

Carving With Kids

Pass on the tradition of figure carving to younger generations. BY LUCY CASALE

Norwegian figure carving is a flat-plane style of woodworking that dates back to the mid-eighteenth century. The small figures were often used as children's toys and were a source of income. This cultural skill is still alive today, and is best practiced alongside a knowledgeable adult—either a woodworking instructor or an experienced parent or grandparent. Here's a great opportunity for you to learn a new craft together with the youth in your life.



Fun Fact:
Beginners can practice carving on soap, carrots, apples and potatoes.

Activities for Young People

PRESCHOOL

Start with Molding

Introduce little ones to carving with materials they are familiar with, such as clay or Play-doh. Help your child draw the figure you want to create on a piece of paper. Then, trace it onto the clay with a pencil, spoon or toothpick. Cut away the edges with a spoon and carefully add detail and refine the design.

EXPAND IT: A fresh bar of soap can also be used to practice carving. Check out the book "Soap Carving: For Children of All Ages" by Howard K. Suzuki.

ELEMENTARY AGES

Try a Kit

Wood carving kits are great for beginners. The Basswood Forest Animals Starter Blocks from JM Cremps contains five pre-cut patterns that allow youngsters to add in their own details. Check out other kits at your local craft store. jmcremps.com

EXPAND IT:

Take a field trip to a museum that has carvings or attend a carving show. Take photographs of the carvings to get inspiration for your own creations.

TEENAGERS

Carve a Figure

Complete the Sons of Norway Cultural Skill on Figure Carving in which you'll make a small figure of your choice. Start at sonsofnorway.com, log in, then select "Programming," "Cultural Skills," and find "Figure Carving."

EXPAND IT: Take a carving class. Ask your local lodge about classes in your area, or look for classes by Harley Refsal, a Vesterheim Gold Medalist who has taught Scandinavian figure carving throughout the United States and Norway. vesterheim.org

LEARN MORE

To find figure carving classes offered near you, check with your local carving club. Start your search online at woodcarvingillustrated.com/clubs.



Visit Sons of Norway's Figure Carving channel on YouTube. [youtube.com/user/sonsofnorwayhq](https://www.youtube.com/user/sonsofnorwayhq)

Read up!

- "Woodcarving in The Scandinavian Style" by Harley Refsal
- "The Complete Book of Woodcarving" by Everett Ellenwood
- "Whittling Little Folk: 20 Delightful Characters to Carve and Paint" by Harley Refsal

Every young woodcarver needs the right equipment

before starting out. A cut-resistant Kevlar carving glove and a woodcarving knife are available at jmcremps.com.