

Make Like a Bird and Nest

This is a great project that encourages kids to really think as animals do, and in the process, make something interesting. Ask them how they think a bird makes its nest and see what they say. Then tell them you are going to be like birds today and make your own nests!

Using your own backyard, or a neighborhood park, help your kids gather the items they think a bird would need to make a nest. These nests may not look pretty, but kids will understand how hard it is to create something out of just what nature offers. If they ask for glue, don't give in! This is a nature only project!

What You Need:

- Sticks
- Grass
- Leaves
- Pine needles
- Newspaper
- Paper
- Pen or pencil

What to Do:

1. Ask the kids what they think goes into making a bird's nest. Write the items on a piece of paper. Encourage them to think outside the box. If they suggest gum wrappers, for example, go with it.
2. Take them outside, either in the backyard or a neighborhood park, and start scavenging for the items that they mentioned. Encourage them to think about what in nature is pliable, what it is sturdy, and what a bird has access to out in the wild.
3. Bring in the items and place them on a newspaper. Have the kids try to manipulate the grass and twigs and other items into a bird's nest shape. Tell them not to worry if it doesn't look like a nest. The idea is to get them thinking about what kinds of things would make it hold shape.
4. Encourage them to weave items together, like the pine needles and grass. See if they can just use their two fingers, mimicking a bird's beak, to get items to stick together.
5. To take this a step further, check out some books at your local library about birds native to your area. See what kinds of things they use to build a nest and how they put them together. Talk about why they build them high up in a tree and whether that is a key element to keeping the nest together.
6. Have the kids display their nests outside in a tree. You never know, you might make a family of birds very happy to visit!

