hanging from the ceiling of some caves. As water drips from the ceiling, mineral deposits are left behind to form these amazing creations. Stalagmites are similar to stalactites but form on cave floors underneath dripping water. Take a look at the activity below to make your own cave creations!

What you will need:

- » a plastic container large enough to hold two jars
- » aluminum foil

- » two small glass jars
- » baking soda
- » food coloring (optional)
- » paper towels
- » a spoon

1. Line the plastic container with aluminum foil and place the two jars in the container.
2. Fill the two jars with very hot water. (Ask an adult for help.)
3. Add five or six spoonfuls of baking soda to each jar. Stir well. Add more baking soda until no more can dissolve in the water.
4. (Optional) Add a few drops of food coloring to each jar.
5. Cut two strips of paper towel about half an inch wide. Dip the ends of the strips into each jar so that the paper towel forms a bridge between the jars. (You could also use a thick piece of yarn or string instead.)
6. Make sure that the liquid in the jars soaks into the paper towel bridges. It's OK if the liquid drips into the container. Check your cave crystals over the next few days to see how they form!

Caves in the Bible

Did you know that caves are mentioned in the Bible? People in biblical times used caves as hiding places or shelters. David stayed in the cave of Adullam when he was hiding from King Saul (1 Sam. 22:1-2). This cave was large enough for him, his family, and 400 other men! Sometimes David wrote psalms to God while he was in the cave. Here is an example from Psalm 142:1: "I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy."

Whether you are exploring a cave, playing in your backyard, or resting in your bedroom, remember that God is always with you and that God hears your prayers! **B**



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