Kids Explore!

Make Natural Paint Brushes

Use materials from nature to make natural paint brushes.

Materials

- Several small straight sticks
- Rubber bands and/or masking tape
- Water colors or tempera paints
- Containers for paint
- Natural materials with different textures, such as lichen, mosses, twigs, long pine needles, fir or cedar boughs, or long skinny leaves
- Paper

Adult help may be needed on steps with a ❖.

1. Go for a walk outside and find some small straight sticks about 5-12 inches long. You can also find a few large branches and break them into smaller sections. These will be the handles of your paint brushes.

2. Next find several different kinds of natural materials to use for the "brush" parts of your paint brushes. Try to find things with different textures.

❖ 3. Back at home, take a small handful of one kind of materials and attach it snugly to a stick with rubber bands or tape. Do the same thing with each of your other materials.

4. Now get out your paints and use your brushes to make a picture on paper. Which brushes last the longest? Do any fall apart? How could you make them more sturdy? Which brushes make the most interesting strokes? The prettiest?

5. For more natural fun, find a recipe for making paints from natural materials. Or simply paint with mud!

*— Adapted from "Nature Paintbrushes" in **A Little Bit of Dirt**, by Asia Citro*