

Life Cycle of a Space Rock

Meteoroids are small particles — often no bigger than a grain of sand — that orbit our Sun. When meteoroids enter Earth's atmosphere, they compress the air in front of them, causing the air to get hot - so hot that the air begins to glow! This creates the brilliant streak of light we see in the sky. These streaks of light are meteors. The heat also melts or vaporizes some or all of the particle. *Meteorites* are rocks from space that have survived their trip through Earth's atmosphere and landed on Earth's surface.

In this activity, your child will illustrate the events in the life of a space rock!

What You Need:

- One sheet of craft paper
- Finger paint
- Glitter
- Crayons
- Other various craft items such as cotton balls, fluff, tissue paper, yarn, ribbon, aluminum foil, gold or silver mylar strips, etc.
- Tiny rocks, such as colored aquarium gravel, to represent the rocks from space (parents should attach these with a glue gun)



What to Do:

- Invite your child to paint and decorate a mural illustrating their meteoroid in space, passing through Earth's atmosphere (meteor), and reaching Earth as a meteorite, where it is found and studied by scientists.
- Invite them to explain the story of their rock from space as they are illustrating it.



Parent Prompts:

Ask your child to imagine a "Meteoroid Zone" above Earth's atmosphere. Invite him or her to tell you how a meteoroid creates a streak of light - a meteor. (When meteoroids enter Earth's atmosphere they create brilliant streaks of light – meteors - as they race toward Earth's surface).

Invite your child to tell you what a meteorite is. (Those rocks from space have passed through Earth's atmosphere without being vaporized and have landed on Earth.)

Where did their meteorite land? Will it be found for study? Will they be the scientist who studies it? What will they name it?