

## Creating Rhythm Native American Rattles & Shakers

Art has the ability to be incredibly personal to both those who are consuming the art, and to the creator of the piece. An artist can truly put a part of themselves into the creation of their work, including their history and the stories of their lives. The artist can become as much a part of the work as the materials themselves. Among many Native American groups of the American South and West, rattles and shakers have been both a piece of art and a deeply cherished ceremonial item. Used for sharing legends and teaching through ceremonies, rituals, and keeping traditions and histories alive.

Rattles and shakers continue to play a role in the tribal dances and ceremonies that are a common sight at powwows today. The rhythm the rattle sets during a dance is unforgettable and resonates and reinforces the ceremony as a part of the individual dancer's culture. The depictions on the rattles also form a major part of the story and message that is conveyed by the rattle.

Today you will have a chance to make your own rattle and decorate it to communicate your own story. Tell the legend that you want and set the rhythm for the tales you'll tell.



### Materials:

To make your rattle you will need –

- Two paper plates
- Popsicle stick
- Stapler or glue
- Beads/buttons/or small rocks
- Markers, colored pencils, crayons, or natural paint from our American Art activity

**Step One:**

Begin by taking your two paper plates and paint the design you would like your rattle to have on the bottom side of the plates (this will be the side that faces out). Choose images that are meaningful to you and that help you tell the stories you want the world to know.

**Step Two:**

Once you're done painting, place one plate down with the top facing up. Place between four – 8 beads/buttons/ or small rocks on the plate.

**Step Three:**

After placing the items that will make your rattle have sound in your plate, take the second plate and place it on top of the first so the bottom of the plate with your art is facing up towards you. Take your popsicle stick and place it where you would like the bottom of your rattle to be.

**Step Four:**

If you are using glue, place a small line of glue between the bottom plate and top plate, make sure you have left the popsicle stick out so you'll have something to hold your rattle.

If you are using a staple, place the two plates together and begin stapling along the edge, making sure to place the staples close together so no beads can escape.

**Step Five:**

You are now ready to tell your story! Begin to shake out a rhythm and share with those at home a tale that is meaningful to you.

If you would like to share your rattle's design, take a photo and post it on the CTHM Facebook page!