



**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE  
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**



# Cloverbud Fun Zone

## Hands-on Activities

### Birdseed Ornaments

#### Materials Needed:

- 2 1/2 cups birdseed
- 2 packages unflavored gelatin
- 2 tablespoons corn syrup
- 1 cup water
- 12 cookie cutters
- 2 drinking straws (cut into 2 inch long pieces)
- Twine

#### Instructions:

**Step 1:** Add 1/2 cup cold water to a large bowl.

**Step 2:** Pour the 2 packages of unflavored gelatin on top of the water.

**Step 3:** Add 1/2 cup of boiling water to the gelatin mixture and stir until the gelatin is completely dissolved.

**Step 4:** Add the corn syrup and stir until combined.

**Step 5:** Add the birdseed and mix well.

**Step 6:** Place the bowl in the refrigerator for about 10 minutes until the liquid firms up enough that it will not leak out from under the cookie cutters.

**Step 7:** Set your cookie cutters onto a parchment lined baking sheet and fill them with a spoonful of the birdseed mixture. Using the back of the spoon, press down the birdseed mixture firmly to fill in all the gaps. Fill the cookie cutters to the top.

**Step 8:** Press the drinking straws into each of the shapes leaving at least 1/2 inch of space between the hole and the edge of the shape.

**Step 9:** Place the ornaments in the refrigerator overnight.

**Step 10:** To remove the cookie cutters, gently pull the metal away from the edges on all sides, then gently push the birdseed ornaments out of the cookie cutters. Gently pull the straws out.

**Step 11:** Thread a piece of twine through the hole and tie the ends in a knot.

**Step 12:** Hang the birdseed ornaments from tree branches, leaving room nearby for the birds to perch on while eating.

**Notes:** When you place the mixture in the refrigerator, right after you've added the gelatin to the birdseed, make sure you don't keep it in the fridge for too long.

If any of the gelatin "breaks" when you stir it, you need to microwave the whole bowl to melt it and try again. The birdseed/gelatin mixture needs to be thickened slightly in the fridge until it has the consistency of a thick syrup. If the gelatin is set more than that before you spoon it into the cookie cutters, the ornaments will end up being crumbly. Just make sure it is set enough so that it does not all leak out from under the cookie cutters.

## Ice Breakers

### **You're an Animal**

#### **Instructions:**

To kick off this goofy icebreaker, have everyone sit in a circle, with one person sitting in the middle. This person will be the announcer, so make sure they have a nice clear voice. Once everyone is settled, the announcer will call out an animal name (for example: cow, dog, elephant, or giraffe) and point to a person. This person will then have to pose as that animal. Use your imagination to come up with any animal pose that you want. If the person is unable to make the animal pose within 3 seconds, they have to go into the center.

### **Name it Ball**

#### **Materials Needed:**

- 1 Ball

#### **Instructions:**

Players stand in a circle. One player chooses a category; for example ice cream flavors. The starting player names something in the chosen category, "vanilla" then bounces the ball to another person in the circle, etc. When a player cannot name something new in the chosen category they are out. The last player standing gets to choose the next category.

## Service Project Idea

### **Kindness Place Mats for Seniors**

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Construction paper or cardstock
- Coloring/drawing supplies like markers, crayons, dot markers, stickers, paint
- Laminator (optional - you can always take your place mats to an office supply store to be laminated too!)

#### **Instructions:**

**Step 1:** Create a drawing on construction paper or cardstock. You can even add a happy message to your artwork.

**Step 2:** Let it dry completely if using materials like glue, paint, or dot markers.

**Step 3:** Laminate each place mat so it can be wiped clean and is more durable.

**Step 4:** Contact your local Meals on Wheels America (or similar charitable organization in your area if not in the US) location to drop off or mail in the place mats.