

**Dear Families,**

**Get ready for a Fossil Frenzy!**

Your learner will be roleplaying as a dinosaur detective or *paleontologist*! Paleontologists must use their science and engineering skills to explore fantastic fossils, model magnificent monsters, and dive into the world of dinosaurs.



**To engage with your learners and learn about their day, you can ask them the following questions after each *Discovering Dinosaurs* activity:**

- *What did you learn about dinosaurs today?*
- *Did you see any fossils today?*
- *What did those fossils tell you about the dinosaurs that left them behind?*
- *How did that dinosaur find its food?*
- *How did it keep itself safe?*
- *Did you work with anyone else today?*
- *What did you and your fellow scientists discover?*
- *How were you like a scientist today?*
- *What did you and your fellow scientists discover?*
  - *Did you make observations?*
- *Did you ask questions and make predictions?*
- *Did you test an idea?*
- *Did you learn something new?*

**Discovering Dinosaurs @ Home Activities**

Attached are activities related to *Discovering Dinosaurs* that are easy to do at home! Try out any of these activities with your learners to engage them in further scientific thinking!

## **Ancient Plants**

**Materials:** Leaves, flowers, and sticks (natural or artificial), modeling clay (palm-sized disc), white glue

- 1. Close your eyes and imagine being in a garden.**
  - *What do you see?*
  - *What kinds of plants are there?*
  - *Are there flowers? Vegetables? Fruits?*
  - *Are there trees or shrubs? Tall grasses?*
  - *How tall are the plants?*
  - *How many types of plants do you see?*
- 2. While not all the plants we have on our planet today were around millions of years ago when the extinct dinosaurs walked the earth, there were still a lot of different kinds of plants.**
  - *How do we know what kinds of plants lived on this planet from before any humans were around to see them? (Fossils!)*
- 3. Take a small amount of modeling clay- enough to make a disc about the size of your palm. Take the leaves, flowers, and sticks you have gathered and press them into the clay to make an impression. This is just like an impression from a fossilized plant!**
- 4. Carefully pull the leaves, flowers, and sticks from the clay so as to not distort the impression that was made.**
- 5. Fill the indentation made by the object with glue. Try not to get too much outside of the imprint so that there isn't a lot of extra glue on your "fossil".**
- 6. Leave "fossils" to dry. When dry, the glue imprint can be removed from the clay.**
- 7. Compare your glue fossil imprint with the original material. Leaves, flowers, and sticks (natural or artificial), modeling clay (palm-sized disc), white glue**
  - *Does it look exactly the same?*
  - *Why do you think it looks different? What can that tell us about real fossils?*

## Packing for a Dino Dig

**Materials:** none

**1. Close your eyes and imagine you are paleontologists going on a fossil dig.**

- *Where are you digging? What is the dig site like?*
  - *Is it hot or cold?*
  - *Is it dry or wet?*
  - *What part of the world are you in? Have you been here before?*
- *What are you wearing?*
- *What are you holding or using to dig up the fossils?*
- *How are you getting around?*
- *What kinds of fossils are you finding?*

**2. Play "Going on a Dino Dig." The first player starts by saying something along the lines of "I'm going on a Dino Dig, and I'm bringing a shovel." The next player adds on to that by saying "I'm going on a Dino Dig, and I'm bringing a shovel and a map." Each player has to remember the previous supplies and add their own.**

- The important thing is that we are talking about fossils- there are no right or wrong answers for the game. This is just to get your young paleontologist thinking about the types of tools you might need to bring fossils safely back from the field. Ask:
  - *Does it need to be plugged in or need batteries?*
  - *How will we dig up the fossils?*
  - *How will we record what we see on our dig site?*
  - *How will we protect the fossils so they don't break?*
  - *How will we get around the dig site?*
- **You can increase the difficulty by adding additional challenges:**
  - Make word chains that link the previous item with the new item. If the first item is a shovel, the next item needs to start with the letter L. Shovel-light-toilet paper-etc.
  - Players can only suggest supplies that start with the letter that starts their name.
  - The supplies have to be the most impractical or silly things to bring on an expedition- video games, giant stuffies, ice cream sandwiches!