

A young girl with brown hair in two braids, wearing glasses and a pink sleeveless hoodie, is holding a lit sparkler in her right hand. She has blue and red striped bows with white stars in her hair. The background is dark and out of focus.

Lighting A Spark



Healthy Hearts & Minds Day | February 2021

Teddington St George C of E School



Lighting a Spark in Every Child

Dear Families,

This Healthy Hearts & Minds Day, Toddington St George's School invites you to **Light A Spark** and create a star for the window of your home for children to spot on their daily walks - how many will you find?

The ideas in this art pack are all low-cost, simple, fun and sensory so are suitable for a wide range of ages and abilities. Why not get the whole family involved? Crafting together can make time for connection, creativity and calm. You could put on some music and add a lovely smell to the room with an oil burner, scented candle, or even just with a herbal tea bag in some hot water - these cues can make the activity extra special and boost oxytocin levels; oxytocin is a hormone that gives us a sense of calm and love, and it flows when we play and connect together.

Displaying a star serves as a reminder that we are and will always be one community, and although at the moment we can not be together, we will always be connected by lighting our sparks in everyone.

Share your starry makes with your teacher via Google Classroom or feel free to pop a picture to the Toddington Village Sensory Trails Facebook page.

Shine bright!

Mrs Lamb & The Staff of Toddington St George's School



Milk Carton Lantern

Resources

Empty milk cartons

Markers

An LED light - camping head torches work well

Tap water

How to make it

Wash out your milk carton thoroughly and dry the outside.

Draw or paint on your starry design and leave to dry.

Fill your milk carton with water and screw the cap on tightly.

Position your LED light so it shines down and into the carton; the water diffuses the light and will make the whole bottle glow.

Display with pride on your window sill to light up the dark!

Sensory Extras

If you have UV paints and a UV torch, try filling your carton with tonic water - the quinine in the tonic water fluoresces under UV light and creates a lovely blue glow.

If making these lanterns to be handled for a sensory play experience, try filling one with icy cold water and one with warm water to add some different tactile sensations; do not use hot water in case of scalding, hot water can also cause the cartons to sag and leak.





Twiggy Stars



Resources

6 sticks, all roughly the same length - pussy willow or sticks with spring buds can look great at this time of year

String, wool or ribbon - you may also find elastic bands helpful

Spring flowers

How to make it

Lay your twigs out in a star shape and tie together tightly - this can be tricky, so if you have elastic bands, use these to hold the twigs in place and then tie decorative string/ribbon/etc over the top to cover them.

Decorate with flowers or leave plain.

Sensory Extras

If you don't have any spring flowers, then you could use pine cones or other natural items instead - pop along to your local woodlands to see what you can find.

You could make your own spring flowers from coloured paper or from circles cut from colourful carrier or bin bags. Scrunch and twist the circles to make a flower shape; the more circles you twist together the more petals your flower will have.

You can make these stars to any size, so you could make lots of tiny ones or even a huge one. They also look nice made into a mobile with a big star at the top and smaller twiggy stars hanging beneath.

Don't worry about how rough and ready these stars look - they're supposed to be a bit wonky. They also keep well, so tie the frame really securely and enjoy as a keepsake for a long time to come .



Doughy Stars



Resources

Quantity of salt dough (see over for recipe)
Star cutters/stencils
Paint
PVA glue
Ribbon or string

Optional - biodegradable glitter, beads, dried pasta shapes

How to make it

Cut out and bake your stars ensuring you create a hole in the dough to leave a hanging loop.

When baked hard and fully cooled, decorate with paint. When paint has dried, seal and varnish with a coat of PVA glue.

Thread with ribbon or string - wide ribbon looks great with these!

Sensory Extras

Add cinnamon, ginger, clove or allspice powder or even cocoa to your dough before baking, or brush the undecorated side of each star with a favourite essential oil to add a calming scent; if you're scenting your dough stars, only paint and PVA one side.

Consider adding additional holes round the edges of your star to thread glittery streamers or strands of beads for more visual movement and interest.

Craft mirrors, beads, dried pasta or other embellishments increase visual appeal and make these lovely to handle. Stick embellishments on with PVA glue or a glue gun. As this is for your window, anything that's shiny will help catch the light and ensure your stars shine bright - covering these stars in foil or adding foil embellishments is an easy way to add extra shine.



Doughy Stars

To make Salt Dough

Preheat your oven on its lowest temperature.

Line a baking tin with greaseproof paper or baking parchment

Mix a cup or mug of plain flour (around 250g) with half a cup of table salt (125g) - the fine, running kind, not lumpy rock salt or flaky sea salt - and half a cup of water (125ml). If using cocoa powder, measure out your flour, take out a tablespoonful and replace it with cocoa powder.

Form together into a ball - it should not need to be kneaded.

Roll out on a lightly floured surface and use cutters or stencils and a butter knife to cut shapes.

Bake for around 3 hours or until the dough is hard. To double-check, turn over one of your dough shapes and knock on the underneath - if it sounds dull then the dough needs to be baked for longer.

Top Tips

Salt dough works best with really simple shapes, so stars are ideal. You can use salt dough to create raised embellishments, but these are best baked separately and stuck on afterwards with PVA or a glue gun once cooled.

Position hanging holes so they aren't too close to the edges of your shape, otherwise the holes may crack and break during threading and hanging. Make the holes a good size as they can shrink when baked.

Dough stars can be painted on both sides, or you can keep one side raw. If you're making these as gifts or keepsakes, consider putting a hand or fingerprint on the raw side as an 'artist's' signature - they will also remind people in years to come how small your children once were. Would make a lovely gift to send to family to let them know you're thinking of them.



Smelly Stars



Resources

Oranges
String

To make stars:

Whole star anise or small stars cut out of brown paper

How to make it

Cut oranges into very thin slices, dab with kitchen towel to get rid of excess juice.

Space slices out on a baking tray and bake in a low oven (around 120 degrees) for around 3 hours. Turn over every 30 mins.

The cooking process will make your house smell amazing!

When cooled, thread with string to create hanging loops or along a length of string to make a garland. Use a little PVA glue or a glue gun to add a whole star anise or a cut-out star to the centre.

Sensory Extras

These little orange slices glow like stained-glass windows in sunlight and the smell should last for a long time too.

Try drying slices of lime, whole clementines or tangerines, or even whole chilies to create different colours. You can also create shaped frames out of wire and thread your dried fruit slices on to them to make a star-shaped smelly wreath.



Suncatcher Stars



Resources

Black paper or card

Tissue paper or coloured cellophane sweet wrappers

A clear A4 plastic wallet

PVA glue

Optional - biodegradable glitter or sequins

How to make it

Slit open the plastic wallet and flatten out, removing any binder holes.

Cut star outlines out of the paper/carboard.

Spread one half of the plastic wallet with a thin layer of PVA glue. Stick down the black star outline.

While the glue is still wet, sprinkle glitter on first if you're using it. Then fill up the shape with strips of tissue paper or sweet wrappers, using more glue if you need to; the more layers you build up, the darker the colour.

Spread the other half of the plastic wallet with glue, fold over to create a seal. When fully dry, cut round the black star outline. Attach to your windows. You can add a candle or LED light behind them so they can still shine at night.

Sensory Extras

Position in your sunniest window and look for the colours reflected inside your house when the sun comes out.



Seedy Stars



Resources

600g wild bird seed
95g Plain flour
110ml water
3 tablespoons of golden syrup
Star-shaped cutters or moulds
String or ribbon

How to make it

Mix the flour, water and golden syrup together until you form a smooth paste.

Mix in the bird seed until thoroughly combined.

Press into your moulds firmly - really pack it in hard. Use a skewer or thin pencil to make a hanging hole; don't make it too close to the edge or your bird feeder may break.

Leave to dry for at least 8 hours or overnight. When hardened, add string or ribbon to make hanging loops

Sensory Extras

Have a birdwatching session through your windows with snuggly blankets and hot chocolate. How many different types of birds will you see?

You could make pretend binoculars using the inner roll from some kitchen towel if you don't have any real ones. Cut two tubes and tape together, adding string to make a strap to hold them round your neck.



Folded Stars



Resources

Colourful paper or card - old flyers and leaflets work really well, or pages from magazines or even newspapers for a monochrome look

Scissors

Optional - biodegradable glitter, sequins, etc

PVA glue

Holepunch to make hanging holes

String or ribbon

How to make it

Use the pentagon template on the next page or create your own - the bigger the pentagon, the bigger the star.

For first-timers, go for a big pentagon.

The best way to learn how to make these is to watch a video, click on the link below:

<https://www.cambridgeimprint.co.uk/how-to-videos/how-to-make-a-five-pointed-origami-star/>

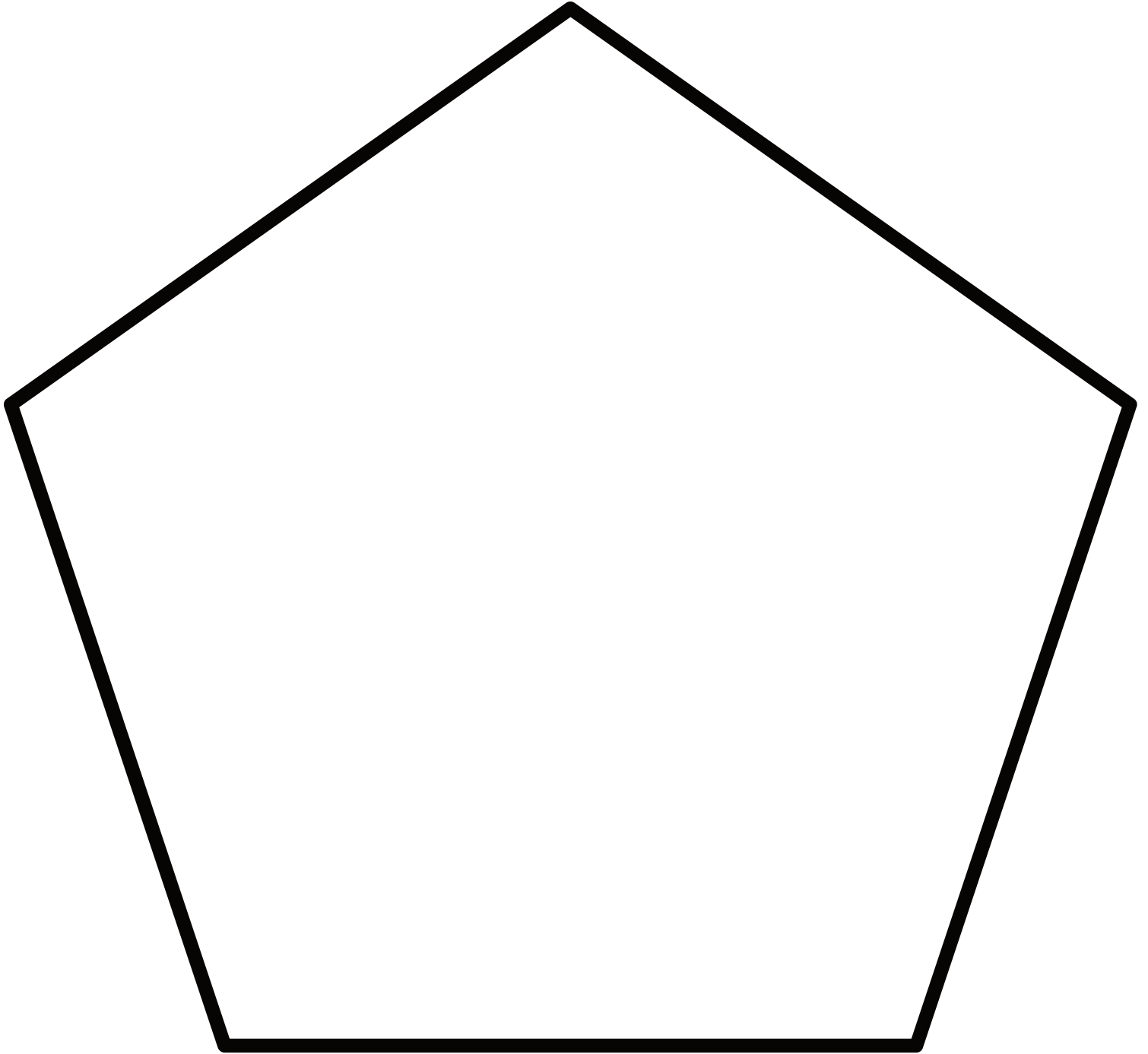
Sensory Extras

Make lots, thread them with string or fishing line, and hang from a wire coat hanger or two crossed sticks to create a mobile.

If you have a single holepunch, the more holes you punch and clip, the more the light will show through. Pair with fairy lights for extra twinkles and shadows on your walls and ceiling.



Folded Stars





Woolly Stars



Resources

Cardboard
Scissors
Wool or string

How to make it

Cut a circle out of cardboard.

Choose how many points you would like your star to have, and then cut a corresponding amount of notches from the outside edge of the circle towards the centre.

Tie a knot in your string or wool and insert the free end through one of the notches, pulling the thread tight until the knot touches against the cardboard. This creates an anchor.

Wind and loop your thread across the circle, visiting each notch. Explore different ways to create patterns.

Using wool that is already colour graduated helps to create layers of colour. To create your own colours, you could dip sections of a long piece of string into paint or make natural dyes using mixtures of turmeric and water for yellow, beetroot juice for red, etc, or use solutions of food colouring to make green or blue.

Sensory Extras

Use shiny cardboard or cover your circles with foil before winding on your threads; this helps create a reflective background that will catch the light.

Alter the cardboard design and make starry pompoms instead - lots of videos online for pompom-making. Use glittery or metallic thread or wool for extra sparkle.



Slotted Stars



Resources

Cardboard
Pens, pencils or paint
Scissors
Wool or string

How to make it

Cut out the star template on the next page - you will need two for each star.

Colour or paint your stars. Snip the stars to make slots, and slide the two pieces together. Add a hanging loop.

Create your own star templates adding as many points as you like. You can make huge ones from big pieces of sturdy cardboard, or lots of teeny tiny ones.

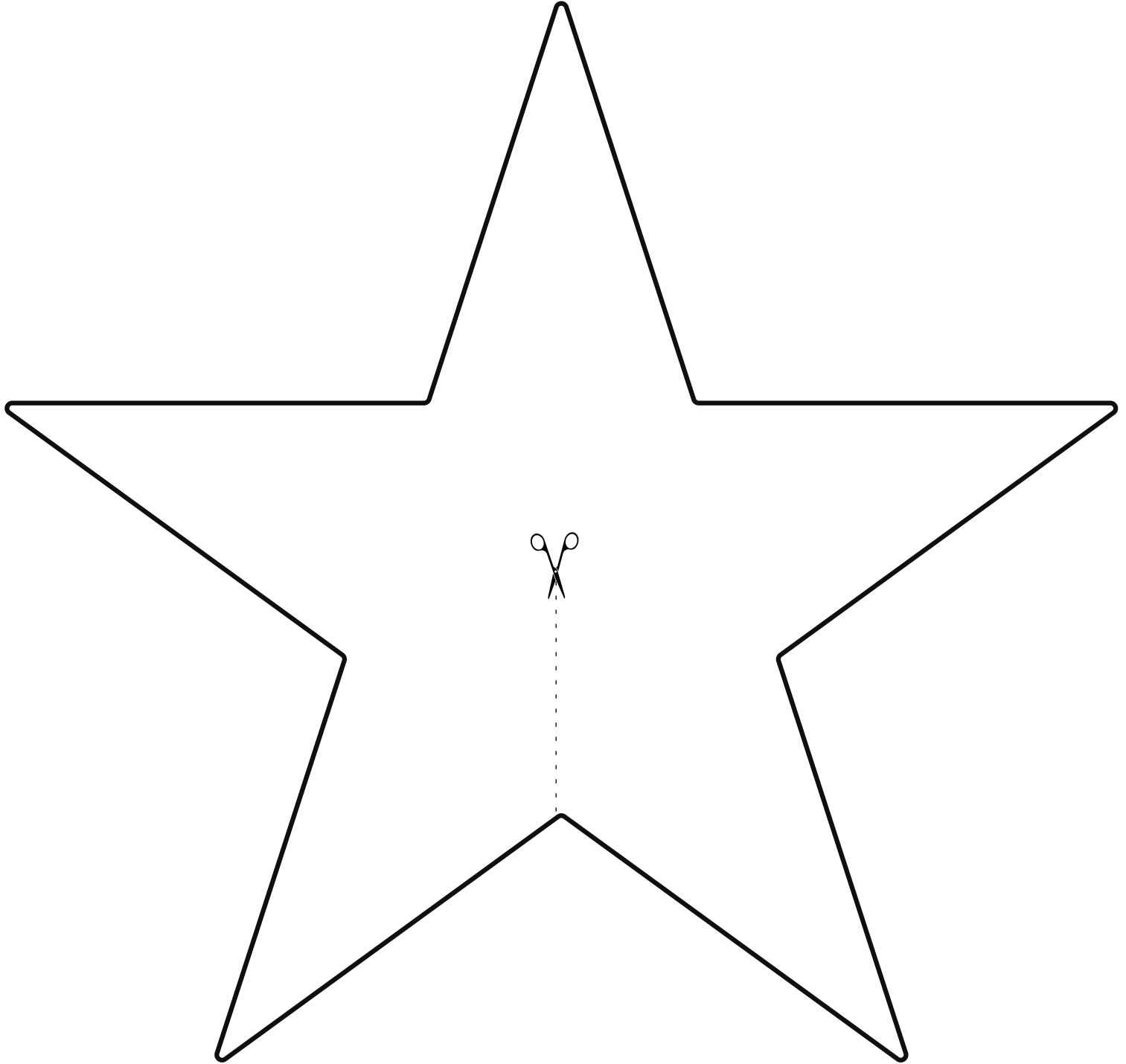
Sensory Extras

Turn your slotted stars into shooting stars by adding tails made of streamers. Cut lots of strips from a carrier bag and attach to the bottom edges of your stars; carrier bag streamers flutter really well in the wind and also make a nice rustling sound.

Laminate your stars or cut them out of plastic tubs - ice cream tubs, butter packs, etc - to make weather-proof ones. To decorate, use acrylic paints, allow to dry fully, and then seal and varnish with a coat of PVA glue.



Slotted Stars





Lolly Stick Stars



Resources

Six lolly sticks
Pens, pencils or paint
Glue
Decorations

How to make it

As with the Twiggy Star, lay out the lolly sticks to make the star shape and add a blob of glue to each point to hold them together.

Colour or paint your stars, however, they also look lovely just in plain wood too.

Add any decorations and a hanging loop. You can stick straight onto the sticks, or wrap ribbons, wool, or pipe cleaners around them.

Dried flowers, herbs and spices, or even long pieces of grass can make great natural decorations.

Sensory Extras

These stars can look great with lots of streamers hanging from them - strips of foil to catch the light, or crinkly-crackly strips from carrier bags, or pieces of string or wool with bows tied to them like a kite's tail.

If you can't find lolly sticks, you could use strips of cardboard instead.



Magic Wand Stars



Resources

Sticks
Cardboard
Sticky tape
Decorations

How to make it

Cut two identical star shapes out of cardboard and decorate.

Place the stick between the cardboard stars and seal all the edges tightly with sticky tape.

These look great in a vase, so why not make lots of different ones to display together? Use for imaginative play and have fun casting spells or granting wishes.

Sensory Extras

These wands can look great with lots of streamers hanging from them. For a sparkly look, you can wrap the stick in foil but you could also add more colour by painting the sticks or by winding colourful ribbon or wool around the shaft too.

Add jingle bells or discs from a foil baking tin or pie plate threaded together to add a sound when you swoosh and wave your wand.