

Create Crystal Ornaments

Do you remember making rock candy when you were a kid? Watching sugar crystals form is fascinating and fun for children. In this activity, kids experiment with molecules and watch them join together, as they create a pretty decoration to hang in the house.



What You Need:

- 1 cup water
- Sauce pan
- 1 ½ cups of sugar
- Spoon
- Clear drinking glass with a wide mouth or a small glass bowl
- Colored pipe cleaners
- 6 inch piece of cotton string for each pipe cleaner
- 6 inch piece of ribbon for each pipe cleaner
- Paper towels

What You Do:

1. Show your child how to pour water into the saucepan and boil the water. Discuss with your child about how the heat makes the water boil. Be sure that your child keeps a safe distance from the stove and pan while the water is boiling.
2. Pour the water into the glass cup or bowl. Add the sugar into the glass and stir. Have your child watch as the sugar dissolves into the water. Keep adding sugar until it no longer can dissolve.
3. Have your child make a shape with the pipe cleaner, such as a circle, heart or star. Then tie the cotton string to the top of each pipe cleaner shape, to form a hangable ornament.
4. After the water has cooled slightly, lower the pipe cleaner into the glass. Tie its string to the pencil and lay the pencil across the top of the glass, so the ornament can dry.
5. Set the glass in a place where your child can observe it, but where it won't be disturbed. Talk about how sugar molecules are attracted to each other and join together to create crystals. Ask her what she thinks will happen.
6. Over the next few days, crystals will begin to form on the pipe cleaners. When the pipe cleaners are covered in crystals, gently pull each one from its glass.
7. Set each ornament on a paper towel to dry. When it's dried, remove the cotton string from the top of the ornament and replace it with a pretty ribbon.
8. You can hang your ornament on a window pane, on your Christmas tree, or anywhere else your family will enjoy it. If you want to hang it on a window, tie a suction cup to the end of the ribbon. When it's time to put the ornament away, can store it in a plastic zip lock bag for next year.