

TREE AMULET

Make and give a tree gift made of natural materials



Goal: To be inspired by nature. The children will make a tree amulet for someone special to them. They will be outdoors and using natural items and their creativity to see how they are able to work without instructions or a given procedure. They will discover what is possible to be designed and created from natural materials in an outdoor studio.

How long: 20–60 minutes

Who: 7–99

Where: A place in nature, among the trees, where there are plenty of natural resources

When: All year round (start in the warm part of the year)

You need: Natural materials, pads, cushions, scissors, and string; other tools and materials are optional

1. GET INSPIRED

Not only have the children experienced many things among the trees, they have also built, manufactured and invented. They will now try to find inspiration from nature and push the boundaries of their own creativity and skill. The challenge is clear – to invent and make their own tree amulet for a loved one. Not only can the children give the present to a friend, a family member, or a relative but also to a tree, a flower, an animal neighbour or a place around them. It will be left up to the children to decide what they will produce and give this time. They could be shown a few examples of what is possible and reminded of what they have made already and from what and how. They can make characters, mythical animals or idols from twigs, knots, pine cones, leaves, nuts, shells, grass, moss, lichens, stones etc. Some people prefer to make small painted or carved totems, wands, hanging decorations from flexible twigs, or pendants, feather hangings, headbands and bracelets from any natural materials.

2. MAKE YOUR ...

The children should be encouraged to find inspiration by taking a walk around their setting. Meanwhile all the basic equipment the children will use and a few natural materials that might not be locally available are laid out and prepared. It is also useful to get to work and start making something. This is because some children may find it difficult to come up with an idea and their own workflow. They will feel comfortable to first imitate or follow a clear procedure and only later embark on their own projects. Those who have got inspired and found the natural materials they need can find a spot and start creating. If you need to set a time frame, arrange with the children when exactly you will meet up for sharing.

TIP: This activity is about giving the children as much creative freedom as possible. It is good to be nearby to offer support to the children but they should be allowed as much space as possible to develop their own ideas. This does mean they should be allowed some minor failures and to make mistakes.



3. PRESENT THE AMULETS

Meet in a circle under a tree to share not only what you have made, for whom and how it was made. Where did you get the inspiration for the idea? What materials did you use and how was it made? What was challenging? What did you enjoy? The most beautiful part will be to talk about what makes the amulet special and for whom it was made. This sharing should be voluntary so that children do not feel pressured if they do not want to talk about it.

EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITY'S GOAL (EVIDENCE OF LEARNING)

- The children have found their own inspiration in nature, in part due to previous out-of-doors projects.

