



18 **sun fun** shadow prints

The sun, with all those planets revolving around it and dependent on it, can still ripen a bunch of grapes as if it had nothing else in the universe to do.

— GALILEO

Turn the shining stars in your life into artists with the simple help of the sun. The sun is a constant presence in our lives, and thank goodness! It is the closest star to our planet, and its proximity is the perfect distance to make life on our planet possible.

Why not tap into the sun and allow the energy it produces to help your child create a masterpiece? All it takes is a sunny day, and the two of you can create beautiful prints that will help bring the outdoors inside. The materials you need are quite simple to come by:

- Sunshine
- Items found in nature such as leaves; nuts; flowers; and small, interesting branches
- Construction paper (Darker colors work best.)

How to Make a Sun Print

Find a sunny spot outdoors. Start in the late morning, if possible, so that the sun can do its thing when it is directly overhead around noontime.

As you gather items, note the difference in their textures and forms.

Take It Further

Why does the sun fade paper? Paper is made with dyes from chemicals. These particular chemicals are called pigments. Certain pigments in the paper absorb sunlight, while other pigments reflect it. When pigments absorb light, they turn into a new chemical. The new chemical cannot absorb sunlight. Instead, it loses its color and the paper fades.

Experiment with reflection and absorption properties in sunlight. Locate a dark object and a light object in nature, such as rocks of different colors. Place both in direct sunlight for several minutes, then compare them to see which feels warmer. The dark rock should, as darker colors absorb sunlight and lighter colors reflect it.

Nature is aware of this property too. Did you know the polar bear has dark skin underneath all that white hair? How might that be a benefit in living where it's so cold?

Lay the natural items on the paper. Think about the space you're working with and arrange your items in a way that looks interesting to you.

If there is a slight breeze, secure your paper by placing a bit of tape under it, sticking it to the spot you've selected.

Leave the paper, with its items on it, out in direct sunlight for several hours. The sun will fade the construction paper, but the areas covered by the items you arranged on it will be protected from the light and will not fade, creating a silhouette.

Frame or display your sun-created artwork in your home. Each time you and your child view it, you will be reminded of the lovely day and quality time you spent outdoors together.