

Illuminated letters –the old fashioned way

Age: 6-9 Group size: 20

Duration: 25 mins



Preparation time: 10 mins

Resources

- Lots of small pots
- Shallow trays
- Feathers
- Scissors
- Cartridge paper 12cms square
- Blotting paper/paper towels
- Fine paintbrushes
- Drawing inks
- Small pots of water

Background

The early books published in the UK would have been stories from the bible. They were beautifully illustrated by monks using feathers for pens and inks. There is more information and images here.

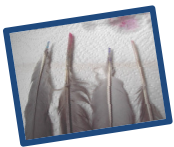
<http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/kids/manuscripts.html>



Preparation

Ink is expensive. Pour small amounts into little pots and sit them into a plastic or foil tray so they won't tip over easily. Cover tables in newspaper and provide paper towels to use as blotting paper.

Collect a range of different sized feathers and cut the tips off the quill at an angle. The feathers should be clean and children should wash hands after using them. For larger areas of colour, the children could use fine paintbrushes.



Activity

Practice ideas for the initial letter of your name. Make the letters solid so that patterns or pictures can be added inside. When the ancient manuscripts were written, the outside of the letters was often decorated too.



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The pictures could be of your favourite things or might be other things that begin with the same letter as your name. When you are ready to start, draw the basic design for the letter.

Dip the end of the feather into the ink and tap off extra ink on the side of the pot. Draw with the feather; add more ink when it starts to fade. If you change colours, wash and dry the end of the feather, so you don't spoil your work. If there is too much ink, tear a corner of kitchen paper and blot up the extra.



Golden Time



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