

Mud Mandalas

Best for Ages

3+

Workspace

Flat outdoor surface

Is electricity required?

No

Description

Mandalas are traditionally used as a way to focus your attention. This activity uses mud and other natural materials to create interesting, unique geometric patterns.

Materials

- Dirt
- Water
- Bowl or container
- Spoon
- Loose parts: marbles, popcorn kernels, rocks, sticks, feathers, leaves, dried pasta, flower petals, herbs, grass, etc.
- Towels

What to Do

1. Collect materials and set up your workspace.
2. Scoop some dirt into a bowl. Slowly add water while stirring with a spoon. Continue adding dirt and/or water until the mud reaches the desired consistency.
3. The mud can be used as a base to stick the mandala pieces on top of. It can also be used as a material to make part of the mandala design. Try creating a mandala using both methods. Which method do you like better?
4. Explore the different textures of the materials. How does the mud feel? How do the pieces that are creating the design feel similar and/or different? What inspires you?
5. Using the loose parts and mud, start creating a pattern that is fixed around a center point. Repeat the pattern in a circular direction. Use your imagination and creativity to create your pattern. There's no right or wrong way to create your design!



Concepts Explored

- Patterns
- Mandalas

Mud Mandalas

Troubleshooting Tips

- If the mud is too thin, mix in more dirt. If the mud is too thick, try adding more water.
- If using a mud base, press the loose materials into the mud to help materials stay in place.



How else can we use the mud in this activity?

How many patterns can you create with the materials?

What happens if you add warm water to the dirt? Cold water?

What is Happening?

- Mandalas are made of objects or shapes in a pattern. A **pattern** is a decorative design that has repetition of the parts. The materials are placed in a regularly repeated arrangement.
- A **mandala** is a symbol of the universe for many Buddhists and Hindus. Most mandalas have colorful, detailed geometric patterns or designs. The entire design is symmetrical and balanced. The word mandala means “circle”. Creating mandalas is a way to focus your attention and relieve stress.

Taking it Forward

- **If you like this activity, you'll also like these [Amazeum You](#) activities:**
 - Mud painting
 - Mosaics
 - Salt drawings
- **Learn more about this activity at your local library:**
 - *Mandala Magic by Sara Deutsch*
 - *Mandala Stained Glass Pattern Book by Anna Croyle*