

Outdoor & Woodland Learning Activity Sheet

Activity:	Natural Mandalas											
Habitat:	Any			Season:	S	✓	S	✓	A	✓	W	✓

Level	
Early	✓
First	✓
Second	✓
Third and Fourth	✓
Senior Phase	

Curriculum topics			
Expressive Arts	✓	Health and Wellbeing	✓
Languages	✓	Mathematics	✓
Religious & Moral Ed		Sciences	✓
Social Studies	✓	Technology	✓

Equipment*
A small stick or tent peg and some string
Tape measure
Natural materials

Time
Various

Key outcomes
Learn about the cultural significance of mandalas.
Understand the shapes and parts of shapes that make up objects – 2D geometry.
Create symmetrical patterns with more than one line of symmetry

*Items depicted in bold are available from CALLP

Activity description
Learn about Mandala's and create your own out of natural material.

Notes



Make a nature mandala

Learning intentions

- Learn about the cultural significance of mandalas
- Understand the shapes and parts of shapes that make up objects – 2D geometry
- Create symmetrical patterns with more than one line of symmetry

This activity requires an outdoor space where you can create a circular mandala on the ground. Ideally create the mandala using natural materials that you find in the area. For example, in a woodland use leaves, twigs, cones etc or on a beach use pebbles, shells, seaweed, etc. Mandalas can take a while to complete, especially if you choose to make a larger one. Their creation is seen as a contemplative (thoughtful) exercise. Enjoy looking for the materials as much as creating the artwork.

What you will need

To create your mandala you will need some of the following materials:

1. A small stick or tent peg and some string
2. Tape measure
3. Natural materials

What is a mandala?

A mandala is an artwork that is made in a precise way generally in a circle shape. The word mandala comes from a language called Sanskrit. In this language, mandala means magic circle. The design of a mandala spreads out usually symmetrically from the centre of a circle. Although the circle is the main part there are other shapes within and outside the circle. For example some are created within a square. You have probably seen lots before. Some examples are below.



The mandala pattern is used in many religious traditions such as **Hindu**, **Buddhist** and **Shinto**. These religions use the mandala to focus the mind, to create a sacred place and to help with meditation. The parts of a mandala can represent the Universe, nature and wisdom, amongst other things.

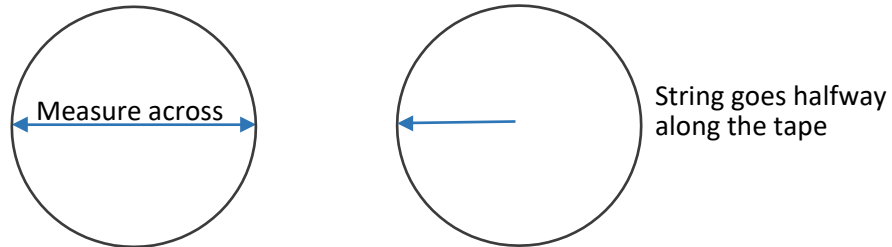
Mandala patterns can be seen in natural objects from the petals of a flower to tree rings, spiderwebs, seashells, crystals and more. As you can see, a mandala is one of nature's most perfect patterns.



The ideas for some mandalas come from parts of nature like the wind, sea, rivers, mountains, flowers and trees. Choose one or more of these and make your nature mandala to show this.

Creating your mandala

1. Collect some materials that you can use- pebbles, leaves, shells, seaweed, pine cones, twig, flowers (stick to daisies and dandelions)
2. Using the measuring tape, measure out how big you want your mandala to be. Then take the string halfway along the tape and fix it in the middle of the tape with a tent peg or stick.



3. With the peg in the ground hold the other end of the string. The peg is the centre of the circle. Walk around holding the end of the string pulled straight out and mark out your circle. This is easy if you're on sand but anywhere else use some of the materials you have collected to mark out the edge of the circle.
4. Now you have a circle to work within. Take out the peg, mark the centre of the circle with a pebble and divide the circle into **4 equal parts** either using more string that goes across the whole circle or marks in the sand. (make sure these lines go through the centre of the circle).
5. In each of these sections make a pattern using lots of the items you have collected, starting from the centre of the circle. The only rule is that each pattern has to be the same in each section. Take your time with this and enjoy being creative.
6. Once its finished have a look and see if the sections are the same. If they are, you have created a symmetrical pattern. Where are the lines of symmetry? – this is the line, that if you imagine cutting the mandala in half, each half would look the same. Is there more than one line of symmetry?
7. An important part of creating a mandala this way is that it won't last forever. The fact that it gets blown away by the wind, washed away by the tide or removed by people or animals is a good way to show the constant changing of the world around us. If you'd like to keep a reminder of your mandala, take a photo or make a drawing.
8. When you go outside for a walk or to play in the garden or at the beach, keep looking for more of nature's mandala patterns, they're everywhere.