



Pine Cone Bird Feeders Activity



Materials:

Newspaper &/or Plastic Table Cover	4 large bowls
1 garbage bag	25-30 Pinecones
Plastic Silverware (spoons/butter knives)	Scissors
2 jars of Vegetable Shortening or Lard	String or Pipe Cleaners
2 rolls of Paper Towels	25-30 lunch paper bags
2 bags of Bird seed	Markers (<i>optional</i>)

Prep:

1. Place the plastic table cover or pieces of newspaper on top of the work table or desks. The table cover / newspaper can be removed and thrown away after the activity.
2. Place 2 jars of shortening or lard out on the table with a plastic spoon or knife sticking out of the top of the jars. Some children have an easier time using the spoons while others prefer the knives for the activity.
3. Put bird seed in the bowls, and place bowls by the jars of shortening/lard. Refill the bowls with bird seed as needed throughout the activity.
4. Keep a roll of paper towels out on the table so that the students can wipe off their hands after the activity, and keep the garbage bag nearby so they can throw away their paper towels afterwards.
5. Cut string in 12 inch strips, or use 12” pipe cleaners.

Activity:

1. Tie one end of the string pipe cleaner around the pinecone. It works best if you tie the string about ½ inch from the top of the pinecone, pulling the string tight between the layers of the pinecone seeds. *Note: When time is limited, it is helpful to have some pinecones already tied off with string, especially if you have young students who might need assistance with tying the string around the pinecone.*
2. Spread a **thin** layer of shortening/lard on the pinecone as you rotate it. Explain that they need to “paint” the pinecone, using the spoon/knife to get the peanut butter in between the different layers of the pinecone seeds.
3. Once the pinecone is covered, place their pinecone in one of the bowls and roll the pinecone in the bird seed. The bird seed will stick to the shortening or lard and get in the cracks of the pinecone as they push down on the pinecone. You do not have to be gentle with it. In the end, the entire pinecone should be covered with bird seed.
4. Give the child a marker and a paper bag, and ask them to write their name on the paper bag.
5. Holding the new bird feeder by the string or pipe cleaner, place it inside the paper bag. Then fold the top of the bag down, leaving the string hanging out on the outside of the paper bag. It is very important to leave the sting on the outside so that it doesn’t get wrapped up in the pinecone.
6. Explain that they have created a suet bird feeder for the birds in their yard. Nearly all birds will eat from this type of feeder as long as it is placed near a branch so that the birds can reach it. The shortening or lard provides valuable fat that the birds need to be able to survive the winter.