



Building and sailing mini rafts

AT A GLANCE



Place

Outdoors by a shallow stream or a large tub



Key idea

Building a floating raft from natural materials and testing what holds



Effort

Materials 15 min · Preparation 20 min



90 minutes



teams of 2–3



7–11 years



shallow water



Materials

- ☐ sticks and pieces of bark (collect beforehand)
- ☐ raffia or string
- ☐ leaves or scraps of fabric for sails
- ☐ penknives only for experienced children
- ☐ a large tub of water instead of a stream
- ☐ towels and spare socks



Schedule

0–10'	Arrival – Quick game: what floats, what sinks? Drop objects into the tub and guess.
10–20'	Collecting – In teams, collect sticks, bark and leaves.
20–55'	Raft building – Lay sticks side by side, tie them to two crosspieces, add a mast and sail.
55–75'	Launch – Put all rafts in the water: which one floats longest? Which can carry a small stone?
75–85'	Devotion – Jesus and the storm (Mark 4:35–41): even when it rocks, Jesus is in the boat with us.
85–90'	Closing – Take the rafts home or take them apart, tidy up, closing circle.



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How it works – simply explained

- 1 Lay four to six sticks of the same length close together.
- 2 Place one crosspiece over the top and one over the bottom.
- 3 At each crossing, wrap the string several times crosswise and tie it tightly.
- 4 Push a thin stick into the middle as a mast and fix a leaf to it as a sail.
- 5 Before the launch, check that nothing wobbles.

 **Example:** “Your raft keeps tipping over? Try putting the mast right in the middle – and maybe one more stick underneath.”

Safety

- Only by shallow, calm water – never by rivers with a current.
- One leader always stands right by the water.
- Knives only with knife rules and enough space.
- In cold weather use a tub instead of a stream.

Variations

- A race with a start line and finish.
- Load the raft with a message: what am I thankful for?

Something to think about

When have you felt like you were in a boat in a storm – and what helped you?