



## Nature Exploration Art Projects

These art projects are an opportunity to admire and reflect on the astounding world that God has created for us. Take some time to soak in the sights and sounds around you as you are outside. From the small ant to the large elephant, from the tall trees to minuscule sand, from little puddles to the mighty sea, God's creation is amazing. How can God's handiwork be felt, heard, and seen when you are out in nature?

**Clay Nature Bowl (page 2):** Create a bowl from modeling clay and press found nature items (like leaves, twigs, and pine cones) into the bowl to create texture.

**Textured Leaf Rubbing (page 4):** Collect leaves of various shapes and sizes and use unwrapped crayons to rub their texture onto the Bible Verse Page.

**Nature Sketch (page 6):** Spend time in nature and draw what you see, hear, and experience.

**Nature Hunt (page 7):** See how many nature items you can find.



## Clay Nature Bowl

### Supplies

- Air-dry clay (1 oz. per person)
- Watercolor paint
- Paintbrush
- Cup of water
- Markers
- Fork
- Toothpicks
- Scissors
- Found elements from nature (small twig, pine cone, small pine branch, leaves, small rocks, etc.)

### Instructions

1. Take a walk or hike outdoors. It can be in your own yard or in a local park.
2. Look for and collect things that can be used to press texture into clay. What is texture? Texture is what you can see or feel on an item. The texture of a stone may be smooth, whereas the texture of a pine cone may be bumpy or prickly. Both can create textures in your clay. The ground is the best place to look for pieces of twig, leaves, small rocks, and dropped pine cones or acorns.
3. You can create your clay pieces outside in nature, or bring the project (and your collection of textures) indoors.
4. Unpackage the air-dry clay.
5. Knead it and warm it up a little bit by working it in your hands. It will become more flexible and malleable.
6. To make a bowl form, roll it into a ball and poke your thumb into the center.
7. Press and pinch with one hand while rotating it in the palm of the other hand.
8. With every rotation and pinching, it will grow wider and the walls thinner. Pinching "up" will create higher walls, while continuing to pinch and rotate will create a larger base and shorter walls.
9. Continue until you get the shape you want. For younger children, simply have them help pat the ball of clay into a flat pancake shape instead.

10. Next, take your found textured objects from nature and press them into the clay sides and bottom. The harder you press, the deeper and more prominent the texture's print will be.
11. You may want to keep one hand inside the clay form for support while pressing items into the clay.
12. You can also use other tools to create texture marks, like fork prongs, toothpicks, or even scissors to cut the clay.
13. Allow to dry for twenty-four hours, until clay is hard.
14. Finally, to decorate your nature bowl or plaque with color you can use watercolor paints, markers, or a mixture of both. Use a small brush and watercolors (with water to activate) to paint in and around the nature prints.
15. Allow paint to dry before using your bowl as decoration or storage for small items.



## Textured Leaf Rubbing

### Supplies

- Bible Verse Page (from page 5)
- Crayons (unwrapped)
- Leaves (various sizes, shapes, and textures)
- Watercolor paints with paintbrush (optional)

### Instructions

1. Collect new leaves, or use the leaves that you collected to make your Clay Nature Bowl.
2. Place one leaf on a hard surface (cement or tabletop) with the veins facing up. Veins are the bumps or threads on the bottom of the leaf that transport nutrients.
3. Place the Bible Verse Page face-up over the leaf, and place the palm of your hand on the paper to hold it still.
4. Feel where the leaf sits under the paper.
5. Using one crayon on its side without the paper jacket, use a "snowplow" motion to rub the crayon over paper where the leaf is underneath.
6. The texture of the leaf will appear on the paper in the crayon's color.
7. Continue to fill your paper with leaf texture rubbings. For variation, alternate your crayon color and position of the leaves, the size of the leaves, and the species of leaves.
8. Optional: Use watercolor paints to paint over and/or around the leaf rubbings. Because crayons have wax in them, the watercolor paints will resist covering the texture rubbings. This is called a wax-resist method.

***"Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;  
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;  
let the field exult, and everything in it.  
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy."***

***Psalm 96:11-12***

# Nature Sketch

Take the time to observe God's creation from a few different perspectives. Using a pen or pencil, sketch what you see, hear, and feel in different locations.

What I see out my window . . .

What I see when I lie on my back or look up to the sky when I'm outside . . .

What I see when I lie on my stomach or look closely at the ground when outside . . .

Isn't it astounding, the detail we see by taking a closer look at trees, animals, bodies of water, insects, and flowers in nature? God has made many great things, YOU being the most wonderful! Sketch yourself enjoying the outdoors.

# Nature Hunt

How many of these things can you find while enjoying God's creation outdoors? Check them off and/or draw them as you go!

Bird	Spider Web	Ant	Tree Roots
Acorn	Log	Flower	Green Leaf
Mushroom	Squirrel	Tall Grass	Two Similar Rocks
Cloud	Brown Leaf	Flying Insect	Stick or tree that looks like the letter "Y"
Pine Cone	Animal Footprints	Dandelion	Wild Berries