

RAFT IDEAS

Topics: Folklore and Mythology, Holidays and Celebrations, Design and Problem Solving

Materials List

- ✓ Containers (boxes, bags, cups)
- ✓ Fasteners (paper clips, staples, binder clips)
- ✓ Adhesive materials (glue, hot glue, tape,)
- ✓ String, yarn, or similar
- ✓ Art materials (particularly paper and paint in green and/or gold)

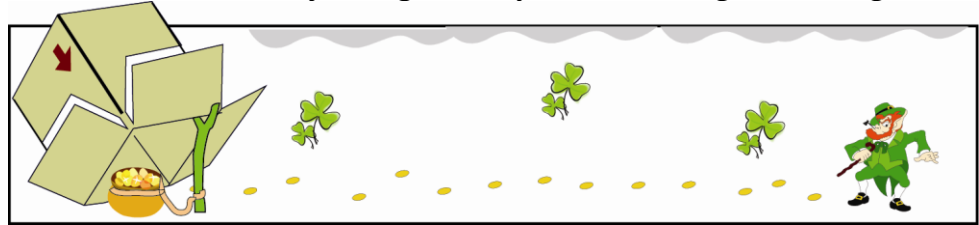
This activity can be used to teach:

- Traditions & culture (National Curriculum for Social Studies: Theme 1, Culture)
- Science & Engineering Practices (Next Generation Science Standards: Grades K-3)



Leprechaun Traps

St. Patrick's Day is a great day to do a design challenge



This St. Patrick's day organize a fun, holiday-themed design challenge that gives your students an opportunity to brainstorm, prototype, and test leprechaun traps.

To Do and Notice

Design and build a leprechaun traps. Set appropriate constraints (size of traps, types of materials that can be used, cost of materials, etc.) Be sure students incorporate the following features into their leprechaun traps:

- Traps by design should have some sort of trigger mechanism plus a device to hold the captured leprechaun.
- The trap should have some kind of bait, such as coins, or art materials that resemble coins. If available, die-cut yellow or gold cardboard into circles to resemble gold coins.
- Traps mechanisms need to be disguised or they will not fool the leprechauns.

While no student has ever caught a Leprechaun, many students have come to class the day after St. Patrick's Day and noticed that their traps have been sprung and some green glitter, green footprints, or fake gold has been left behind. Who else could have sprung the traps but the leprechauns?

The Content Behind the Activity

Some common types of traps are pit traps, cage traps, snares, and foothold traps. Although a potentially sensitive issue, animal trapping can be, when done correctly, an effective means relocating dangerous or unwanted animals. As well, archeological evidence indicates that trapping was one of the primary ways prehistoric peoples hunted for food. Central European peoples hunted mammoths by using traps, and archeologists have found pits in Norway for hunting elk that date back to 3700 B.C.

In Irish folklore, Leprechauns are short, male, fairytale creatures. According to myth, the Leprechauns inhabited the island of Ireland before the Celts. Leprechauns are described as being clever and mischievous. They are hard to catch; but legend has it, that if you catch one, he will give you a pot of gold. Or, if you manage to reach the end of a rainbow, the legends say you can find a buried pot of Leprechaun gold there.

Taking it Further

- Introduce simple machines (wheels, levers, pulleys, inclined planes) and incorporate them into Leprechaun Trap designs.
- "How My Leprechaun Traps works" makes a great student presentation topic.

Web Resources (Visit www.raft.net/raft-idea?isid=186 for more resources!)

For more information about Irish folklore and leprechauns, visit:

<http://islandireland.com/Pages/folk.html>