

# Connecting Kids to Nature

Nature is a great teacher! Try this outdoor activity - it's safe, fun, and educational. Project Learning Tree® activities build children's creative and critical thinking skills while they learn what the environment needs to remain healthy and sustainable.

## Activity 1: The Shape of Things

We depend on all of our senses - touching, tasting, hearing, smelling, and seeing - to gather impressions of our environment. In this activity, children will focus on the many shapes that are found in both natural and built environments.

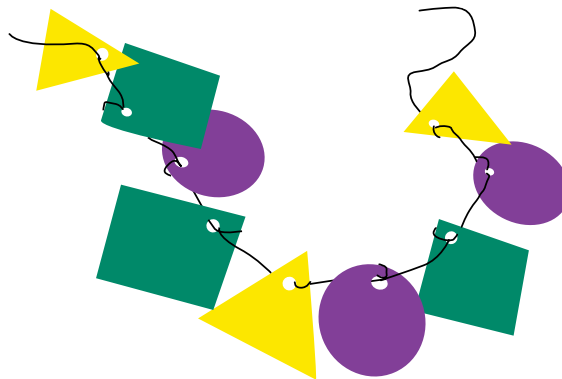
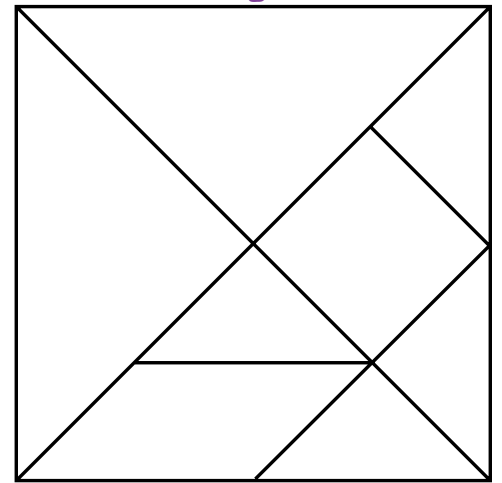
### Doing the Activity

Have children create "shape necklaces" (or bracelets) by cutting out circles, squares, triangles, rectangles, ovals, and hearts from different colored construction paper. Have children write the shape names on the cutouts and punch a hole in each. Thread a piece of string or pipe cleaner through each shape so that it forms a loop fitting easily over a child's head or loosely on their wrist. Then, head outside to investigate:

- What is your favorite shape? Challenge children to find it in nature.
- Ask children to find objects the same shape and color as the ones on their necklaces.
- Play the "I Spy" guessing game: "I spy something shaped like a \_\_\_\_\_. Can you find it?"
- Hold up each shape and have children name all the outdoor items they can find to match.

Once back inside, introduce children to the Chinese Tangram puzzle. The puzzle is made of seven geometric pieces: five triangles, one square, and one parallelogram. The pieces can be arranged to create different objects, including people, animals, flowers, boats, and more. Use the tangram template shown here to copy and cut your own puzzle pieces out of paper, cardboard, or wood, and then work together to see what new objects you can create!

## Chinese Tangram Puzzle



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**PLT improves children's environmental awareness, critical thinking skills, and academic performance.**

- Attend a workshop near you to receive PreK-12 PLT activities, ideas, and materials.
- Encourage your child's school to incorporate outdoor learning and PLT.
- Learn more at [www.plt.org](http://www.plt.org) or call 202-765-3641



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