

# Carving With Kids

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

**N**orwegian 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://jmcremps.com).