



## Activity "Fossil Molds and Casts"

Objective: To simulate the formation of fossil molds and casts

Lesson Time:

45 minutes

Grade Level:

K – 5<sup>th</sup>

Standards Correlation:

Science Standard – 4.1

Materials:

Plaster of paris

Petroleum jelly

Bowl

Mixing container

Simulated fossil (could be a sea shell, chicken bone or just about anything)

Spoon

### Procedure

1. Coat inside of bowl thinly with petroleum jelly.
2. Mix plaster of paris in mixing container, about 2 heaping tablespoons to 1/4 cup of water.
3. Pour plaster to a depth of about 1/2 inch in bowl.
4. Let the plaster of paris set about 10 minutes.
5. Coat a "fossil" on one side with petroleum jelly.
6. Press the lubricated side of "fossil" into the plaster about halfway.
7. Let the plaster set about 1/2 hour.
8. Remove the "fossil" from the plaster.
9. Coat the entire surface of the plaster with petroleum jelly. Make sure the sides of the bowl are coated at least one inch up from plaster surface.
10. In the mixing container, mix together another small batch of plaster.
11. Pour the plaster mixture into the shell imprint in the clay. *NOTE: Throw the cup and spoon away and do not wash any plaster down the sink as it can clog the drain.*
9. Allow the plaster to harden (about 20 minutes).

10. Gently separate the two parts of the plaster.

11. Compare the shape and texture of the outside of the shell with the shape and texture of the outside of the plaster cast.