

Craft a Papier-Mache Santa Boot

Art can be a lot of fun for kids, but did you know it also helps improve sensory awareness, fine motor skills, problem-solving skills, and self esteem? This engaging project will stimulate your child's imagination and get both of you into the holiday spirit. And the result of your efforts? A durable, three-dimensional Santa boot that looks great as a stocking, gift box, holiday decoration, or table centerpiece.



What You Need:

- 2 paper lunch bags
- Newspaper, torn (not cut) into strips
- Wheat flour
- Red paint
- Paintbrush
- Cotton balls

What You Do:

1. To create the paper bag form for the boot, begin by cutting the bottom off one of the paper bags.
2. Cut the second paper bag in half and discard the top. Cut along the front folds, stopping halfway down.
3. Stand the first bag upright and lay the second bag on its side, cut side facing up. Lift the flap created by the cuts and slide the bags together to form a boot shape. Tape them together to hold them in place.
4. To create the wheat paste, mix two or three parts water to one part flour in a large bowl. You can experiment with adding more or less water, depending on how thick you like the paste. The more flour you add, the stronger the paste will be.
5. Help your child dip a newspaper strip into the flour paste and run it gently between two fingers to remove the excess paste. Have him carefully place it on the boot form and run his fingers over it gently so the wet newspaper lies flat.
6. Repeat the process until the entire boot (except for the bottom) is covered with a single layer of newspaper. Allow it to dry completely.
7. When the paste is dry, turn the boot over and place it carefully on your work surface. You may need to place it over a jar or other object for support. Help your child cover the bottom of the boot with newspaper strips as described above and allow it to dry completely.
8. Help your child cover the boot in two more layers of newspaper strips, allowing each layer to dry completely before applying the next one.
9. When the final layer is completely dry, invite your child to paint the boot. If applying more than one coat of paint, allow the paint to dry before applying the next coat. To paint the bottom of the boot, allow the paint on the upper part of the boot to dry, then turn it upside down and paint the bottom.
10. When finished painting, help your child apply a layer of glue around the outside of the boot at the top. Have him press cotton balls to the layer of glue to create the white "fur" trim.

Fill your Santa boot with gifts and treats, or arrange a few branches in it and place it near the fireplace as a decorative accent.