

Nature Journaling

Making a Nature Journal

Supplies

Cardboard

Combination of printer, notebook, scrapbooking, construction, colored and repurposed brown paper

Scissors

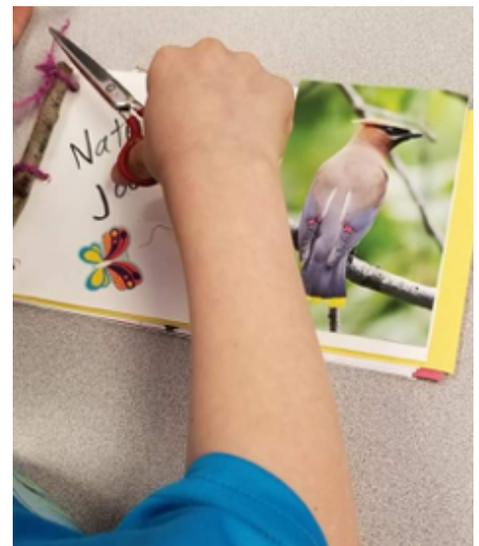
Paper punch

Yarn, string, or cordage

Decorations

Directions

1. Use cardboard and a combination of printer, notebook, scrapbooking, construction, colored and repurposed brown paper.
2. Cut the paper slightly smaller than the cardboard. Some of the papers may have shapes cut out, edges trimmed with pinking shears, flaps or pockets. (The cardboard for the cover may be in two pieces or in one larger piece folded in half).
3. Use a paper punch to make holes in the papers and the cardboard that will line up.
4. Allow participants to select a stack of mixed papers and bind them together using yarn, string, cordage or similar. Be careful not to tie them too tightly, or it may be hard to turn the pages. You may want to add a stick along the front edge before you tie it all together. This adds strength and goes along with the nature theme.
5. Once the journals have been tied together, they may be personalized with drawings, words, cut outs, stickers, etc.
6. Interest may be added by cutting a hole from the edge or center of a page, making a flap or pocket, drawing a frame or other elements of interest.



Journaling is a way to express and record observations. A journal may serve as a science notebook or even a diary. It may be filled with words, drawings or a combination of the two. Encourage youth to take their journals and something to write or sketch with on an exploration. Allow each person to find something that they are interested in investigating, or direct the investigation if you desire. Encourage them to use their senses and consider the following:

- How does it look, feel, smell, sound?
- What do you notice about it?
- Does it remind you of anything?
- What does it make you wonder?



Allow time for observation and exploration, and then encourage the students to record their thoughts in their nature journals. These may be in the form of words including descriptions, lists, questions that come to mind, thoughts or even poems. They may be simple sketches or detailed drawings with labels naming organisms, describing where something was found, etc. Rubbings may be made of leaves, bark, feathers or other objects instead of collecting them.

They may want to record the date and location explored, and could even draw a map.

You could stop briefly at several points along a hike, or allow each child to select a place to sit and experience nature on their own for a brief time. This, and the distance away from others will depend upon the age and comfort level of the individuals, but can be a very impactful experience. Gather the group to share and help them to combine their experiences to formulate a story of the day that illustrates a larger and more complete picture.