

JEWELS OF THE SEA: PEARLS

AGES

Children 8+ years

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Pearls are the only gemstone to come from a living creature! Depending on audience age, discuss pearl diving, pearl formation/farming, and/or pearl history. Pearls are formed in mollusk shells and come in many shapes and colors. They are prized amongst jewelers. Most pearls today are cultured, meaning they are grown in a pearl farm. After a discussion or presentation, participants “dive” for their own pearls with which to create their own keychain or bracelet. A coloring sheet is included for children who finish their crafts early. Suggested runtime: 60 min.



Image source: Amanda Raiche of Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library, Vermillion, SD

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

Activity: Pearl Diving

Materials: Small kiddie pool(s); water to fill up pool; sand; pipe cleaners; pearl beads; other beads to supplement the pearls; containers for pearls to bury in the sand (you could use baggies or small plastic containers for something very simple and cost effective, or a plastic clamshell from a craft store).

TIP:

You can also have participants make “oysters” by putting frosting and a candy pearl between two cookies.



Image source: Shutterstock

ADAPTATION:

For those who need physical accommodations, use containers on tables instead of kiddie pools.

TIP:

If weather and space permit, take this activity outside! It can get messy.

Instructions:

- In advance, separate out pearls into containers (baggies, tupperware, or plastic clamshells, or shallow pan/container). Alternatively, just throw pearls in the bottom of any pan/container.
- Fill the kiddie pools $\frac{1}{3}$ with sand, just enough to cover the pearls.
- Add water to your desired depth. (The deeper, the messier!)

For the activity:

- This can be run as a relay between teams or done collaboratively in groups around the pools.
- Make “clothespins” out of pipecleaners, and bend them around kids’ noses.
- Participants will place a large clothespin on their nose to replicate the turtle shell clip pearl divers used and one by one run to the pool to dig up their pearls. When they have their set, they will run back and tag the next person. The first team finished wins!
- Alternately, you can have the kids participate in groups around the pools with no rush or competition needed.

Craft: Pearl Keychains and Bracelets

Materials: Beads; string or cord; keychain rings

Instructions:

- In advance, set up tables with craft materials.
- Cut the string to twice the desired length.
- Fold the string in half and put both ends through the keychain loop.
- Put the ends of the cord through the loop and pull tight to secure.
- String beads, making sure to pull both strings through.
- When done, tie a double knot at the end of the strings until beads are secure.
- Trim excess string.

UNIQUE SPACE AND/OR PERSONNEL NEEDS

Solo-librarian friendly.

RESOURCES

Web

“Pearl Description” from Gemological Institute of America:

<https://bit.ly/3fsufNS>

Teacher’s pack for *The Pearl Diver* from Medina Publishing:

<https://bit.ly/3hYcSWV>

“Pearl Diving” from Abu Dhabi Culture: <https://bit.ly/3usOS11>

“Meet the Female Pearl-Divers of Japan: The ‘Ama’” from *Forbes*:

<https://bit.ly/2ROAYJ2>

“Pearl Farming in Japan” from *The Guardian*: <https://bit.ly/3hYcOq9>

Beaded keychain tutorial from *Instructables*: <https://bit.ly/3i4AZ6i>

Books

Non-fiction

Diving for Pearls (Gemstones of the World) (2018) by Rachael Morlock (children’s)

Pearls (Gems: Nature’s Jewels) (2015) by Sarah Machajewski (children’s)

Fiction

Pearl (2018) by Molly Idle (children’s)

A Single Pearl (2013) by Donna Jo Napoli and Jim LaMarche (children’s)

The Pearl Diver (2015) by Julia Johnson and Patricia Al Fakhri (children’s)

The Pearl-shell Diver (2016) by Kay Crabbe (children’s)

Printables

Pearl Coloring Sheet

