

Nature and Art with Cats

with Emily vonSwearingen



You Need

Painted Rocks Project:

- rocks
- paint and paintbrushes
- markers/colored pencils
- paper
- scissors
- Optional: glue, Mod Podge, string/yarn, cat (optional)

Fabric Pouch Project:

- 12"x12" fabric of any sort
- scissors
- plate (circle)
- Optional: cording/yarn/string, beads, cat
- Step-By-Step tutorial:
www.think360arts.org



The Big Idea

Do rocks have feelings? **A quiet journey connecting nature and art with painted rocks, identifying feelings and how to make a protective pouch.** All with adorable cat helpers!

The Plan

Explore nature using your senses and curiosity (like the cats do!). What do you see or hear? Is the wind blowing? Are birds chirping? What does the temperature feel like? Collect a few rocks.

Painted Rocks:

- Wash rocks and let air dry.
- Paint the top surfaces of the rocks - repeat a coat of paint if needed.
- Discuss positive words and what they mean. Example: HOPE, PEACE, LOVE, CALM, ENERGY, THANKFUL, etc.
- Write words using different colors with markers/colored pencils.
- Apply glue to back of the words and stick words onto rocks.
- Apply a thin coat of Mod Podge to paper and rocks to seal and finish. *Alternatively, you can use watered down glue.
- If students do not have paper/scissors, use threads/yarn to tie and/or wrap around rock; use color choices that reflect the meaning. For example: cool colors for CALM and warm colors for ENERGY.



Fabric Pouch:

- Select a piece of fabric approximately 12"x12".
- Use a plate or a circle at least 10"x10" to trace around using a pencil - cut out the circle.
- Approximately 1" in from the top, make a mark. Repeat with the bottom, side to side and diagonals. Students can make additional marks in between for closer holes.
- Fold fabric edge up to see the mark and snip a small hole at each mark.
- Cut a length of cord at least 16".
- Insert end of cord into first hole then pull through, leaving a few inches at the end.
- Thread cord/yarn into the next hole by either going under or over depending on the first direction.
- Repeat threading over/under through each hole, leaving the cord ends loose and even with each other.
- Place rock into center of fabric.
- Using one hand, gently hold the fabric while the other hand pulls both cords to cinch the bag together.
- Tie knot on both cords to prevent them from slipping back through the holes.
- Optional: add beads. Tie knots at the end of the beads. Trim the ends.



Teaching Artist Tip

- Limit the amount of rocks collected. One rock may be sufficient for the process. Ask them about why they picked that rock? Does "it" have a feeling?
- If you do not have acrylic paint; watercolor paint or chalk can be used. Designs can be added with markers or by wrapping threads/yarn around rocks.

Going Further

- Create a calm space for students to "use" their rocks. Have them think about word/feeling connections such as: "When I am ANGRY, I take a deep breath in and then I slowly exhale with PEACE", "When I feel WORRIED, I take a deep breath in and when I slowly exhale, I am CALM", etc.
- Use Google and YouTube to research "Children Pebble Meditation."

