

African Shield

In some African countries, like Kenya, tribes create unique initiation shields for boys entering adulthood. Shields are handed down from generation to generation and painted over for each new owner. Have your child make their own version of an initiation shield, and decorate it with their favorite objects and colors. Don't forget to add a central "eye" to look through. This craft is a jumping off point for teaching children about the importance of cultural rituals.



What You Need:

- Large piece of cardboard
- Paintbrush
- Acrylic or poster paint (in black, red, white, brown)
- Scissors
- Water
- Pencil
- Newspaper
- Rag or sponge

What You Do:

1. Before cutting out the cardboard shield, have your child practice cutting the shape on newspaper, which is easier to cut. Fold a piece of newspaper in half and cut out a half-oval shape, and then unfold it to see if it's a good shape and size.
2. Once your child has a shield shape they like, they can lay the paper on cardboard, trace it, and then cut it out.
3. Carefully poke the scissors through the middle and cut out the "eye" circle.
4. Help your child dilute some red and brown paint with a bit of water, and rub the colors on the shield using an old rag or sponge. The color and spongy texture will create a hammered metal effect on the shield.
5. Once the paint is completely dry, your child can sketch their designs onto the shield. They can use symbols that represent their favorite sports, foods, hobbies and more.
6. Paint the designs with red, black, and dark brown paint for an authentic feel.
7. Now show it off to friends and family!

Read more about typical shields [here](#).