

NATIVE AMERICAN TALKING STICK

BY DEBORAH HARJU, POSTED ON MAY 14TH, 2013 IN ART SCHOOL



Let's explore a Native American tradition today and create a *Talking Stick*. Talking Sticks are used by many Native American tribes when they have council meetings, specifically tribes in the Northwest. The idea of the Talking Stick is to respect each other's opinions and viewpoints during important meetings where things are discussed, or agreements need to be made. Unless you were holding the Talking Stick, you wouldn't interrupt or speak, but wait your turn.

During the time you are listening, you are to pay careful attention to what's being said so that you don't repeat what someone else has already stated. Some families may even have something similar in their home for family meetings. Whoever holds the microphone, or the item chosen, is the person who has the attention of the group.

The interesting part about this Native American tradition is that it is taught to children at a very young age. Around three is the age they learn to be respectful of each other's points of views. I really like when our family gets together to work on a project collectively, and it's a great exercise for today's lesson. What better way to emphasize respect for each other and patience than to create something together.

You'll need a large-ish stick, we found ours on a walk, some paint, twine and feathers are optional as well. I recommend this project to take place outside if possible. Lay some protective covering down, newspaper, kraft paper, anything on hand to keep the paint contained.

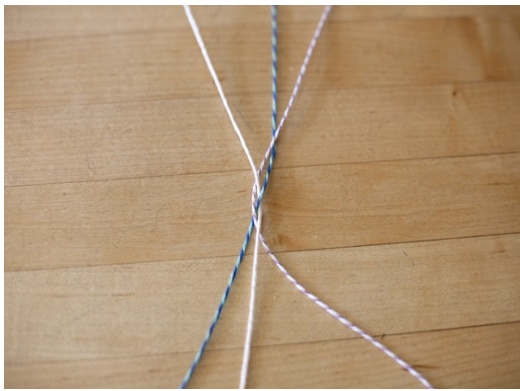
Choose the paint colors and the brush and get started. Since our stick was on the large side, we had one kid on each end and then they worked their way towards each other.





Feel free to encourage the kids to mix colors, sample patterns, create polka dots, whatever they fancy to make the stick colorful and fun.

If you have twine on hand, you can twist or braid the strands together, knotting them at each end securely.



We attached our three-strand braid (not coincidental that we have 3 kids in this family), to one end of the Talking Stick, and voila! Now let's see how our next family meeting goes...

PRO Tip:

This craft can also be used as a walking stick! Perfect for pairing with your favorite scavenger hunt! [Check out the Kayitz BaBayit website](#) for more summer fun.



