



Critter Helpers in My Backyard!

Little Learners' Pollinators Lesson with Miss Lisa!



✚ *Don't forget your Big Learner: this will be fun for them too!*

If you can, first watch these videos linked here and the Little Learners page on our website...

[Pollination](#)

[More About Pollinators](#)



First you will need to gather your materials:

For Activity #1

One set of Critter Helper Identification Cards; printed on white paper (if you have card stock, they will last longer but this isn't necessary). Scissors to cut them out and glue stick, glue or tape to stick the description to the back of the picture.

✚ If you can't print them, you can still learn about these Critter Helpers by bringing them up on the screen and having your Big Learner read about them as you look at each picture.

For Activity #2

About ten smooth rocks. The size doesn't matter but they don't need to be too large (about a two-inch diameter will work just fine). The number you collect will determine what you can do with them after you paint them. *For a game of tic-tac-toe, you will need two groups of rocks: five each of two different designs.*

👁 *Keep an eye out for Pollinators on flowers while hunting for rocks!*



Craft Paint or Homemade Paint (See recipe below for ingredients*) in various colors.

Pollinator/Flower Design ideas and tic-tac-toe grid,

[Click HERE](#) to print the sheets out, or you can look at them on the screen or come up with your own ideas. *Be creative!*

Q-tips, paint brushes or other means of spreading the paint on the rocks

Optional: Permanent markers, clear spray paint, sidewalk chalk.

Homemade Paint Recipe

✚ You can use Q-tips or paint brushes for painting. You can use this recipe for finger paint as well.

You Will Need

- Mixing bowl and spoon
- Measuring cup
- Food coloring
- Containers or Squeeze bottles with tight fitting lids
- Flour
- Salt
- Warm water
- Funnel (only if your containers have narrow openings)



Directions

1. In a mixing bowl, combine even parts of water, salt, and flour. I used 1 cup of water, 1 cup of salt, and 1 cup of flour for the four ½ cup containers shown.
2. Once fully combined, divide into containers using the funnel if necessary.
3. Place small drops of food coloring in each container and place lids on tightly.
4. Shake the containers to mix the paint.
5. Continue adding food coloring until desired shade is achieved.
6. Paint as usual! Paint on rocks and thickness of paint might take longer to completely dry.
7. Store the paint with tight fitting lids on top.
8. Paint will separate after sitting for a while. Simple shake the containers up again or stir and they will be as good as new!



Adapted from *How to Make Homemade Paints* by Smart Schoolhouse:
<https://www.smartschoolhouse.com/diy-crafts/make-homemade-paint>



Activity #1: Critter Helper Identification Cards

#1. If you have cardstock, print the pictures on cardstock and the descriptions on plain paper.

#2. Cut out the pictures and the descriptions carefully.

#3. Match the description to the picture using the colors and letters (just use the letters if printing in black and white).

Then stick the descriptions to the backs of the pictures for a set of cards you can use to identify *Critter Helpers* in your yard!



Activity #2: Rock Painting and Homemade Paint!



#1. Choose the design for your rocks. You can choose from pollinators such as bees, ladybugs and butterflies or the flowers where they collect the pollen. For Tic-Tac-Toe you will need *two groups of rocks: five each of two different designs* so pick at least two designs.

✚ You can also just have fun painting all different pollinators and flowers to decorate your garden or yard!

#2. Use craft paint or make your Homemade Paint using the recipe above (Bonus chalk paint recipe below for additional fun on the sidewalk when you are done with rock painting!).

✚ Think about your design choices when choosing or mixing colors

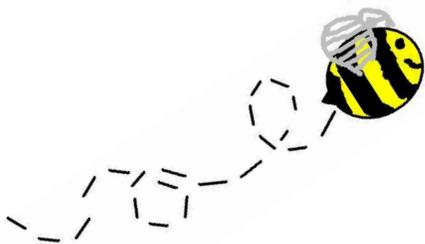


#3. Paint the rocks the colors of the pollinators or your favorite flowers (Red=Ladybugs, Yellow=Bees, Blue or Orange=Butterflies etc.)

✚ For optional details use black permanent markers to add stripes on bees, wings on butterflies or spots on ladybugs.

#4. Let them dry before placing them around your garden or having fun with the extension activities below.

✚ Also optional: spray paint them with clear spray paint after they dry so they last longer outside. Rain will wash the designs off the rocks if not protected somehow, especially if using the homemade paint.



Extension Activities:

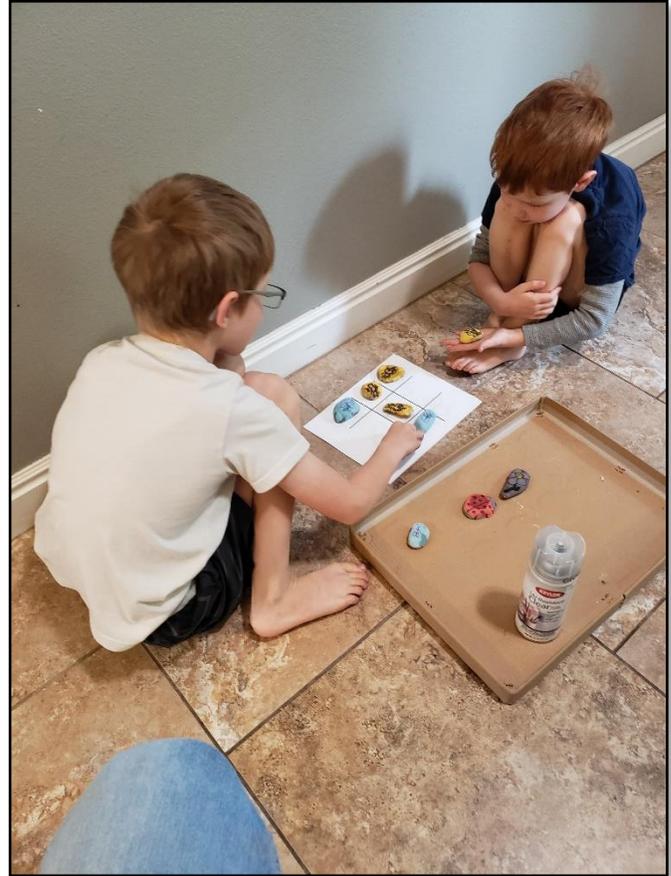
Pollinator Tic-Tac-Toe- If you have five each of two different designs you can play a game of Tic-Tac-Toe with your Big Learner or other Little Learners and see who can get "Three in a row to make your garden grow!"

Use the tic-tac-toe grid provided by printing it out or just draw your own on a piece of paper.

- ✚ Better yet, use sidewalk chalk or the *Bonus Chalk Paint recipe* below to make a tic-tac-toe board on your sidewalk or driveway and play outside!

Share Your Creations- Place your painted rocks around your garden or backyard to make your outdoor spaces pretty or place them in potted plants and flowers inside or out. You could also brighten a neighborhood friend's day by "door dashing" them*** with one of your creations!

****Big Learners must okay this activity and make sure you stay safe.*



Bonus Chalk Paint recipe! (NOT needed for the activity)

Ready to make some easy chalk paint with your children? You only need a few simple ingredients and supplies:

- 1 Part corn starch
- 1 Part water
- Food coloring
- Any containers with tight fitting lids.

Mix the corn starch, water, and food coloring. Give the solution a little stir or shake until fully combined. Then stick in some paint brushes, and you are all set!

