



Mosaic Concrete Stepping Stones

Overview/Description: Students create their own stepping stone and decorate it with broken tile and pottery or other found objects. Stepping stones are made right on the ground or other flat surface - no form is used.

Grade Level: Any **Lesson Time:** 2 hours (there is a waiting period in the middle) **Season:** Any

Type of Activity: Art/Craft (messy and fun)

Materials Needed: 60 lb bag(s) of Concrete Premix (one bag for 3 stepping stones), Water, Wheelbarrow for mixing, Shovel, Hand Trowel, materials to decorate (colorful rocks, broken pottery, tiles, coins, etc.), Hammer (to break tile/pottery), Gloves, Sponges or Rags, Bucket for Sponge Water.

Preparation: Have all materials ready. Have a flat space of ground, or old piece of plywood ready (can also use cardboard, plastic). Have plenty of room for kids to work without stepping in or on each other's work.

What to do:

- **Break tile or pottery** into small pieces - cover with a towel before smacking with hammer to keep shards from flying into eyeballs.
- **Mix the concrete** in wheelbarrow, one 60 lb bag at a time. Add water little bits at a time - you don't want it to get soupy, and it is easy to add too much water. Concrete should be wet but thick and stiff. If you DO mix it too wet, you can add dry mix to stiffen.
- **Put a plop** (shovelful) of concrete on the plywood or flat surface. The concrete should hold its shape.
- Kids use a hand trowel or just their gloved hands to **shape it**. 1.5" to 2.5" x 12" - 14" wide is a good size, but it is also OK to just let kids do what they feel.
- **Add the decorative bits** - broken tile, pottery, stones, etc. Lay them out on the surface, then wiggle and smack them so they become embedded in the concrete but flush with the surface. This step can be upsetting for kids, because their decorations will disappear at this stage. The whole thing will look pretty ugly and gray.
- **Let the concrete set up** for a while - maybe 30 minutes to an hour. It will feel solid with no jiggling when you touch it. You will think: "maybe I waited too long".
- **Wash/scrub the surface** to expose the decorative bits. This will also expose the rocks in the concrete. A big sponge is best for this, but a rag or brush will work too. Rinse and wring out your sponge often.
- **Let the stepping stones dry** for a day or two before moving them. If the weather is hot keep them moist and shaded if possible (concrete is weaker if it cures quickly). In 3 days your stepping stones will be ready to use in the garden.

Teaching Points:

- Broken objects (garbage) can be used to make useful art.
- You are creative, you can do real grown-up work, and you can make beautiful, useful things.
- Opening Circle questions: Is beauty important? Why do you think that? What is another example of reusing objects that might be considered garbage or junk?