Family Activity: Beating to a Different Drum
Provided by the Art Institute of Chicago Department of Museum Education

Introduction
A Senufo artist from Ivory Coast made this drum depicting a regal, seated woman gracefully balancing a drum on her head. The drum, which is made of wood and animal hide, may also have been played by a woman. The sculpted figure supports the drum with powerful, upraised arms, an arched back, and a strong neck. She sits on a stool with her feet off the ground, a position of honor.

Discussion Questions
• Use the close-up view to look carefully at this ceremonial drum.
• Describe the shapes and figures that you see.
• Compare the size of the female figure’s hands and arms to her legs. She is smaller than the drum, but she appears comfortable with her load. How can you tell this?
• Identify as many of the images on the drum as you can. These symbols have special meaning to Senufo community members. What do you think they might mean?
• What symbols are important to you?

Activity
Make your own drum!

Materials Needed:
• Large, cylindrical oatmeal container
• Brown construction paper
• Parchment or wax paper
• Large rubber band
• Glue
• Scissors
• Pencil
• Brown and black markers
• Beating instrument such as ballpoint pens with their covers, wooden spoons, etc.
Steps:
1. Cut construction paper to fit around oatmeal container. Glue in place.
2. Draw symbols that are meaningful to you on the drum with brown and black marker.
3. Use the lid to trace three circles on parchment or wax paper.
4. Cut widely around circles (about two inches).
5. Secure all three layers onto the top of the drum, over the plastic lid, with a rubber band.
6. Try beating the drum with your hands, covered ballpoint pens, or a wooden spoon on various surfaces until you find the sound you like.

More Fun:
Have a family member or friend sit on a stool or small chair and hold the drum above his or her head. Stand behind and play the drum. Try holding the drum yourself while someone else plays. How does it feel to be in both positions?