What Do You See in the Moon?

Many cultures through time have developed stories about the features they observed on our Moon. One is the story that rabbits live on the Moon with a Katsura tree. Some people see an outline of a rabbit on the Moon, others see a dog, and still others see a man in the Moon, a crab, a lady knitting or reading a book, a man resting under a tree, a frog, a lizard …

The Moon is covered with light and dark areas. The light colored areas are the oldest part of the Moon's surface – they have many craters and are called the "cratered highlands." This part of the Moon's crust formed from a cooling magma ocean soon after the Moon formed 4.5 billion years ago! The basins were formed by BIG impacts early in the Moon's history. Later, lava filled these basins and cooled. The dark-colored plains we see are made of a fine-grained, dark, volcanic rock called basalt – the same rock type as found on Earth's ocean floors and the same type that makes up the islands of Hawaii.

In this activity, your child will use his or her imagination to discover an object or character in the Moon.

What You Need:

- Books that share stories about the Moon and what different cultures see when they look at the Moon. For example:
    Moontellers: Myths of the Moon from Around the World
    Lynn Moroney, 1995, Northland Publishing Company, ISBN 0873586018
- Images of features that different cultures see in the Moon (optional)
- Large photographs of the Moon
- Sheet of tracing paper to overlay on the Moon image (one per child)
- Tape
- Crayons and other craft items such as glue sticks, glitter, yarn, ribbon

What to Do:

- Share a story with your child about what a different culture sees in the Moon, and how that feature came to be.

- Using crayons, and other various craft items, invite your child to trace out the features to show their own representation of what they see on the Moon.

Parent Prompts:

What do you see when you look at the Moon?

What are the dark areas on the Moon?

What are the light areas on the Moon?