

Mimicking Matter

Look at artist Robert Irwin's Central Garden from a distance. You will find many plant shapes, sizes, textures and colors. That's because Irwin wanted to play with your senses when you enter his living artwork. Once you walk down the Zigzag Path, you will cross five bridges. At each bridge Irwin altered the design of the stream. Find two changes and share with a partner; you will discuss these later with your group.

Get a team

Invite 3 or 4 friends to an area where you have space to play and try the following activities.

You will compare and contrast the movement of the liquids and solids in the stream.

Matter

Matter is anything that occupies space and has weight. It comes in three states: solid, liquid, and gas. Today we will focus on the solid and liquid states.



Liquid

A liquid's particles are loosely connected to each other with freedom.



Solid

A solid's particles are tightly linked by strong bonds and form firm structures.



1. You will be liquids recreating water.

Hold each other's wrists to form a line. Like the particles in a liquid, you have freedom to change shape as long as you stay connected. Design different paths try walking in a straight line, zigzag, etc. After creating two paths, move on to be solids.

2. You will be solids recreating a boulder.

Link arms and form strong bonds like the particles in a solid. Maintain firm positions as much as possible. Now, recreate one of the paths you designed when you were liquids. Discuss how moving around is different.

3. Come back together with your entire group.

Share what you experienced. Think back to the beginning of the activity when you noticed Irwin's different designs. Identify possible reasons why he wanted two different forms of matter in one setting.