

KINGS, QUEENS, & CASTLES

The Middle Ages

The activities in this Toolbox were inspired by Europe of the past: its art, culture, and technology. Modern historians have dispelled the myth of a 1,000 year dark ages, and have shown that it was actually a time when art flourished and new technology developed.

[See video instruction for more information]

Weaving and Tapestries

These activities help children work on motor skills and coordination.

Story Telling - Discuss how people would tell stories through pictures sewn on large pieces of fabric.

[Example available on our website]

Felt Weaving - The parent or child cuts lines in black felt. Then the child weaves the felt strips.

Tapestry Sewing - The child can practice sewing on the burlap. Younger children will focus on developing fine motor control, sewing lines or simple shapes. Older children can attempt to create a scene.

[See video instruction for more information]

Pick-Up Sticks

This game goes by many names: Jackstraws, Mikado, Spillikins, and others. Although the origin of the game is unclear, simple games similar to this were played in the Middle Ages by peasant children.

The sticks are laid in a pile. The first player tries to remove a single stick, without moving any others. The turn continues until another stick is accidentally moved. The players trade turns until one stick is left. At the end, the player with the most sticks wins.

Horse Puzzle

In the right hands, Montessori puzzles can be a rich educational experience, because of the variety of activities they provide.

Observation - If possible, the child should observe a real horse before using the puzzle. Even if you can't visit a petting zoo or ranch to see a live horse, the child can watch a video of horses.

Assemble the Puzzle - Take it apart and put it together.

Parts of the Horse - The child can use the puzzle to learn the parts of the horse: head, mane, neck, body, forelegs, hind legs, tail. When putting the puzzle together, the child can identify each piece.

Puzzle Book - The child traces each piece of the puzzle on a small sheet of paper. Older children can also label the piece. Then they can staple these sheets to make a "puzzle book."

Assemble Puzzle without Frame - For an additional challenge, the child can assemble the puzzle without the help of the frame.

Stained Glass

This activity can be done by younger children with help. In addition to helping the child build skills, they can learn about transparency.

Cutting Black Frame - The child cuts thin strips of paper to use for the frame and to separate colors in the stained glass. They place these on one sheet of contact paper.

Placing Tissue Paper - After placing the black border, the child fills in the space with different colored tissue paper.

Finishing the Activity - Then place a sheet of contact paper on top and then cut off any excess paper. The child can tape it to a window and see the light pass through!

Family Crest

Sorting helps the child develop critical thinking and sense perception.

Memory Game - Lay out sets of matching crest cards, face down. The child then flips over two cards at a time, trying to match pairs of cards. Younger children can start with as few as 6 cards of the same design, and older children can use all 36 cards.

Crest Sorting - Sorting activities only use half of the 36 cards. The child starts with a single design with three different colors. The cards are matched to the correct row on the chart.

The next step is to use different designs with the same color. The child places them in the correct column.

Finally, the child uses all 18 cards and matches them to the correct column and row.

Crest Sorting (without chart) - The child sorts the 18 crest cards without using the chart as a guide.

Draw Your Own - The child can learn how crests represent a family. Then, using our printable crest, your child can design and color their own crest. [Available on our website]

This Toolbox can be used with a wide range of ages and skill levels. The activities outlined here can be adapted for each child's ability.

Depending on the age of each child, we recommend supplementing these activities with information about the Middle Ages.