

Paper Plate Galaxy

Galaxies are large collections of stars, gas, and dust that come in different shapes. We live in the Milky Way Galaxy which is a spiral galaxy – it looks like a pinwheel! Our Milky Way Galaxy is about 100,000 light years across, with a bulge in the center, a nucleus, a flat disk with distinct spiral arms, and a surrounding of halo stars. We do not have any pictures of our own galaxy, but astronomers can determine the shape using telescope observations and by comparing to the pictures we have of *other* galaxies.

You and your child will make a spiral galaxy mobile and learn its different parts.

What You Need:

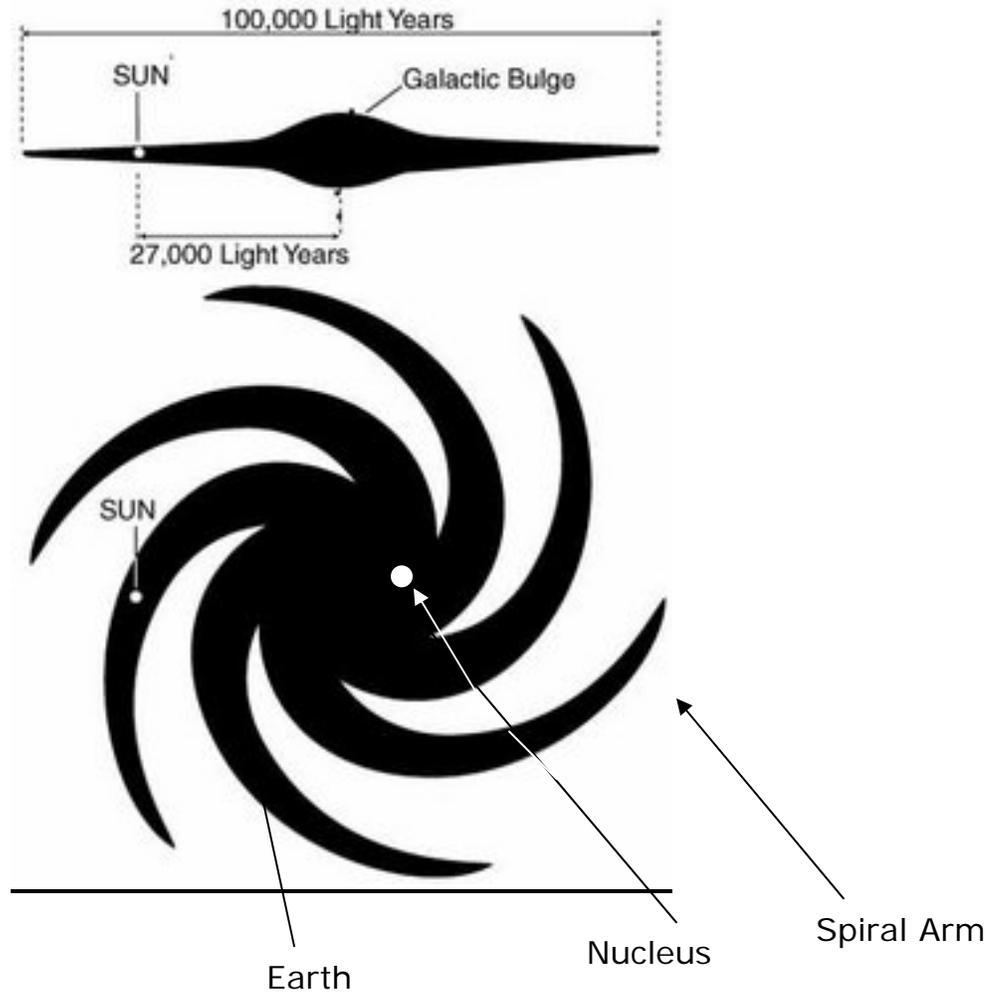
- Scissors
- Crayons
- Various craft items
- Glue
- Peppercorn
- Paper plate
- Yarn



What to Do:

- Poke or cut a hole in the center of the plate (*this will be used for hanging the galaxy*).
- Using the diagram provided for this activity as a guide, have your child draw and label the following parts of a galaxy: nucleus, spiral arm, and galactic center bulge.
- Cut out around the spiral arms
- At the plate (galaxy) scale, the Earth is merely a very, very small spec of dust! Glue a peppercorn on the plate to represent about where our solar system would be located in the Milky Way Galaxy. We are in one of the spiral arms about two-thirds of the way from the nucleus.
- Decorate your galaxy on both sides with stars and gas and dust using the various craft items available. Thread a piece of yarn through the center hole and knot it or tape it to the bottom of the plate; create a loop in the opposite end of the yarn. You are ready to hang your galaxy!

Milky Way Galaxy



Note: Our solar system is much, much smaller than the dot shown on this image!