

STORIES IN THE SKY



BY NAOMI OVANDO

Is it a king sitting on his throne, a monkey eating a banana, or a dolphin jumping out of the water? Do you remember looking up at the clouds when you were a child and being fascinated by all the stories that took place in the sky? Sometimes I look up at the clouds and gasp at their beautiful shapes and glorious colors.

I love watching clouds and seeing them take different forms as they move across the sky. Blue, clear skies are pretty, but clouds add beauty and drama. They make magnificent sunrises and striking, colorful sunsets. They can be white and fluffy, thin and wispy, dark and ominous. They continually change shape, move, appear, and disappear. Clouds are nature's poetry and storytellers.



Cloud watching is something everyone can enjoy, and it can be done anywhere that you have a clear view of the sky. Gazing up at the clouds will fill you with awe and wonder. It encourages creativity and imagination, connects you to the natural world, and allows you to slow down and relax.

Step outside and find a comfortable spot to lay on the grass with your kids. Look up and let yourself be surprised. Clouds spark the imagination and in just a few minutes, you'll witness them morphing into many different animals and shapes. Let your imagination run wild and enjoy seeing how clouds are like an ever-evolving painting in the sky. If you observe them at sunrise or sunset, you'll witness a beautiful palette of colors.





Watching clouds is both art and science. Clouds are made up of hundreds of millions of tiny water droplets or ice crystals. They can take on an endless array of shapes and sizes due to the changes in sunlight, atmospheric disturbances, and physics. Observe how the shapes of clouds change, how they grow and dissipate. In addition to all the beauty and magic that clouds possess, they also teach us about the weather.

There are four main types of clouds that you can look for:

CUMULUS: Light, fluffy clouds, which look like clumps of cotton wool. These clouds are usually a sign of fair weather. Their big, puffy appearance looks so comfortable, making you wish you could lay in them. They grow into animals, people, and endless shapes that are only limited by the imagination. Look for cumulus clouds on sunny days. They are the best for finding the wide variety of shapes.

STRATUS: They are grey layers or patches of cloud with very diffuse edges. They are like a sheet or overcast veil that casts a drab, dreary light and are sometimes at ground level and called fog or mist.

CIRRUS: Thin, white, feathery, wispy strands of clouds that are made from ice crystals. They look like brushstrokes or wisps of hair and are usually seen at higher altitudes. This type of cloud can be the first sign of moisture developing and can mean rain is on its way.

NIMBUS: Large and grey in color, nimbus clouds hang low across the sky. They carry large amounts of water and bring prolonged rain or snow.





Here are a few ways to enjoy cloud gazing and the stories in the sky:

1. On a day when clouds are present in the sky, head out to your backyard or another area where you have a clear view of the sky. Set out a blanket or towel, lay down, get comfortable and look up at the sky.
2. Talk about what you see with your children. What shapes do you see? Can you observe any animals? Use your imagination and let it go wild! Can you create a story about the different things you see in the sky?
3. Just stopping to gaze at the clouds and enjoying your time together is enough, but if you'd like to take it further, you can draw or paint the different types and shapes of clouds that you observe. If you saw a horse in the clouds, can you draw or paint it? Can you write a poem about what you observe?
4. Capture clouds by taking photos or videos of them. I love taking photos of clouds near sunset when they light up the sky in beautiful colors. Creating a time-lapse video is fun, and you'll be able to see how much clouds move.
5. Observe clouds during different times of the day to see how they change in color, size and shape.

Slow down, look up, and keep your head in the clouds. Good and beautiful things will come from it.

A woman with long, dark, curly hair is walking on a grassy hillside at sunset. She is wearing a white, tiered, sleeveless dress and a colorful, patterned shawl. She is smiling and looking down at a young girl who is walking ahead of her. The girl is also wearing a white, tiered, sleeveless dress and is walking away from the camera. The background shows rolling hills and a sunset sky.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Naomi lives with her husband and children in sunny Southern California. She's been homeschooling her two boys and little girl from the start. Her homeschooling journey is growing her and stretching her like none other, and she is grateful for God's faithfulness and grace. She is a hobbyist photographer and loves taking storytelling photos of her family. Going on outdoor adventures with her family is one of her favorite things to do. She can often be found in the nearby mountains or at the beach with camera in tow.

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