

□ Activity 2: Gold!

Gold fever struck the nation in the mid-1800s. People in the United States and from all over the world were sure they would strike it rich if they could just get to California. Select one of the following options.

Option 1

For this option, you will pan for gold (or other interesting rocks and minerals) in a stream or creek. Take a round metal pie pan and dip it into a shallow area of the water so that you get some dirt/sand in the pan. Remove any big stones, twigs, etc. Carefully tilt the pan while moving it back and forth (or in a circle) so that some of the water flows out along with some of the sand and finer bits of rock. Be on the lookout for any shiny gold pieces or other interesting material. While it is very unlikely that you'll find any gold, you may find some rocks, minerals, or fossils you'd like to examine further. Use a rock and mineral guidebook from the library or online to help you identify your finds.

Option 2

Explore one of the following websites that deal with the California Gold Rush. The first is multimedia presentation about the Gold Rush. The second allows you to read information about the Gold Rush and view pictures of artifacts from the time period. Be prepared to share with a parent some of the interesting facts you learned from either website.

The California Gold Rush

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/8135/

This presentation features a short video and then information about the Gold Rush.

Gold Fever!

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/8136/

This website from the Oakland Museum of California provides information about the life of gold miners, what prospecting was like, and more. Use the links on the left to read additional pages.

Activity 2: Gold!

If you have access to a stream or creek, take your child there to pan for gold (Option 1). If not or if your child prefers, she can explore one of two websites to learn more about about the California Gold Rush.

Option 1

If you have access to a stream or creek, this option is a fun way for your child to experience panning for gold. Be available to help her. It is very unlikely that she will find gold, but she may find rocks, minerals, or fossils that she'd like to examine further. Encourage her to use a rock and mineral guidebook from the library or online to help her identify her finds.

Option 2

For this option, your child will explore one of two websites that deal with the California Gold Rush. The first is an informational presentation that includes a short video. The second website allows your child to read information about the Gold Rush and view pictures of artifacts from the time period. Whichever site your child explores, ask her to share with you what she learned about this period in history.

Activity 3: Mormons Searching for Religious Freedom

For this activity your child will trace the Mormon Trail on the map provided. She will use this map in future activities as well.

Activity 4: Settling the Land

Before your child begins this activity, she should read p. 65 in the book, which says that pioneers generally looked for land with good soil, without many trees, and near a good water source. Discuss/brainstorm with your child what other features the settlers might have looked for, such as weather/climate, slope of the land, proximity to stores or towns, proximity to other farms, being near land that had been farmed successfully, etc. She will then record 5 of the best criteria and then evaluate the land where you live to see if it would have been a good choice for a pioneer. If you live in a city or town, encourage your child to imagine what the area was like before the land was developed.