Activity Make Your Own Mbira

Materials:
- 1” thick piece of wood, cut into a 4” square
- Paint
- 10 push pins
- 4 large bobby pins
- Craft or popsicle sticks
- 2 rubber bands
- Wire cutters
- White glue

Note:
During the process, there are two different times when the Mbira needs to dry for one hour. You may want to break up the project into two or three different sessions.

Directions:
1. Take two popsicle sticks and glue them side by side across your piece of wood, about one inch down from one of the ends. To secure them as they dry, hold your thumb down in the center of the sticks and stretch your rubber bands across and underneath the wood to wrap around the ends.

2. While the glue dries, it’s time for you to decorate! You can use paint, markers or any other type of medium. Once you’re done decorating, set everything aside to dry for about an hour.

3. For the keys, take your first bobby pin and bend it open. This will be the long key. Measure out enough of the bobby pin so that it touches the popsicle sticks and reaches to the end of the wood without extending over it.

4. Measure out and cut your remaining three keys from the rest of the bobby pins. Each one should be shorter than the one before it so that each key will have a different pitch.

5. Space out the keys across the piano and tape the ends to the popsicle sticks to hold them in place.

6. Apply glue across the tape and place two more popsicle sticks over the first two to sandwich the keys into place. Wrap rubber bands around the ends of these sticks just like you did in Step 2 to hold them down while they dry.

7. To make sure the keys are secure and that they will give a good sound, stick two punch pins through the popsicle sticks around either side of each bobby pin key. Set everything aside to dry for another hour.

8. Now you’re ready to play your Mbira. To do that, take each key and bend it back approximately 45 degrees or a half inch from the wood. To play, just run your thumbs across the end of the keys.

http://www.activitytv.com/779-make-thumb-piano Go to this link to see a video on how to make this Mbira