

ArtStream

Written Instructional Guide



“Nature Collage with Organic Materials”

For 3rd - 5th Grade Students

With Teaching Artist Alex Ever

Lesson 2: “Mindfulness and Nature Mandalas”

Mindfulness and Nature Mandalas

- We'll be taking our time to create a non-permanent piece of art
- “Mandala” is the Sanskrit word for “circle” and is a form of art stemming from the Buddhist and Hindu traditions.
- Mandala is often used as a spiritual teaching tool to help strengthen meditation and increase focus.
- We'll be using materials from nature to create our own mandala



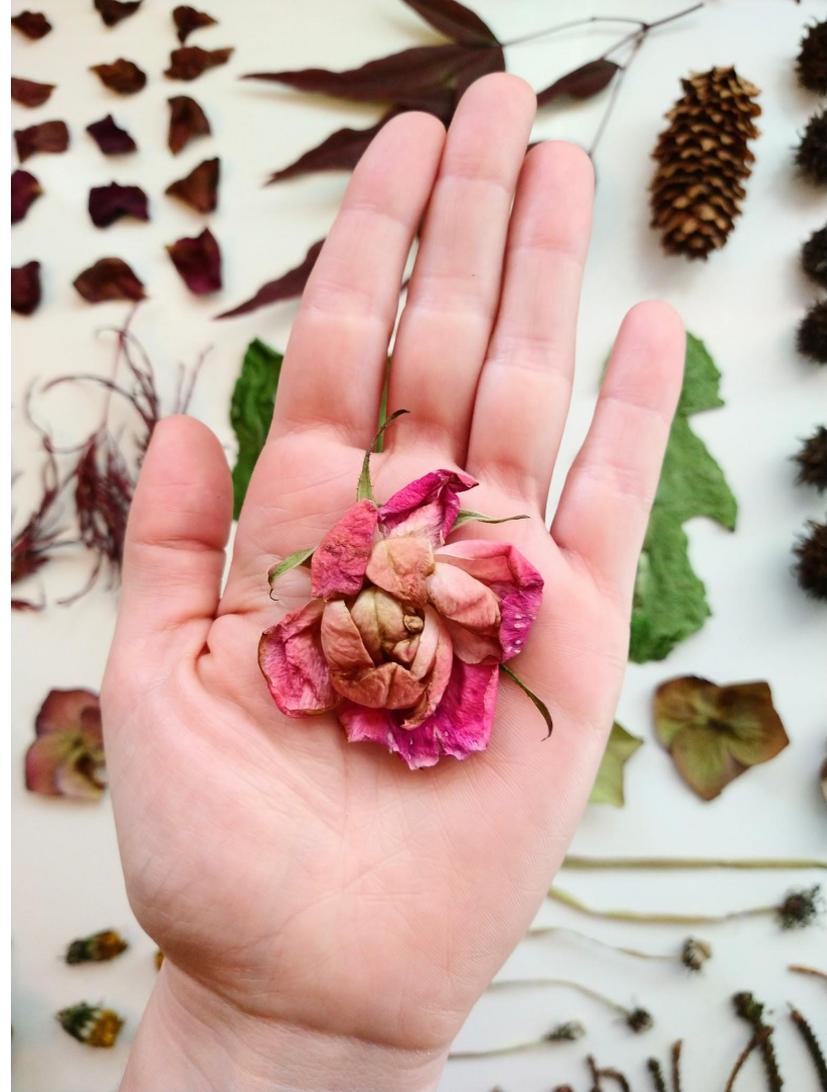
Materials

- Paper or a clean surface
- Natural materials (harvested from a yard, neighborhood, or nearby park)



“Finding our center”

- Pick one of your favorite smaller pieces of nature you found.
- Hold that piece in your hand and look at it. While doing so follow along with breathing in our nose 1-2-3-4 and out 1-2-3-4.
- While breathing close your eyes and feel the material in your hand. How heavy is it? Note how it feels against their skin. What patterns can you remember from the piece? Can you name the colors you see in your head?



Step 3: Find the center

- Eyeballing the center: make sure to consider where the center is for both left and right as well as top to bottom.
- Mark your center point with the same small item you held during our breathing exercise. This piece will be the first part of our mandala.



Step 4: Build the first layer of your mandala.

- We're going to build out from our center point creating one layer at a time.
- We want to start with our smallest materials, look at your materials and find what you have that is the smallest in the mix.
- Lay out the first layer, evenly distributing natural materials around the center point. Similar to how flower petals spread out around the middle of a flower.



Step 5: Add more layers to the mandala

- Now that we have our first layer down, choose new materials to make our next layer. What material is small enough to fit around this material?
- You are likely close to finishing your second layer, let's do our third layer, but this time, let's use two materials instead of one.
- Can you create your own pattern as you place your layers?



Step 5: Finishing the mandala

- Allow yourself to come to a pause wherever you are on your mandala
- You can keep working on and building out your mandala or you can clean up your supplies.
- Our work is not permanent so we will take it apart and use the pieces for next time!
- Note that you can take a picture with a phone to remember the piece.



Step 7: Reorganize your materials

- Take time to take apart your work!.
- Just like how organizing your pieces beforehand was important- you want to take apart your mandala and organize your materials into piles.
- Place your materials in piles or line them up in a similar way you did when you first started this project.
- Take time to notice a detail about each piece you touch and rearrange.



Closing reflection

- Take a moment to place your hands in your lap, straighten your back, and close your eyes. Imagine the mandala you just made. Take a moment to identify one choice you made in crafting your mandala that you feel especially proud of. Take a moment to appreciate the good work you just did! Take a deep breath.



Thank you!

- Way to go! I hope you felt how calming and rewarding making mandalas can be.
- Continue working on your mandala or clear your work surface and start building a new mandala from scratch! Have fun exploring and practicing mandala building. Can you make the mandala bigger or more detailed next time?