Topic: Fossils
Make Your Own Fossils
http://www.madaboutscience.com.au/store/index.php?main_page=page&id=52

Fossils are the remains, impressions or traces of ancient animals or plants, which have been preserved in the earth's crust for thousands of years. For a bit of fun, why not make your own fossils of treasures you find at the beach or in your garden? It's easy to make lasting fossil impressions either using pre-prepared clay or Plaster of Paris from the shop, or by making your own authentic-looking dough. Suitable for kids aged 5+

What you need:
•1/2 cup of flour
•1/2 cup of used coffee grounds
•1/4 cup of salt
•¼ cup of sand
•Water
•Mixing bowl and spoon
•Fossil Objects (sea shells, plastic dinosaurs, leaves, or other small objects)
•Optional: Plaster of Paris, store-purchased clay

What to do:
1. To make your authentic-looking dough, mix all the dry ingredients together in the bowl.
2. Add water a little at a time until you have a thick dough. It needs to be about the right texture – not crumbly, but not too wet and sticky either.
3. Knead the dough with your hands, and then flatten it on your work surface. It needs to be a couple of centimetres thick.
4. Carefully press your fossil objects into the clay until you get good impressions, then remove them.
5. Let your clay fossil dry thoroughly for a few days.

Optional Fun:
You can try using pre-prepared clay purchased from the shop to make your fossil impression, then pour Plaster of Paris into the impression and let it set. Plaster of Paris is easy to work with and you will love the finished plaster replica of the fossil, which you can then paint. As an alternative to using the clay (homemade or purchased from the shops), you can press your fossils directly into Plaster of Paris to make your fossil imprints.

About fossils
Fossils give us a window into the past. They are remains of past life preserved in rock, soil or amber. Most fossils we find today are fossils of plants and animals that were buried quickly during the Great Flood, about 4000 years ago. Generally, the remains were once the hard parts of an organism, such as bones and shell, although very occasionally soft tissues also fossilize. There are different types of fossils – trace, mineralized fossils, impression fossils – because remains can be preserved in a variety of ways. Much of what we know about plants and animals that lived long ago was discovered by scientists who have studied fossils.