

History at Home: Laurel Wreath Activity



The Roman poet Ovid with a laurel wreath

A **laurel** wreath is made of branches and leaves of the laurel, a type of evergreen shrub or small tree. In Ancient Rome, it was worn on the head as a symbol of **triumph**. The symbol of the laurel wreath is from Greek mythology. The Romans adopted the symbol because they admired Greek culture. In Rome, they were symbols of military victory.

Military commanders or emperors often wore them after a battle. Laurel wreaths in ancient times are most often shown as a horseshoe shape. Laurel wreaths were also used as a funeral decoration.



In modern times, in some countries, the laurel wreath is used as a symbol of the master's degree. The wreath is given at the university graduation ceremony.

Now that you have learned about laurel wreaths in Ancient Rome, you can follow the directions below to make your own laurel wreath out of materials that you might have at home.

Vocabulary:

1. **laurel**: a small evergreen tree or shrub.
2. **triumph**: a great victory or achievement.

Materials required:

Paper plate, green construction paper or any type of green paper (we used multiple shades of green but you don't have to), scissors, glue or glue sticks.



Ancient Roman statue of the Emperor Nero and his mother Agrippina crowning him with a laurel wreath

Activity Directions:

1. A paper plate will form the base of the wreath. Take a pair of scissors and cut the paper plate into a "C" shape by cutting into one side of the plate and cutting out a circle in the middle.



2. Cut small leaf shapes out of the green paper. They should be about an inch to 2 inches long. If doing this activity with young children, cutting out larger leaves would be best.



3. Place the paper plate upside down so that the side you would eat on is touching the table.



4. Glue the leaf shapes to the paper plate starting on the ends in the overlapping pattern that you see in this picture.



5. The finished product should look similar to this photo. Let the wreath dry completely, then celebrate your victory by wearing your wreath!

