

# TALISMAN BAGS



Cultures all around the world have natural items that they believe to possess special meaning or powers. But who gave them these significances, and why? Humans did! People just like you, me, and our kiddos! Making Talisman Bags is a fun way for children to connect to the natural world and take a closer look at their environment while reflecting on their hopes for the new year.

# WHAT IS A TALISMAN?

A talisman is an object that is associated with specific meaning and powers, such as protection or luck. A four leaf clover is considered a talisman for luck the same way that an amethyst crystal is considered a talisman for protection.



## WHO GIVES TALISMANS THEIR MEANINGS?

We do! Human imagination is responsible for these meanings. People have given natural items meanings throughout history based on their personal and collective-cultural relationships with them. Some are symbolic while others, such as lavender (which represents serenity), have been given their associations based on their physical properties (the lavender scent is calming). A talisman can be anything that you personally feel a connection with and give meaning to.



## WHAT IS A TALISMAN BAG?

A talisman bag, also known as a "mojo bag," is a small pouch that holds various items that the owner has assigned meaning to. A protection talisman bag may contain the stone tigers eye, the herb sage, and the chamomile flower, as these all represent protection. People create talisman bags and keep them nearby – in their homes, in their pockets or purses, even around their necks as jewelry. The idea is that the talismans inside their bag will bring forth the things they represent.

## WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A BAG?

Any scrap of fabric will do! Just place your natural items into the center of a piece of fabric, gather it at the edges, and tie it together with a string or ribbon.



## HOW DO I MAKE A TALISMAN BAG?

There is no right or wrong way to make a talisman bag! You can use natural items that already have cultural meanings associated with them, or you can simply go on a walk and find things that resonate with you! At The Arboretum, we had children in our Winter Nature Camp walk around the garden and pick up things that looked or felt meaningful to them.

One camper picked up the spike from a plant for protection in the new year. Another camper picked up a tattered leaf to symbolize that you can still be whole even if you are a little worn out. Yet another camper picked up a bright green, rectangular leaf because it reminded him of money, while his friend picked up a heart shaped rock because it made her think of love. Our campers gathered their items, went back to our classroom, and held each item in their hand while “infusing” them with the meaning they personally associated with them. They then placed them inside their bags and wore them as necklaces full of natural items that symbolized what they hope to bring into the new year. Some even decorated the bags with words and symbols for the new year. Get outside, go for a walk, look down, up, and around, and find things that speak to you. Collect them and head home to begin assembling your bag!



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What do you want to  
draw close to you in  
the new year? What  
will you put in your  
talisman bag? Let your  
imagination soar!