

## *Summer: Energy!!*

### **Flower Pressing and Drying**



### **Summer, Autumn and Spring Activity**

**Introduction:** First, always ask permission to collect flowers if they are not in your yard. Check with your local Native Plant Society, nurseries, or County Extension Office to obtain a list of endangered/protected flowers/plants. Second, read about your flowers and learn if they have any toxicity or allergic cautions. Many plants and flowers can irritate the skin, especially in sensitive individuals. A good investment is a Wildflower Field guide for your area. You can take your books, pamphlets, and other information with you when you set out to collect flowers. A suggestion is that you could, after your research and if you have the outdoor space, enjoy broadcasting wildflower seeds in your own yard to grow, enjoy, dry, and press. Perhaps in a neighborhood community garden or a plan with a neighbor, you can find the possibilities open up for your own supply of safe to pick flowers.

When you do collect, never pull the flower up by the roots. Always clip with good gardening shears. And never collect flowers that are sparse in numbers. Only take flowers that are among many more of their kind. Please leave the single and small numbers to flourish.

**Materials needed:** Wisely chosen flowers, cardboard pieces, old newspapers or paper towels, rubber bands or string, a heavy book, and patience.

#### **Flower Pressing Steps:**

- 1) After gently collecting flowers, arrange individually or in small groups on piece of newspaper or paper towel. Have 2 precut cardboard boards ready (2 boards per press), anywhere from 6" by 4" to as large as 12" x 9".
- 2) Layer your flower arrangements in between the two boards, in between the papers, making sure each set of flowers has a paper towel or newspaper under and over it, to create a "sandwich".
- 3) Use string or rubber bands to hold them together securely.
- 4) Find a heavy book(s) to set the presses under for a few days.

- 5) In a short time, you'll have lovely colors and shapes of flowers to create cards, to frame, or to place in a clear jar to enjoy for a long time! Over time, of course, the pressed flowers will fade. Then, kindly return them to the earth with Gratitude.

#### **Flower Drying Steps:**

- 1) After your lovely vase of roses or other flowers you want to preserve still have color and are not drooping, you can lift them from the vase and cut off the damp/wet stems, leaving enough stem to gather the flowers together.
- 2) Using a string or rubber band, tie the stem at the bottom together, leaving a loop so you can hang the flowers up....up side down.
- 3) Find a quiet spot where you can hang your bouquet upside down until the flowers become stiff yet keep their colors.
- 4) In a dry vase, you can now display your flowers for a while longer! You can even leave them hanging for display, too.
- 5) Like the pressed flowers, they won't last forever. Kindly return to the earth or put in compost when the colors fade.

#### **Connections through the senses:**

- 1) Body movement: be a flower unfolding, open arms and lift face to sun. Do this to silence or to music. Welcome the bees and sway in the wind.
- 2) Draw a flower (or flowers, depending on age) in contour line (outline, lines only), start at the top of the page and make it big! Try to draw without looking at the paper. Draw to music or outside looking at the flowers in their habitat. Add colors later (paint, crayons, etc.) or create a separate painting of a flower(s), again, think big!
- 3) Listening: sit in a meadow or park or yard...anywhere there are flowers. Spend a few moments listening. What do the flowers say? How do they feel?
- 4) Textures: with careful judgment, touch the flower petals and stems. How are they different? What does the center feel like? Is there pollen? (Careful if allergies are an issue).
- 5) And, as always, take time to smell the flowers!!

## Chalk Art



### Introduction:

When we see chalk art on our walks about the neighborhood, it always brings a smile to our hearts. Children and adults alike can engage in this fun activity. Buy non-toxic chalk that rinses easily. Remember that chalk will be carried away with water down to your drains and into your streams and water supply (filtered, of course), so we want to choose what causes no harm. There are many artists creating chalk art, so have fun researching online, but don't get intimidated by their results. Especially if you are doing this activity with children, you can't go wrong with the bright colors and sunshine!

**Materials needed:** Non-toxic sidewalk chalk, knee pads for older folks.

### Chalk Art Steps:

- 1) Choose a place that is flat and consider the texture of the surface in terms of how smooth or bumpy it will be to draw on. No worry, sidewalks are fine, but remember the chalk stick will run down rather quickly.
- 2) Think of shapes you can draw and color in that could (or not) make animals, plants, etc. For younger children, basic shapes like circles, squares, triangles, etc. Rainbows and flowers seem to be popular chalk art objects.
- 3) Try tracing shadows for your child to color in. It's a fun way to learn basic body proportions, self-expression, and awareness of shadows depending on the angle of the sun.

### Connections through the senses:

- 1) Before tracing your child's shadow, engage in a dance where you make your shadows dance! Then, settle on a pose for tracing. Song: "Me and My Shadow"
- 2) Is the surface rough or smooth? Notice how that affects the colors.
- 3) Sit with your shadow(s) and just listen. Let your heart be filled with gratitude!

## Painting with water, Drawing in Sand, and Creating Stories



### Introduction: Painting with Water

This is a very simple and yet elegant activity. Clean and fun.

**Materials needed:** bucket or pail/pan of water, paint brush(es), sunshine, dry areas like sidewalk, side of house or garage

### Steps:

- 1) Fill a bucket or pail with water. If a hose is nearby, great. Be careful, water is heavy!
- 2) Demonstrate “painting” on the surface with water. Magic!
- 3) Hand the brush to your child and watch pure fun!!
- 4)

### Connections through the senses: Water Painting

- 1) Movement: be a water molecule flowing through a river!
- 2) What does water sound like? Pay attention to splashes and noise it creates when filling the bucket.
- 3) What does water feel like? Describe and write down the words later.
- 4) Does water smell?

### Introduction: Drawing Lines

This activity can be done any place that has a surface that is soft where you/your child can create lines. The beach, a play field with soft gravel, a garden with dirt that is in between planting seasons, etc.

**Materials needed:** Sticks can be used or hands, and the above mentioned surfaces.

### Steps:

- 1) You can start with drawing lines in the air and dancing.

- 2) Sing or play music (in your head even!) while you create wavy, straight, zig zag, dotted, long, short, thick, thin, lines. No images required but if it goes that way, great!

3)

### **Connections through the senses: Drawing Lines**

- 1) Can you be a line? How can you move?
- 2) How does the sand or surface feel?
- 3) Are there any smells?
- 4) Can you create lines while listening to music? This can be done later indoors. Children respond to music by free-drawing lines on a piece of paper with a black crayon. Can add color later. (See my *Art á la Cart Memoir*, due to be released in 2021 for this lesson in the back of the book!)

### **Introduction: Creating Stories**

Our natural world is full of potential stories. Every excursion outdoors presents insects, birds, plants, and animals that can inspire us to write about the experience later. This helps with recall, and imbeds the memory more deeply into our brains. It's making a connection your child can return to many times as a bedtime story or you child can "read" to someone else.

**Materials needed:** After the experience a pen/pencil, paper, and any illustrating tools like crayons to illustrate. A camera is helpful to document for recalling later the image/sequence.

### **Steps: An Example**

- 1) Jaxon and I were playing in our back yard when we saw a dragonfly resting on the side of the house. It was sleeping in the sunshine.
- 2) We went to the dragonfly and watched him. It triggered conversation and questions like: Is it dreaming? Why does the dragonfly like sleeping in the sun? Look how translucent the wings are! How many wings does it have? How do dragonflies fly? What color is it? Our shadows were cast on the wall next to the dragonfly and we spread our arms and flew like a dragonfly.
- 3) I took a close up of the dragonfly so we could talk about it later.
- 4) Later, I asked Jaxon to tell me the story about seeing the dragonfly that day. He narrated about how we found it sleeping and we wondered if it was dreaming. He described it had four wings and a long tail and it was a golden color.
- 5) We made a dragonfly out of a popsicle stick, some scrap papers for wings, made two black dots for the big eyes. I took a photo of that and put together a booklet to read to him that night. He loved it and wanted to read it many times.



### Connections through the senses: Creating stories (specifically here, Insects)

- 1) Can you be a Dragon fly (or any insect you're looking at)? How does it move and/or fly?
- 2) What does it look like? Draw simple lines and shapes to create the image. You can also make an insect out of simple materials like popsicle sticks, yarn, etc. like in the example above).
- 3) Listening: What does the insect sound like? Can you make the sound?
- 4) If you got to hold it (a butterfly, a worm, a ladybug), what did it feel like?
- 5) Does the insect have a smell?

## Painting rocks

### Introduction:

It's fun to find smooth rocks to paint. Choose an earth-friendly paint ([www.beampaints.com](http://www.beampaints.com) or [www.naturalearthpaint.com](http://www.naturalearthpaint.com))

and a shady spot (better to allow paint to dry in the shade, it will be less likely to peel off right away) and enjoy making a colorful assortment of painted rocks. You can start with primary colors, then secondary, etc. Choose different sizes of rocks to paint as well. Indigenous people all over the world painted in caves and on rocks and those are called Petroglyphs. You can look up all kinds of petroglyph images and create your own on larger rocks! Also, older children like to paint flowers, ladybugs, and other images on rocks. Adapt to what age group you are working with and enjoy the fun! Bear in mind, these earth-friendly paints will not last, so be sure to snap some photos!! The next time it rains or there's a sprinkler nearby, you can watch the colors slip away and the rocks will be ready to be repainted another day!! Notice in the photo below that we also placed twigs by the painted rocks to complete the fun. In the second photo, you can also "paint" rocks with plain water! It's fascinating to observe the darker shapes created by the water disappear. But take a quick photo because it vanishes fast!

**Materials needed:** Earth friendly paints, water, container to mix paint in, brushes, assorted rocks in various sizes, smooth is best to paint on, but you can try more rough surfaced rocks, too. Additional things like sticks, pine cones, etc. are fun to incorporate.



**Steps:**

- 1) Collect your rocks. Find a sunny place with some shade to work.
- 2) Paint the rocks any way you like!
- 3) Assemble into interesting composition, add sticks, etc. if you like.
- 4) You can use just water instead of paint, too! Use a small container of water, a paintbrush, and have fun! Watch the water being absorbed by the rock and evaporate into the sunshine!

**Connections through the senses: Rock Painting**

- 1) Can you be as still as a rock? For how long?
- 2) Draw rocks with any media, you can draw lots of smaller rocks or one big one!
- 3) Listening: Does the rock make any sounds?
- 4) What does the rock feel like? Explore different textures of different rocks. Why are they different?
- 5) Do rocks have a smell?

# Make your own Magic Art Cart!

## Introduction, Materials, and Steps:

There are summer days when it's too hot or rainy to go outside. On those days, find a spare cardboard box, scraps of colored papers, crayons, glue, and decorate your box with shapes, lines, colors, textures, and any images you choose. You are creating a storage box for magic! You see, everyone needs a Magic Art Cart (see my website, Books page) to have supplies ready for artmaking! You can keep sketchbooks, drawing, painting supplies, rulers, glue, etc. handy so when it's time to engage in a creative activity, all your art tools are ready! Choose a box that's not too small... Then, when you have time on these indoor days, read my Magic Art Cart Trilogy about amazing art adventures!! Let your imagination take you away!



## Connections through the senses:

- 1) Go on a Magic Art Cart Adventure!
- 2) Where will you go?
- 3) When in time? Past, present, future?
- 4) What will you see there?
- 5) What will you hear there?
- 6) How will it feel?
- 7) Will you meet any artists?
- 8) Can you draw this place where you go? Example: Fly to the moon! Create a moonscape, or if you're in a city, draw buildings, or if you are in the forest, draw trees, etc.
- 9) Can you write a story about your adventure? You can illustrate it!
- 10) How can you share your adventure story?