

## BUDBURST FOR FAMILIES

Spending Time with Family and Plant Friends!

**Title:** Flower Power

**Age Group:** 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **Purpose:**

- **Why?** - Noticing how flowers are alike and different uses observation skills that are general STEM skills and also reveals the diversity of plants. Children benefit from exposure to a variety of different plants because it builds appreciation for biodiversity and wonder of nature.
- **How?** With a pencil and sheet of paper, observe and sketch two or more flowers and the parts they have in common.
- **What?** As a family, choose at least two different kinds of flowering plants and describe the parts they have in common and how each looks different.

### **Steps:**

1. Do you have flowers in your yard or neighborhood? Wondering how many different kinds of flowering plants are out there? Flowers are both alike and different.
2. With pencils and paper in hand, take turns choosing a flower to draw. Observe the shape, color and number of petals the flower has. Does it have three, four, five, six or more? Are all the petals the same color? Same shape? Observe and draw what you see. (Later you can color your flowers with crayons or colored pencils.)
3. Next look for the pollen. If the flower is ready to be pollinated, the pollen will rub off on your fingers when you touch it. Can you find pollen? What color is it? (Pollen can be yellow, white, green, purple, etc.) If it is spring or summer, do you see any birds, bees or butterflies visiting the flowers? They are the pollinators. The pollen is found on thin tubes with knobs on top. These are called the stamens. Does your flower have the same number of stamens as petals? If not, how many stamens do you see? Add each stamen to your flower sketch. Do you see one other part of the flower? In the very middle there is another structure that may have a sticky top. That is the pistil or carpel and is where the pollen needs to go to pollinate the flower. Can you draw a pistil into your flower? Tie a colorful ribbon or string around the base of your flower so you can find it later.
4. Now choose at least one other flower on a different plant. Observe and draw it just like you did the first flower in steps 2 and 3.
5. You can keep returning to those same flowers to observe what happens to them over a few weeks. Eventually the petals and stamens fall off, but the bottom of the pistil remains. That is called the ovary. The ovary will start to enlarge into a fruit. If your flower was an apple blossom, it now has transformed into an apple. If your flower was on a tomato plant, the bottom of the pistil has changed into a juicy red tomato! Inside each fruit are the seeds for the next generation of plants. **That is real flower power!**

# budburst

*a project of* the Chicago Botanic Garden

**If you want to learn more** about **the life cycle** of a flowering plant go to:

<https://www.dkfindout.com/us/animals-and-nature/plants/>

**To see a labeled drawing of a flower go to:** <https://www.dkfindout.com/us/animals-and-nature/plants/parts-flower/>