



Handicraft Lesson

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For our handicraft lesson, we will be making "papyrus" with recycled paper.

This is a simple activity that all ages can enjoy — from your younger children (with a bit of help with steadying their hands), to teens who can decorate and embellish their paper until they are fully satisfied with their artistry!

Bring back grass or leaves or flowers from this week's nature walk and have fun creating these practical pieces for yourself or to give as gifts!

"I've filled him with the Spirit of God, giving him skill and know-how and expertise in every kind of craft to create designs ... he's an all-around craftsman."

~ Exodus 31:3-5

Papyrus (Recycled Paper)

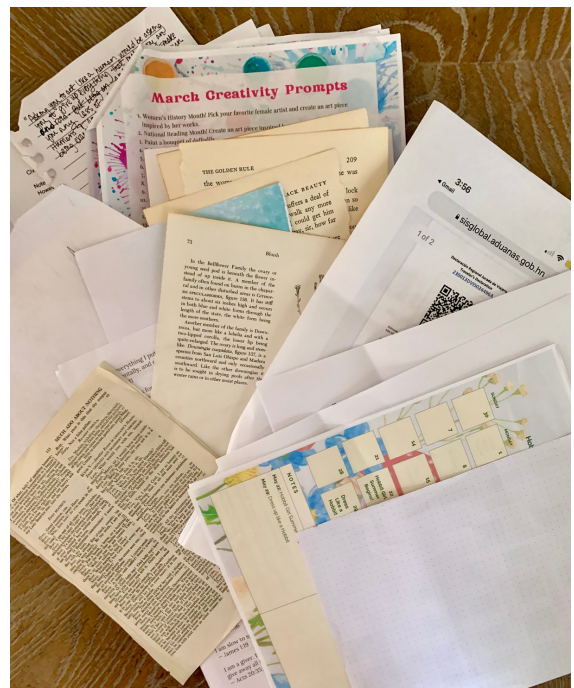


Papyrus originated in Egypt dating as far back as 4000 BC. It was a type of thick paper made from the papyrus plant, which grew in abundance along the Nile river.

While today the papyrus plant is not in readily available, a fun alternative is to use grass clippings, leaves, or flowers to decorate your recycled paper!

1. To get started, you will want to gather old paper to be recycled. Olivia used a number of different paper sources, from old work papers, to old book pages, to notebook sheets. Another great resource can be from the scraps of other paper projects that require a lot of cutting, old newspapers, or magazines, egg cartons, cardboard, etc. As long as it doesn't have a plastic coating, it can most likely be recycled.

2. Once you've gathered your paper, you will need to tear it into small pieces. You can use scissors, an office shredder, or your own hands. Once you've reduced your paper to scraps, put it in a bowl or container and fill with water, enough to cover the paper, and soak overnight.



3. Once your paper is soaked, add wet paper and enough water to cover in a blender, and blend to a pulp. At this point you can decorate the paper if so desired. Olivia added grass clippings and dried leaves to the blender to simulate "papyrus," which gave the paper a cool grassy texture. Another option is to add dried flowers or even tear up bits of construction paper and layer it over the top of the pulp to give it a pop of color.



4. Fill up a large pan or casserole dish with water, and pour your pulp into a paper-making screen or mold. You don't need too much pulp or the paper will be very thick. It might take a few tries to find the right amount for your screen. Once the pulp has been added, you can add more decorations to your paper, such as dried flowers, leaves, or construction paper. Use your hands to shape the pulp to make sure the surface is even and fills all the corners.



5. Remove your screen from the pan of water and press down on the pulp to remove excess water. (The screens we used had only one side, but you can add a layer of wax paper on the top to squeeze through the screen, then flip the screen so that the wax paper was on the bottom, then removed the newly-formed paper.)

6. By now the paper should be holding together. Use a sponge or towel to dab away the excess water, taking care around any decorations you might have added. Lay flat to dry, which can take anywhere from a few hours to a whole day depending on how much water you removed with a sponge.

The paper will most likely dry wrinkled or curled. You can take a low iron to smooth out some wrinkles, or you can stack the papers underneath a thick book to flatten it out.

And you're done! Keep in mind that the paper will still be very lumpy, especially if you added the grass and/or flowers. If the grass or flowers are not dried, they may stain the paper and lose their color over time, but still provide a cool textured. Take a straight cutter to even out your paper if so desired, or leave them rough! Use them for writing or extra decoration for your next mixed media projects!

