

Rainsticks

For centuries many tribes have used rainsticks to summon the rain. Let the children fill paper towel rolls with rice, beans etc. Cover the ends with a small circle of poster board and masking tape. Let the children paint. **SAVE THOSE PAPER TOWEL ROLLS!** Our kids made a huge rainstick using a mailing tube. Let the kids hammer in roofing nails all over the tube. Cover the end w/poster board and clear tape, then filled it with rice.

Experiment with the sound of different amounts of rice. When you like the sound, tape up the other end. Let the children paint a stripe horizontally until each child did one. Then let each child take a pencil dipped in paint and make dots all over the tube.

Beads

Use 2 cups flour, 1 cup salt and small amount of water to make a dough. Knead the dough. Have the children make circles and square shapes. Stick a small toothpick into the clay to make the hole. Bake in oven at 225 degrees for 1 hour. Once cool let the children use markers to decorate them. Then let the children string them into a necklace. You could make a bracelet using elastic thread.

African Shields

Shields were made in a great variety of sizes and shapes. Some only a few inches long were carried in dance rituals and were merely symbols of their original use. Shapes varied from tribe to tribe.

Using a paper plate staple a strip of strong paper to the back and staple on each side of the plate. The child will insert a hand into the back of the plate and the paper will keep the shield in place. Let the children decorate the plate. Color and glue on cut up wallpaper pieces, sequins, yarn, etc. Let the kids dance around with the shields.

Kofis (Pronounced Koo-fees)

Kofis look like a pillbox hat and are a traditional headdress for celebrations. These special hats add authenticity in role-playing and the study of African culture.

Use dark construction paper 24"x24" for the headband. Cut 6 strips 12" long by 2" wide. Arrange strips like a wheel, overlapping in the center. Staple the center or use a brad (paper fastener). Punch holes all around the hat and attached the strips with the brads.

Calabash Bowls

A Calabash is a bowl made from dried gourds. We make papier-mâché to create our bowls. I turn over a small foam bowl with a piece of plastic wrap taped over it. Let the children lay strips of newspaper that have been dipped in glue over the bowls. Do more than one layer. When dry, remove and cut them into a circle or bowl shape. Paint with bright colors and spray with clear acrylic.