

Absorbing Artwork

A colorful experiment that will delight little ones

from **FamilyFun Magazine**

Total Time Needed: 1 Hour

3 years and up

This unusual art-and-science activity uses salt, glue, and food coloring to create colorful 3-D drawings.

Materials

- Card stock
- Rimmed baking sheet
- White glue
- Salt
- Colored water (see tip below)
- Eyedropper

Instructions

1. Set the card stock on the baking sheet and have your child use the glue to draw a design on the paper.
2. Sprinkle the wet glue with salt until it's completely covered, then tap off any excess.
3. Have your child use the eyedropper to drip colored water, one drop at a time, onto the salt. As the salt absorbs the liquid, the water will move along the glue lines, resulting in a wonderful web of color. Be sure to watch what happens when the color reaches intersecting lines.

Tips: We used 5 drops of neon food coloring per tablespoon of water to create our vibrant hues.



Family Survey and Place Mats by Nicole Blasenak Shapiro

from **FamilyFun Magazine**

Total Time Needed: 1-2 Hours

To spark some table talk, set out these place mats adorned with fun facts about your dinner companions. Marianne Ashby, of Bountiful, Utah, devised this idea for a family reunion. A few weeks beforehand, she e-mailed guests, asking them to reveal their favorite books and movies, high and low points of the past year, and other intriguing little facts.



On the computer, she styled the answers to her survey, minus the names, and grouped each set on its own mat. (Ours, shown above is made of two sheets of scrapbook paper mounted on legal-size paper.) Then she had the mats laminated at a copy shop. At mealtime, they were "a fun conversation starter," says Marianne, "as everyone tried to identify who belonged to which answers." Afterward, guests took the mats home as souvenirs of a memorable gathering.

More place mat topics:

- We're grateful for ...
- When we grow up, we want to be ...
- We admire ...
- In 2010, we'd like to ...

You can use snowflakes, snowmen, snowballs or other winter themed items instead of leaves to make this more of a seasonally appropriate craft.

Homemade Snow Dough by Catherine Newman and Jodi Butler

from **FamilyFun Magazine**

Total Time Needed: 1 Hour

Ages: 18 months and up

Your kids don't have to wait for an actual snow day to have some wintry fun. Just whip up a batch of this sparkling white play dough. Younger tots will enjoy squishing the clay, while older siblings might like using small twigs, dried beans, and tiny carrot sticks to create Frosty and pals. Other useful props: cupcake wrappers, colorful beads, paper drink umbrellas, egg carton cups, and snowflake cookie cutters.

Materials

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup salt
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 2 tablespoons white tempera paint
- 1 tablespoon white or iridescent glitter
- A few drops of peppermint extract (optional)

Instructions

1. To make a batch, combine all of the ingredients except the peppermint extract (if using) in a medium-size pan and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture holds together, about 5 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat.
2. Turn the play dough onto a waxed paper-lined counter to cool, about 15 minutes. If you like, knead in peppermint extract for a festive holiday scent. Store the cooled play dough in a Ziploc bag in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

