



TREE COOKIES

A NATURE BASED ART ACTIVITY

CONTRIBUTED BY:

 **Katahdin Learning Project**
a program of Friends of Katahdin Woods & Waters
and Katahdin Elementary School

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

In this activity, students will:

- Study a tree cookie in order to find information about the tree's life history.
- Choose something they love about winter in Maine and illustrate it on their tree cookie.

MATERIALS

- Tree cookies (one per student)
- Sanding sponges
- Pencils, paint, paper plates, paint brushes, bowls, water
- *The Magic and Mystery of Trees* (McElfatrick & Green)
- Projector for short video (below)

PROCEDURE

- 1.) Read: *The Magic and Mystery of Trees* by Claire McElfatrick and Jen Green, or a similar book that includes how to interpret tree rings.
- 2.) Review how to study the tree cookie in order to determine the age of the tree, find other information about the tree and the environment where it grows.
- 3.) Invite students to study their tree cookies. Provide magnifying glasses if possible. Students can sketch a copy of the tree cookie in a nature/ science journal and make notes about their findings.
- 4.) Next, students will sand their tree cookies in order to prepare the surface for drawing and painting.

*Guiding questions:

- After sanding your tree cookie, what did you notice about the wood grain?

CONTINUED...



- a. What did the wood feel like right after sanding?
- b. How did sanding change the tree cookie's surface? How do you think that will impact your art?

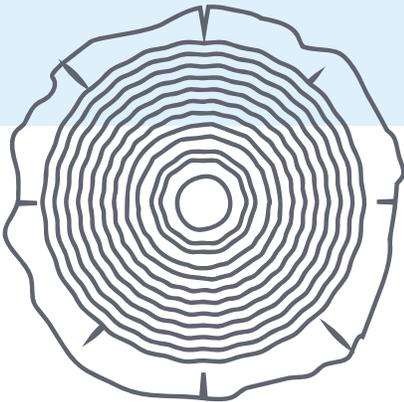
5.) Discuss how various artists have come to Maine and have created pieces of art inspired by Maine nature. (More info: <https://www.maine.gov/sos/kids/about/people/arts-literature>)

6.) Watch this short video about Maine's art history: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uo_xKIKq6pc

7.) Ask students to think of something they love about winter in Maine. First they will draw their idea on the tree cookie with pencil and then paint.

*Guiding questions:

- Why did you choose to paint what you did?
 - a. How would you describe or share your art with others?
 - i. MS Standard: Speaking and Listening
 - ii. What type of language (i.e. descriptive language) would you use?



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