RECYCLED TURTLE SHELL RATTLE

Rattles play an important part in Native American music. They can be made from a variety of different materials such as gourds, bark, seeds, seashells, deer hooves and even modern containers such as metal salt and pepper shakers!

One of the most beautiful Native American rattles is made from a turtle's shell. It's gentle sound and beautiful appearance is a welcome part of quieter Native American songs and ceremonies. Since turtle shells are a rare find for most families, here's a version of this craft that recycles the metal "take-out" containers instead of an actual turtle shell.
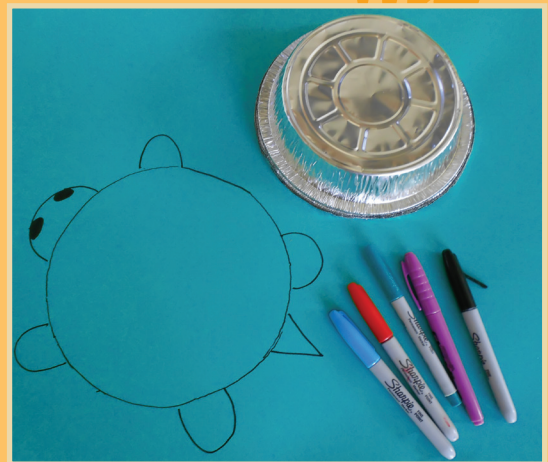
GET YOUR SUPPLIES

To create this turtle rattle you'll need a few simple supplies.

- Look for a cleaned take-out container, a piece of cardboard or poster board
- Glue or hot glue
- Pens and paint - for decoration
- A handful of small items that can make the sound of your rattle. Smaller materials such as birdseed, tiny pasta, seed beads or Q-tips make a quiet sound. Larger items such as dried beans, macaroni, pebbles, larger beads or buttons make a louder sound.

MAKE YOUR TURTLE

To make your turtle, place the larger side of the take-out container on the cardboard and trace the circle it makes. To that circle, add the head, tail, and fours feet of the turtle. Cut out the turtle shape and decorate by adding eyes, or other markings on the feet and tail.

DECORATE THE SHELL

Next, turn your metal container upside down and paint or color the part that will be the shell. Many of these containers have geometric designs stamped into the metal that look like the scales or areas seen on a turtle's back. Feel free to be creative with making your turtle's shell unique and beautiful!

◈ MAKE IT RATTLE!

Next, add the materials that will create the sound. Place them inside the take-out container and close the lid and shake. Do you like that sound? If not, try another material and keep going until you've gotten a perfect sound for the rattle you are making.

> **!** ◆ Remember, smaller materials such as birdseed, tiny pasta, seed beads or Q-tips make a quiet sound. Larger items such as dried beans, macaroni, pebbles, larger beads or buttons make a louder sound.

◈ PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

When you've completed all this, place your shell onto the cardboard or poster board and glue it into place. Regular craft glue works for this instrument but hot glue creates a better seal for this project, if you have that available.

◈ TIME TO PLAY!

Hold your completed turtle shell in one or two hands and gently shake. You can shake from side to side or up and down or let the materials "swoosh" inside the shell, creating different sounds.
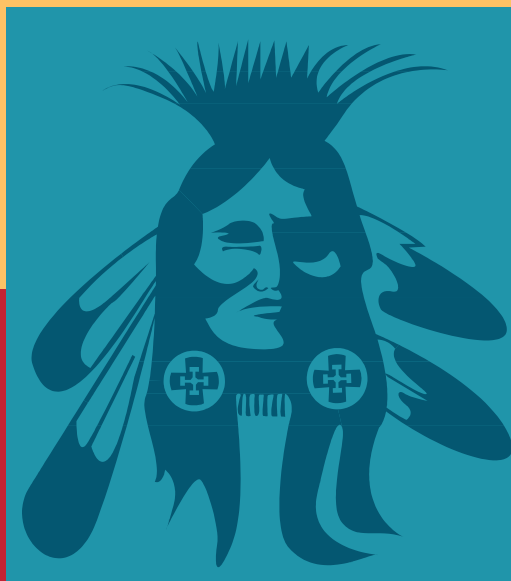
Make a beat and play along with a song you know or favorite music from a recording. Make up a song about a turtle or about your favorite animal and sing it along with your rattle. Create a quiet song that you can sing to yourself or that you sing about yourself.

The recycled turtle rattle fits easily in a child's hand and is a great way to explore music as well as the role of animals in Native Culture.

◈ CREATE YOUR OWN HONOR SONG

If you've ever been to a pow-wow or listened to Native American music, you've probably heard "honor songs". These songs honor women, men and veterans and tell about their value and acknowledge their importance and their service. Even though it might not be exactly a Native American style honor song, you can sing or create a song that honors your mom, dad, friends, teachers or even the best characteristics that you possess. You can also create a song such as this and give it as a gift to someone you love!

EXPLORE NATIVE AMERICAN MUSIC AND CULTURE

If you live in the USA, there may be a Native American museum created by a local tribe in your area. You can visit a pow-wow that is open to the public or look online at websites such as the NMAI (National Museum of the American Indian) and powwows.com. Native American tribes and indigenous peoples are incredibly diverse and have a rich cultural history. We invite you to respectfully learn more and share what you know with others!

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