

# **Houston Parks and Recreation Department**

## **Youth and Family Engagement Activities**

**Week of May 25 – May 29, 2020**

### **Cherry Blossom Painting**

Because this cherry blossom painting is more of a branch than a whole tree, you want to cut your paper in half for a horizontal painting. Mix up your paints. If you have a nice sky blue and two shades of pink already, great! If not, you will need to mix your colors. Paint the entire canvas with blue for the sky. Allow the sky to dry completely. Draw in your branch with a pencil and use black paint to fill in your branch. Allow the branch to completely dry. Now the fun part! The kids will make paint brushes using clothespins and cotton balls. Using two shades of pink, one light and one dark, have the kids paint in the cherry blossom flowers with their cotton ball paintbrushes. Start with the darker shade first, then add the lighter pink.

### **Stack the Rocks (Hands-on Nature)**

Are you familiar with famous games like Jenga? Well, picture that game with an awesome nature twist and you've got something close to Stack the Rocks. The aim of the game is simple, encourage participants to find a bunch of similarly sized rocks or stones. Now all they must do is balance them on top of each other without them falling. This is an awesome game to teach youth about balance and shapes, as well as training up their focus and concentration. Make sure you supervise to ensure they are using smooth stones and rocks and not being caught on jagged edges!

### **Story Telling Bag (Family Fun)**

Put many different small objects in a bag. Sit in a circle and begin your story with "Once upon a time...". Take turns drawing an item from the bag without looking and fitting it into the story. Pass the bag around the circle to continue the story until you run out of items.

### **The Crab Walk Workout (Fun Fitness)**

Start by sitting on the ground with your hands and feet flat on the ground. Make sure your fingers are pointing away from your body or else you will put too much pressure on your wrists. Now, raise your torso up towards the sky, about level with your shoulders. Then start to walk with your hands and feet. Let's see how long you and the kids can keep this up!

### **Touch and Feel Boxes**

Start by putting interesting objects into containers that a child must reach into and identify by touch. Shoe boxes work well as they are usually readily available, can be easily cut with scissors, and do not let light through. Making the boxes is part of the fun, have the kids decorate them, just make sure to cut out a child-sized hand hole on the side of the box beforehand. Place an item in each box and have your kids take turns guessing what the items are. Encourage questions and offer clues as needed.

### **Sock Bean Bag Toss**

A great use for that large cardboard box you were about to recycle. Cut holes of various widths and shapes and assign point values to each one. Flip the box upside down and you've got an instant carnival-style bean bag toss. You can use soft socks to toss or small balls such as ping-pong balls. Little prizes are totally optional as a fun incentive.