ART IDEAS From TSBVI

https://www.tsbvi.edu/fine-arts-items/56-art-ideas

Paper

- Use the edges from form-feed braille paper, use brads (the kind you can swivel around like when you made pinwheels) to put through the sprocket holes to join the strips into shapes (I used this in high school geometry to create parallelograms, triangles, etc).
- Use crinkle-ribbon to curl twists for hair on something. Braid ribbon.
- Make hanging mobiles with 3-D cardboard geometric shapes.
- Cut 2 paper or fabric shapes (inverses of each other can be made by cutting two pieces at the same time to get a front and back) glued along the edges and stuffed with tissue paper, wood shavings, sawdust (for scent), potpourri, fiber filling... you name it!
- Make kite structures with paper and straws.
- Make paper beads by rolling gift wrap, foil paper, or colored paper into cylinders, balls, etc. Cut paper into triangles and roll to get beads with thin ends and thick middles.
- Use a cardboard tube, Pringles chip tube, oatmeal cylinder to make a rainmaker. Push nails into the cylinder randomly (they should be too short to go through the other side). Put dried peas, beans, shells, pebbles or similar objects into the tube. Fill only 1/8 or 1/4 of the tube. Seal off the ends of the tube. Decorate the outside with fabric and dangling tassels. As the tube is turned over it sounds like rain.
- Make pillars, table legs, etc. for a theatrical play using the corrugated board used for bulletin boards. Use the same material to texturize other items.

Skills/Concepts: art, geometry, physics, recycling, history, drama, and math

Metal

- Bare copper wire twisted into spirals with needle-noosed pliers to make jewelry, to frame around a picture, to be an integral part of a picture (e.g. as hair).
- Use the aluminum foil sheets from the raised line kit, a foil pie tin's bottom, from a hobby shop or wholesale hardware store and a wooden dowel rod, rounded or pointed at one end. Cut on a diagonal at the other to emboss shapes in reverse in order to get bas relief on the shiny side. If you can get copper sheets, it is even prettier.
- You can punch holes through aluminum foil sheets/pie-tins in patterns (a cardboard cutout or cookie cutter can help guide the student around the edges to make an outline or silhouette of the shape). A carpet needle or large nail might be used to make the holes (put something like wads of newspaper under the work so nothing under the project gets damaged). The holes are textured for a completely blind student and a light can be shown through it for a sighted student. Joining several pieces of the metal sheets together can make a candle holder that lets light through without too much wind.
- Combine skills from 2 and 3

String/Yarn

1. use a stiff, thin cardboard (shirt board or gift box) and draw two lines intersecting at right angles to make a large "L" or corner. This can be made as Elmer's glue lines allowed to dry. Using a braille ruler and a carpet needle, punch evenly spaced holes 1/4 inch apart along both lines--the same number of holes along each line (say 12 holes). Thread the needle with colored yarn. Starting from the back side (with the glue), pull the thread through the farthest hole (hole 12) on one line (A) and into the hole (hole 1) closest to the right-angle on the other line (B). From the back, go into hole 2 on line B and draw the string through and into hole 11 on line A, etc. When done, do the
reverse order (hole 12 on line B into hole 1 of line A) with a different colored/textured string/yarn. The result is a pretty curve.

**Skills/Concepts:** mathematical relationships (1-to-1 correspondence), pattern analysis, fractal geometry, physics (support bridges use cables similarly).

2. same idea but with a circle or oval with evenly spaced holes (number them, if possible from 0 to ____). I did this one and just photocopied the shapes with the marks where the holes would go. The students thread through hole one to hole 5, to hole 10, etc., skipping by 5. This was taped to the back of the cardboard. When the students are done, gently tear away the paper from the cardboard or cover the back with felt. It makes for a great frame for pictures, 3-D art glued in the center, or just as art by itself. The students can experiment with getting a larger or smaller blank opening by skipping more or fewer holes (skipping by 3 produces a larger blank center than skipping by 7). As I recall, however, there has to be an odd number of holes along the rim of the circle (I think), and younger children get confused once they reach a hole that already has thread in it.

   For an older child to do this independently, s/he can use a needlepoint ring, which (I think) has holes in the rim already. Once completed, it can be a free hanging "sun-catcher". Older children can imbed brass nails or hat pins into soft wood, cork sheets or Styrofoam blocks (cover with black felt for a dramatic effect) and wrap the string around the nails (student can independently use a large gear such as a bicycle gear with lots of teeth as the template and place the pins into the notches). **Skills/Concepts:** pattern analysis, pre-multiplication (skipping by 5 once gets to hole 5, twice, to hole 10, three times to hole 15, etc.).

3. fabric wreaths: use a straw wreath (craft shop). Use old pieces of fabric (LOTS) cut into 2 inch squares with pinking shears (there are electric shears available or a fabric shop might be able to do them in bulk if you plead well enough). Using a pencil with the lead broken, a slightly sharpened dowel rod, or a Phillips screwdriver, place the tool in the center of the square of fabric and push it into the straw wreath. Continue over the front surface of the wreath. Different colors/textures can be focused in one area, or different sized squares of fabric can be used to create different effects (e.g., to indicate the "top"). Finish off with 2 small eyelet screws pushed into the back and use picture-frame wire for hanging.

4. different color/textures of fabric to make a collage. An animal shape made of small pieces of overlapping fabric can be glued to a poster board to make a collage.

5. Yarn, soaked in glue, wrapped around a balloon, when dry, the balloon is popped to leave a lace structure. (This can be frustrating for a child to keep the string from slipping around.

6. cheesecloth or similar cloth soaked in starch and draped over jars, dowel rods, cardboard boxes. When dry, they retain the shape. These make great Halloween ghosts, just glue on Googly eyes or macaroni or buttons.

**BEADS/BRAIDS**

1. Remember lanyard braided into key/whistle chains?
2. braid hair, rope, dough
3. beads on hair, string necklaces, hanging planters
4. beads woven into fabric
5. potholder weaving (it’s still going strong at craft shops)
6. leather strips braided into belts (there are leather belt kits available at stores that sell stuff for the Boy Scouts).

**EDIBLE ART**

1. If you can get the domino sugar tablets (not the cubes, but the ones actually shaped like dominoes), Elmer’s glue (if you want to keep it) or frosting can be used to glue them together to make pillars (putting a ruler lintel across them), pyramid arches, and curved arches (lightly sandpaper into blunt-edged wedges to get the curves).

   This can be used to teach the physics of architecture—why was it necessary for early structures using the pillar and lintel to have so many pillars? (The lintels can’t support too much weight and structures couldn’t be too tall—you would need too many pillars inside the building that there would be no room for people).
What advantage would an angle arch have in holding up a wall and roof? (Allows more light and air to get into a building).
What advantages did the Romans and the Byzantines get from arches? (Could support more weight, needed fewer pillars, more light and air, structures could be taller).
What advantage does a flying buttress arch have? (Like the Notre Dame Cathedral, the interior is free of pillars, so there is more room for people).

**Skills/Concepts:** physics needed in architecture, pre-graphing for geometry, community awareness [Where is there a building with an arch? (e.g., church, government buildings, bridges). Where in the room is there lintel? (doorway).], planning ahead.

2. To go along with the above, put wax paper or saran wrap inside a bowl. Periodically cover with a thick sugar coating (or tempered chocolate) and allow to dry. When thick enough, remove the dome to make a Rotunda (which is an arch swiveled 180 degrees that leaves a chocolate trail).

**Skills/Concepts:** 3-D geometry (non-Euclidean), etc.

3. gingerbread house (can be made with graham crackers instead)

4. pasta art using uncooked pasta: string them, weave them, glue them together. Pasta (macaroni, elbows, etc.) come in different colors now, or can be painted (add scents to the paints for another sensory stimulus).

**WOOD**

1. make a candle holder with blocks of wood of various heights, thicknesses. Use a handle-held drill to get holes deep enough to hold candles. Blocks can be glued together into a small centerpiece or dowel rods can be inserted into holes to spread them out. Don't have the dough for this? Get a log or thick branch. Plane the bottom to make it flat and drill a series of holes along the top. Spray paint or glue glitter, beads, macaroni.

2. use wood shavings from a plane to make "hair".

3. Affix objects (nails, coins, rope, yarn, buttons, bottle caps, pop can pull tabs, etc.) to the surface of wood.

**SOAP CARVINGS**

1. Use Ivory or scented soap bars and a plastic knife/nail/sharpened dowel to scrape, dig, and carve 3-D shapes, make textures by cross hatching, random small pokes, etc.

2. Use the shavings to scent the inside of a fabric animal shape or to glue onto a picture for added texture.

**WHERE TO GET IDEAS**

1. Check out craft shops, Girl Scout and Boy Scout books, art shows, craft shows, art books, etc. for more ideas. Make a reindeer out of clothespins or a dog bone biscuit. Wreaths made of hangers and tissue paper (or clear plastic bags). Hollowed out eggs for a head with pipe-cleaners for arms and legs.

2. Gather pieces from toy games (Mr. Potato Head, Lego blocks, checkers, car wheels, etc.), visit a hardware store (get a jar of washers, Hmm, that cabinet handle could be a nose or train, gears for wheels), go to garage sales (plastic fabric pieces, imitation leather, small objects d'art), baker's/restaurant supply store, wedding/party favor store (neat dried flowers, candy molds, objects used to make favors, Googley eyes, etc.) for ideas and supplies. Teacher stores also have a lot of materials. Look at the stuff with your hands and sniff it. Ideas just come a poppin'!