Imagine the satisfaction in making a birdhouse, flower box or piece of furniture! Woodworking Wonders teaches carpentry skills that can lead to a lifetime of enjoyment.

Supporting School-Age Accreditation and Quality Programming

Woodworking Wonders can be webbed into School-Age and Teen program activities. Many curriculum activities are designed as long-term projects where children/youth improve their skills as they advance. This project supports the National AfterSchool Association keys for human relationships and activities.

Opportunities for Youth Leadership and Development and Cross-age Teaching

A successful Woodworking Wonders project requires children/youth to assume responsibility for themselves and those around them to keep everyone safe. Once they’ve mastered some skills, they can help younger children learn to appreciate working with wood and learn to use tools correctly. Youth can also develop leadership skills by organizing service-learning projects.

Providing Quality Middle School and Teen Programming

Woodworking Wonders should appeal to teens who are looking for a challenge and who are interested in developing a skill that could lead to a lifelong hobby or possibly a career. Teens will enjoy creating new plans and patterns and building items that would be much more expensive if they had to be purchased. They can take on the responsibility of teaching others and sharing what they have learned.

Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development

Youth involved in 4-H know they are cared about and feel a sense of BELONGING; they exercise INDEPENDENCE by using decision-making and action to influence people and events; they develop a sense of MASTERY by learning skills needed in making positive career and life choices; and they experience GENEROSITY by helping others through community service. These elements support the Army Youth Development Components of Belonging, Success, Service and Independence.

Summary

Woodworking Wonders is a great project for teaching children/youth a very useful skill while helping them to develop life skills that can overlap other areas of their lives. Regardless of the type of job a person may have, woodworking can provide a relaxing outlet at the end of a work week. The satisfaction of creating something in wood, can give a lot of self-confidence in other areas of life.
Woodworking Wonders

Project Goals
The goal of this project is to teach woodworking following safe practices while developing skills in organization and planning, communication, problem solving, and decision making. Each guide highlights specific goals for the activities and also encourages children/youth to develop personal goals.

Four Fun Activities

1. One of the first skills a carpenter must possess is the ability to identify the right tools for the right job. The activity Tools and Equipment teaches children/youth to identify 13 basic woodworking tools. This activity can be enhanced by using real tools for identification. Check out the activity in Measuring Up, Level 1, page 8.

2. Although woodworking is fun and rewarding, there can be some danger if children/youth don’t follow safety rules. Have them create a woodworking safety poster as a reminder of safety considerations when using woodworking tools. The Safety First activity not only helps children/youth learn about safety, it also provides an opportunity for them to share their knowledge with others by using the poster to create a presentation or skit. See Making the Cut, Level 2, pages 8-9.

3. There’s more than one way to join two pieces of wood. Sometimes a carpenter needs a door, and that is where hinges come in. The activity Hinging Around teaches youth about hinges and how they differ depending upon their purpose. See Nailing it Together, Level 3, pages 9-10, for more information about the hinges activity.

4. When there is a lot of wood to cut, it makes sense to use a power saw instead of a hand saw. However, using a power saw takes practice. The Cutting With Power activity teaches children/youth about safety issues with power tools and gives them practice using a power circular saw. For those children/youth with more advanced woodworking skills see Finishing Up, Level 4, pages 15-16.

Experiential Learning
Experiential learning engages children and youth while they learn, share, and grow through their 4-H experiences. The focus is on them as learners with an adult as the coach. First comes the “doing” or exploring. Next, youth share what they did and discuss the experience with their peers. After they’ve identified the skills and knowledge gained, help them determine how to apply these to other situations in their lives.

Project Activity Guides and Target Age Groups
Woodworking Wonders includes four Youth Activity Guides and one Helper’s Guide covering four levels of skill development. Although the project books are designed for various grade groups, youth in any grade may use the book that best fits their level of woodworking knowledge and experience.

Measuring Up (Level 1, grades 2-4) explores the beginning knowledge level of woodworking by learning names of basic tools, different woods and safety rules.

Making the Cut (Level 2, grades 4-6) teaches youth about woodworking careers, wood finishing and helps them expand their knowledge of tools.

Nailing it Together (Level 3, grades 6-8) continues teaching about woodworking careers, as well as teaches about veneers, hinges, joints and using the right tool for the right job.

Finishing Up (Level 4, grades 9-12) teaches youth about advanced power tools and even more complicated woodworking techniques.

Helper’s Guide provides project leader support for all manuals as well as suggestions for group activities.

Related 4-H Projects
Arts and Crafts and Theatre Arts are just two 4-H projects that complement Woodworking Wonders or use what is learned in the entrepreneur project to start a woodworking business. Also the skills in planning, measuring and cutting accurately are useful in the clothing project.

Integrating Technology
Although Woodworking Wonders focuses on building individual skills, blending technology into the project can broaden the experience in a variety of ways. The Internet is a resource for woodworking plans and tips on using tools. Many tools incorporate technology into their use and allow ease of measuring and cutting. The use of digital photography means photos can be taken of future projects so plans can be drawn later and children/youth can share photos of finished items with a parent or family member who is living elsewhere.

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Community Service Service Learning Opportunities
There are many ways to combine Woodworking Wonders and community service. For instance, encourage children/youth to build bird houses for a park or even for the youth center. Or, consider building flower boxes, decorating them, planting flowers, and setting them up at a school, hospital or retirement home. For a more ambitious community service project, consider having the children/youth build a large security barrier that could be filled with soil then planted with flowers or shrubs. Work with military personnel at the garrison for measurement and placement of these containers.

Life Skills
“Skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life” are identified as Life Skills (Hendricks, 1996). Woodworking Wonders teaches skills such as planning, responsibility, communication, listening, goal-setting, decision making, teamwork, cooperation, self-motivation and problem solving. Generally one life skill is targeted for each activity, but more than one can easily be taught and practiced.

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