

# Can you make your own birch bark?

Activity

2

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Art and History

## LEARNER OBJECTIVES

- Make realistic-looking birch bark for a miniature canoe or pencil holder.
- Examine how Native Americans and settlers from the past used all parts of a tree.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

Heavyweight, watercolor paper, toilet tissue, water brushes, paints, leather strips, glue and scissors.

## PREPARATION TIME

20-25 minutes

## ACTIVITY TIME

45-60 minutes

## Background

This hands-on project will give students an interesting perspective on some of the past uses of birch bark. It is important to inform students not to strip real birch bark from trees as it can kill the tree.

## The Activity

1. Wet heavyweight, watercolor paper with a wide brush. Make sure the entire paper is wet. Lay pieces of toilet tissue across the paper. The water will make the tissue crinkle up and stick to the paper. When the entire piece of paper is covered and still wet, paint small areas with light rust and gray colors. Let paint dry and use a small brush with black paint to draw fine lines across the paper. Look at some real trees for the color patterns. Let paint dry, then cut the paper for whichever project you wish.

2. For a canoe, use the canoe pattern in this guide and lay it out on the paper. Cut out with scissors. Punch holes with a small hole punch where indicated. Glue leather strip along the top of the canoe, continuing down the side of the canoe. Lace the two sides together and finish by gluing along the top edge of the other side of the canoe.

3. For a pencil holder, use an empty can and attach birch bark paper to label of can. Glue a leather strip along the top and bottom outside edge of can. Glue another strip along the side of the can to cover the seam where the paper meets.
4. Have students research some of the uses for birch bark centuries ago when this country was first being settled.



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# Canoe Cut-Out Guide

Lay out and cut around pattern.

