Games From the Past

Maize Dollies

Materials:
- Green Maize leaves (8 per student) (not included)
- String 1 yard long (25)
- Cotton balls (25)

Classroom Time: 1 class period (45 min.)

Objectives:
Teacher's introduction to the activity: Every child has toys and frontier children made Maize dollies, every one as unique as the child. They used their active imagination, and in the corn leaves they saw wonders. Of course, Native American children made corn dolls long before the white people arrived. Listen to the Iroquois story of the corn doll. Make your project “yours”!

Instruction:
1. Put a cotton ball into one maize leaf, and tie around the ball.
2. Use a long leaf for arms, and roll it, then tie the ends, leaving the enough length for the “hands”.
3. Find some large leaves, and for the body, cut the narrow ends off, fold the leaf, cut a slit in the middle.
4. Put the “head” through the slit, & the “arms” through the fold part of the large leaf.
5. Tie the middle of the leaf to form a “waist”.
6. Now trim your creation as you please, using things around you, like black peas for eyes, a scrap of material for an “apron”, etc.

Legend of the Corn Doll

The Iroquois have “Three sisters,” the sustainers of life; corn, beans, and squash. The Corn Spirit was so thrilled at being one of the sustainers that she asked the Creator what more she could do for her people. The Creator said that a beautiful doll could be formed from the husks. When the Creator was done forming the doll, with a beautiful face, it was sent to the children. The doll went from village to village playing with the children, and doing what she could for them. But, because everyone she met told her she was so beautiful, she became vain. The Creator cautioned her, and that if she continued, he would have to punish her.

Well, one day the Corn doll glanced at the water and saw her reflection. She admired herself, because she knew she was beautiful. The Creator stepped in and sent a screech owl to snatch up her reflection. He punished her, and from then on, every Iroquois mother tells her child this story to remind them that it is wrong to thing they are better than anyone else; that the Creator has given a special gift to everyone.
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