



# Native American Activities

Agape Center for Environmental  
Education

# Native American: Quillwork Craft (4-8)



This activity focuses on Native American crafts used in the northern portions of the United States.

### Supplies:

- Dyed quills
- Birch bark cut into circles (about the size of the mouth of a cup); enough for 2 circles per student
  - String
  - Tweezers
- Containers (to hold the quills in- will fill these up with hot water to make them more flexible, so keep that in mind)
  - Masking tape
  - Scissors
- Poking instrument (to poke holes through the birch bark)
  - Pencils
  - Needles
  - Clothespins

Order dyed porcupine quills here:

<https://www.wanderingbull.com/SingleItemResults.asp?ID=631>

Order sheets of birch bark here:

[http://www.amazon.com/s/?ie=UTF8&keywords=birch+bark+sheets&tag=googhvdr-20&index=aps&hvadid=31551578957&hvpos=1t1&hvexid=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=5269829684033903670&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvgmt=e&hvdev=c&ref=pd\\_sl\\_fj8ns689g\\_e](http://www.amazon.com/s/?ie=UTF8&keywords=birch+bark+sheets&tag=googhvdr-20&index=aps&hvadid=31551578957&hvpos=1t1&hvexid=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=5269829684033903670&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvgmt=e&hvdev=c&ref=pd_sl_fj8ns689g_e)

### Directions:

- Before you get started: place the quills in hot water in containers spread out on the tables. The hot water will make the quills more flexible and less brittle. Make sure to caution students about being careful with the quills! They have barbs that make them extremely painful to pull out once they get stuck.
- Pass out two birch bark circles to each student. Have them put one off to the side for the end.
- Have the students draw a SIMPLE design on the birch bark (examples: sun, pine tree, turtle, etc.).
- Draw dots on the design every 2 cm (about the size of your pinky finger nail) and at every point or turn in the pattern.
- Using the poking instrument, poke a hole through the birch bark on the dots. Placing a piece of cardboard behind the bark is always a good idea.
- Use the tweezers to pick up one quill. Place the end of the quill through one of the holes about 1/3 of the length of the quill. Then use the tweezers to bend the quill over and place the other end through the second hole. This should create a line on the side of your pattern.
  - Repeat with the quills until your pattern is complete.
- After the pattern is done, very carefully cut all the tips of the quills off into the trash. (Highly recommend that the teacher does this step).
- Then, using masking tape, push the quills down from the side (so you don't push the quills out) and tape them down.
- Now get the other birch bark piece and put it on the back of the first circle. Keep them together with a clothespin or two. Then poke holes around the edges of the circles while they are still back to back.
  - Use the needle and string to sew the two birch circles together.
  - Leave enough string at the end to make it an ornament or necklace.

# Native American: The Legends of the Native Americans(5-8)

This activity focuses on Native American stories and looks to exercise the creativity of the students.

Supplies:

- Paper
- Writing Utensils

Directions:

- Native Americans have some really fascinating stories that they tell; often these stories are about the origin of something in nature.
- Share some stories with your students.
- Then ask them to pick something in nature to write their own origin story.
- Add specifications to your liking.
- Additionally could have the students pick a tribe, research their stories, and then write their own story modeled after the ones that they read.
- Also can ask for illustrations/create a story book out of their own origin story.

# Native American: Pine Tea (K-8)

This activity focuses on Native American culture by drinking their own pine tea.

## Supplies:

- Pine needles
- A way to boil water
- Thermos with hot water (if you want to have tea on the hike)
  - Cups
  - Knife
- Strainer (optional)

## Directions:

- Take the students for a hike (if able).
- Collect pine needles on the hike (The younger the better- green needles).
- Wash pine needles off and take off brown ends.
- Chop up needles into small sections (about  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  long).
- Put needles into boiling water, and let them steep for about 5-10 minutes.
  - Strain out needles if desired.
    - Enjoy the tea!
- Discuss Native American life styles and eating habits while partaking.

## Additional Information:

If you would like more information or picture directions, follow the link provided:  
<http://www.practicalprimitive.com/skillofthemonth/pineneedletea.html>