

Leather Routine

Here is a routine to assist you during the day.

History: Leather is one of the earliest and most important materials used by man. Cultures from around the world made leather into clothing, housing, boats and containers. Preserving the hides of animals required a tanning process. The 19th century leatherworker made harnesses for horses and oxen, enabling them to pull large loads in wagons.

The harness and saddle maker was an important part of the community. He constructed and repaired harnesses, horse collars and stage equipment. He also repaired shoes and stitched ripped seams in leather garments. His tools ranged from simple hand held cutters to sophisticated machines. Many farmers like Mr. Bernhard did their own leather repair. Examples of leather saddles, collars, and bridles are in the carriage barn.

Before students arrive

- Make sure needles are threaded.
- After **each** group you will need to thread and knot the needles so they are ready for the next group. Each string should be about 36 inches long (about the length from the center of chest to fingers)

Arrival of students at leather center

Welcome students and have them sit down. Exchange introductions.

Explain that they will do two different activities at this station.

Divide the students into two groups; one group will soap the saddles while the other group makes marble bags. At the halfway point, the group will switch.

Saddle soap station

Show the students the pictures that have been provided and discuss why leather was important.

Ask

- Where does leather come from?
- What was leather used for? Saddles, harnesses, clothing, etc.
- Why was leather important? Moving people and goods with stagecoaches and wagons, working on the farm, running a business, etc.
- What is tack? *Tack is the gear used for harnessing horses.*
- How does a farmer plow his fields? With a horse or oxen who would need to be harnessed with tack made from leather.

Explain

- Using a photo of a harnessed horse, emphasize how important it is to care for leather. Brittle, unconditioned leather can break causing a major accident.
- One job on a farm would be using saddle soap to clean leather to ensure it was in good condition.

Give each student a cloth with a small amount of saddle soap already on the cloth. The idea is to rub a very small amount of soap onto the tack for a long time to get the oil to penetrate the leather.

Making the marble bag

Explain that a favorite activity (especially at school) was playing marbles. Children would have a leather or cloth bag filled with marbles.

1. Provide pencils for each student. Ask them to write their name directly on their muslin circle. Have them use their real name.
2. Give each student a threaded needle. Show them how to go in one hole, and then come back in the next hole. Do not go over the top. Encourage students to do one stitch at a time, carefully pulling the string through while holding the eye of the needle.
3. When students have gone all the way around, tell them to pull the two ends of the thread to create a bag. Tie the ends of the string together.
4. Let each student pick two small marbles. They can put these in their bag and wear it around their neck.

Playing marbles

- When students are finished with both activities they can play marbles. Instructions are in the box or students can make up their own rules.
- The large shooter marbles must be returned when they are done playing.
- When the triangle rings, line up your students and walk them to the crafts station.

Students are not allowed to go to the next station unless an adult walks them over.

End of the day clean up

- Please thread and knot (just one end of the string) all the needles for tomorrow's parents.
- Please arrange all materials neatly in the fruit crate provided.
- We appreciate your help in keeping our facilities clean!