Over the last 70 years, archaeologists have discovered split-twig figurines in remote caves in the Grand Canyon. All figurines found throughout the Southwest radiocarbon date between 2900 BC and 1250 BC, also known as the Late Archaic Period. Archaeologists have believed that these objects may have functioned as toys, hunting fetishes or some other form of magico-religious object. The figurines likely represented either deer or bighorn sheep and have been found in caves associated with extinct Pleistocene artiodactyls (even-toed hoofed mammals). This discovery suggests that Archaic hunters may have placed the figurines in these remote caves to help magically ensure their food supply. In addition, it appears that these hunters pierced some of them with spear-like twigs.

To make your own split-twig figurines, visit www.kaibab.org/kids/stf.htm for an illustration and follow these instructions:

1. Collect a willow twig. (Or use long pipe cleaners from a craft store).
2. Split the willow about ¾ of its length (twist the ends of two pipe cleaners together to make a longer one).
3. Halfway from the split to the end, bend the back leg down, and at the split make the front leg.
4. Wrap the horizontal split-twig around both legs, working the coils downwards.
5. Tuck the excess willow under the last leg coil.
6. Make the head by bending the vertical twig forward and then back down the neck.
7. Bring the remaining twig up to the head and wrap the corner of the head
8. Coil the neck to finish the figurine. Pierce your figurine for good luck and head off for a successful hunt!