

Building a Bird Nests

Materials: Long grass/bed straw/weeds, sticks, mud, Any other materials birds may use - spider webs, Id-man's beard, animal fur, feathers, moss, Scissors

Procedure: (Focus Attention/Direct Experience/Sharing Inspiration) This craft will produce a grass and mud nest, resembling a Robin's nest.

- 1) First have the students gather long grass, enough to fill both their hands and any other materials that interest them. These materials might include, old- man's beard lichen, soft dry grass and small flexible twigs.
- 2) While the students are collecting, dump some water in a mud puddle, if it hasn't rained in recently. Once the children are ready, have them take their long grass and gently pull it from end to end, like a Christmas cracker, so that the strands remain parallel but create a longer bundle of fibres that looks like a messy piece of rope, about a foot or so long.
- 3) Next, twist the bundle of grass in opposite directions, moving one hand towards yourself, and the other away. The grass should start to look more like a thick piece of rope at this point. Keep twisting until the grass twists over itself creating a wreath-like circle.
- 4) Wrap the ends around one another, completing the circle. A small circle is easier to work with - no more than 10-15cm in diameter. Any loose strands should be looped through the circle, to tidy it up and help to secure the frame.
- 5) Next, push soft short grass into the circle to create the bottom of the nest. To this add flexible twigs, mud and more grass. Continue until the student is happy with their nest.
- 6) Finally, line the nest with soft materials to create a cozy spot for eggs. Scissors can be used to trim long strands of grass. Place the nest in a sunny spot to dry.

Hints, tips and tricks: That birds build their nests without hands is amazing. With their beaks, feet and yes - butts, they create incredibly complex nests. Before, it is a good idea to start by looking at pictures of different bird nests with your students. Have them come up with a list of nesting materials and nest designs. Let them develop their own categories. There are lots of great videos on YouTube that capture the whole process too, for an added visual for students.

