Activity Box

An activity box contains the materials and tools to complete one or more activities. These activities can be centered around earning a badge, workshop, themed event or even where it will be used. Let's examine activity boxes.

Activity Box

Steps

1. **Standards.**
Creating an activity box may have a fixed set of criteria or standards if you're creating one for a group or organization. For example you may need to use a certain type of container or certain items that need to be included. Find out if there are standards to follow. If there are no standards, develop your own.

2. **Storage.**
Be sure you or the group you're planning to donate it to have storage for the activity box. If not, discuss possible storage solutions.

3. **Lend it out.**
Prepare a way to loan out your activity box. You'll want to track who has the box, review contents to verify everything is returned and in usable condition as well as what responsibility falls to the borrower. You may think the box will come back as it goes out, but it may not.

4. **Recreate.**
Keep a list of what the kit contains, originals of printables and anything else you may need to recreate the box in case it is returned incomplete, lost or destroyed.

5. **Share your box.**
You can share your activity box contents with others so they can create a replica of your box. This can be especially helpful if your organization has awards or insignia your activity box covers.

6. **Plan your box.**
Will your activity box cover one activity only? Will it have more to follow a theme or complete the steps of a badge program? Will it be used in an enclosed area so items need to be kept small or outdoors so everything needs to be protected from the weather? Plan what it will be used for, how it will be used and where.

NOTE: If an item in your box is too large for your container, add a note so the person borrowing it knows to grab the additional item(s).

7. **Do it digital.**
You may be able to create a digital box by creating everything you need digitally. In this case, your "box" may be a CD, DVD or even a ZIP file with everything on it. Check out the Enrichment Project badge program "Digital Activity Box" for more information on doing it digital.

8. **Test before use.**
Before you do the activity with others, do it yourself. This will allow you to answer questions and determine if everything is correct before you present the box.

9. **Container.**

The container for your activity box is very important. Grabbing a tote to put in an area where everything else is in shoeboxes may not work. If your activities are all printables, you might be able to get away with a sleeve protector or large zip top bag. Of course, digital items might be contained on a single disk that you need to protect from damage. Examine any current boxes or area you plan to use. Determine the best container for your activity box.

10. **Contents list.**

The contents list not only allows you a quick check to make sure everything is in there, it also lets your borrower know if they have everything. If something is missing, this list can also serve as a reminder to acquire missing items. Plan to keep a copy of your contents list so you can recreate the activity box if needed.

11. **Instructions for activities.**

An instruction should be included for each activity. The instructions might include:

- Items provided in the activity box
- Items the user will need to provide
- Preparation time
- Activity time
- Area needed
- Steps to complete the activities
- Diagrams for difficult steps
- URLs for sites / videos to help
- Image or sample of finished product

Test all instruction sheets before including them in your box. Be sure to have a backup.

12. **User materials and tools.**

Some items just won't go in a box. You can make a list of user materials and tools they need to have on-hand to complete the activities in either a list for the entire box or as part of the instructions. Items that might be included in user materials and tools include:

- Water
- Screwdrivers, hammers and other simple tools
- Cleaning supplies
- Rubber / latex gloves
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pens, pencils, crayons

13. **Box materials.**

Box materials are those items that will be used and need to be replaced. Items which are printable (color sheets, word finds, etc.) should be accompanied by a master in laminate or a page protector so additional copies can be made. Consumable items such as craft supplies, if not provided, should be listed on the users materials list per person to make it easy to determine amount needed.

NOTE: Test the box before using it. It will help you explain and troubleshoot issues when you are doing it with others.

14. **Box tools.**

Tools are items that can be reused. All items need to be clean and usable. Broken or damaged items should be replaced. This might include templates, test tubes, tweezers, rulers or other items that will not be "used up" while doing the activity.

15. **Responsibility list.**
The user needs to know what they are responsible for and what they are not. If color sheets are included in the materials and twelve are used, it should be the borrower's responsibility to replace those color sheets. Remember, these boxes are designed to be used over and over by multiple individuals / groups. However, if you don't communicate your expectations, the user will not know. Save frustration up front by providing a list of what each user is responsible for.

16. **User notes and feedback.**
Your user may know of a better way to do something or a new tool is available that halves the time to do a step according to your instructions. Feedback is a wonderful way to communicate a need for the box to be updated. Provide a form or email address with each box so your users can let you know if the activity box is good or could use improvement. Be sure to outline how they should communicate with you as part of the step above.

17. **Grab 'N' Go sheets.**
Grab 'N' Go sheets are designed to be short activities you can do with a group. For the craft sheets, I put the instruction sheet and sample in a page protector. This gives me an "activity box" with all I need for a fast activity. You can find out more about these sheets by seeing the Enrichment Project badge program of the same name or checking out the downloadable sheets available on *larajla.com*.

18. **Ideas.**
You can purchase kits to make beeswax candles, instruments and even origami animals. Check out kits that others have for sale. Use the activity boxes others have designed for inspiration.

Sites to Explore

www.pinterest.com/thebrowniebunch/busy-box-ideas
scoutingmagazine.org/issues/0709/a-box.html
www.gsnnj.org/Awards-Journeys/Girl-Scout-Journeys/Pages/Journeys-in-a-Box.aspx
www.childcarelounge.com/activity/dramatic-play.php
www.modernparentsmessykids.com/2014/05/build-play-dough-tool-kit.html
makethebestofeverything.com/2011/01/homemade-detective-kit.html
littlebinsforlittlehands.com/diy-homemade-kids-science-kit-20-experiments-saturday-science
www.blogher.com/how-create-perfect-activity-box-kids
www.themotherhuddle.com/how-to-make-an-activity-idea-box-for-kids
www.sheknows.com/kids-activity-center/articles/961739/how-to-create-a-rainy-day-activity-box

*Check out larajla's Enrichment Project
to start your own adventure.*