

Nature Walk Inspired Votive

Remember when you collected leaves or flowers and pressed them in a book to dry? Perhaps you ironed these treasures flat under some wax paper? This craft takes beautifully preserved samples from nature and turns them into functional art. Have an extra? Share a centerpiece as a gift for a neighbor or friend!

Materials:

Clear plastic bottle

Kitchen shears and scissors

Clear contact paper and clear tape

Nature's Treasures: flowers, petals, leaves, pine needles, etc.



Directions:

Start by rinsing the **empty plastic bottle** with soapy water. Peel off the plastic label making a clear canvas. Adults, use the kitchen shears to cut and remove the top portion. Leave as much height to the bottle as you want. Finally, make sure the bottle is very dry before attempting to adhere the contact paper to the bottle.

Collect leaves, feathers, flowers, petals, pine needles, clovers, butterflies or even cicada wings ... see what you all discover on your nature walk. (Even if it's just around the yard or bus stop!)

Lay out the amount of **contact paper** you will need to wrap around the cut bottle. Trim to size, leaving a few inches to fold into and under the votive. Carefully peel off the contact paper's backing, leaving the sticky side up.

Now it's time to have some fun! Lay out all of your beautiful pieces -- either plan a design or freestyle it -- **press the petals and leaves** directly onto the sticky side of the contact paper (remembering to leave a border at the top and bottom where you will attach it). Also, have all the art facing outwards for maximum color.

Once the art is complete, carefully wrap it around the plastic base. Then fold the extra portions over the sides, pressing into the plastic. Repeat on the bottom, firmly attaching the designed paper. Finally, pop in a **flameless candle** to create a dynamic glow, cozy enough for bedtime, but pretty enough for a kitchen centerpiece.

Extension:

- ✓ Go on a **rainbow nature walk**. See if you can collect natural bits in all the colors of the rainbow.
- ✓ **Fall** is around the corner - fashion a late summer votive and **compare** it to a fall votive in just a few weeks! Make one for each season.
- ✓ Share your illuminated votives on social media **#littlechildrenBIGactivity**.

See the "I've been thinking..." section at www.joanruddimanedd.com for continuously updated content.