

Explorer's Compass



Theme: Navigational Compass (like the explorers used!)

Curriculum Area: Social Studies

Activity: Child will be making a compass to learn about different navigational methods. Through this activity, they will determine the direction of their compass (North, South, East, West) by using water and a virtual compass on a smartphone/computer for reference. This activity is meant to teach the students about how the explorers navigated the seas – before there was a “Maps” app or GPS!

Age of Children: 5th grade (approx. 10-11 years of age)

Materials Needed:

1. Small magnet that can be glued
2. Circle to trace (bottle cap, cup etc.)
3. Cardboard
4. Bowl and water

(if small magnet is unavailable, sewing needle/paperclip and fridge magnet will work too!)



Developmental Objectives: By participating in this activity, children will:

1. Develop knowledge on direction and navigation.
2. Understand that the compass was a huge technological development during the time of the explorers.
3. Enhance cognitive development by creating their own navigational tool (understanding magnetization and why it is useful for direction)

Procedure: 1. Ask your child if they can name any explorers they've learned about in school.

2. Explain that these explorers had to navigate the sea without any of the technological developments we have today.

3. After they have completed their compass, take it around different parts of the house/neighborhood. Have your child tell you what direction they are facing by using their compass.

References: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/compass.htm>

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/histsocscistnd.pdf>

Social Studies Standard – 5.2 Students trace the routes of early explorers and describe the early explorations of America