



## Crafts Around the World Series Africa: Paper Beads

Enjoy learning how to make simple crafts from six of the seven continents: **Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, North America, and South America.**

### Purpose:

Introduce youth to some simple cultural traditional crafts from around the world. Journey around the continents, learning how to make simple crafts and having fun creating.

### Objectives:

- ◇ Learn the cultural history and origins of the craft.
- ◇ Inspire global exploration.
- ◇ Develop fine motor skills in paper wrapping.
- ◇ Increase cultural awareness, recycling, and creativity.

### Education Standards:

- ◇ Understand the visual arts in relation to history and culture.
- ◇ Apply geometric methods to solve design problems.

### Experiential Learning:

- ◇ Create beads from paper.

Encourage thought and discussion with these questions:  
What happened? What's important? So what? Now what?

**Audience:** Grades K-12



Photos courtesy of Janis Brinn, Artwork created by Michigan 4-H Winterfest participants, 2020

### CONTINENT: AFRICA

Africa is the second largest of the world's continents. The equator runs through Africa, putting it in both the Northern Hemisphere and Southern Hemisphere.

### COUNTRIES: UGANDA & KENYA

Neighbors in middle eastern Africa, Uganda and Kenya are partners in many areas. 4-H has been in existence in Africa for over 50 years with the largest 4-H program in Kenya, where it is called 4-K.

### LESSON: AFRICA: PAPER BEADS

Paper beads are the oldest craft done on the African continent. Women of the villages, many living in poverty, generally make the paper beads from magazines that they find. Many organizations support and empower villages through the purchase and promotion of these beautiful paper bead creations.

# AFRICA: PAPER BEADS

**TIME:** 30-45 minutes or multiple days depending upon the interest to learn more.

## **MATERIALS:**

- ◇ Plain paper or cardstock for template
- ◇ Ruler
- ◇ Pencil, pen or markers
- ◇ Scissors or paper cutting board
- ◇ Colorful paper (magazines, gift wrap, maps, or other paper)
- ◇ Coffee Stir Sticks, thin straws, toothpicks, cotton swabs with cotton ends cut, or wire (plant flags type) (These are for wrapping the paper around. What you choose depends on the size of bead hole desired.)
- ◇ Mod Podge or any type of glue such as glue sticks or bottled glue
- ◇ Paper towels or wet cloths (for possible mess)
- ◇ Clear or glitter nail polish
- ◇ Paint brushes for applying the glue (recommend cheap disposable)
- ◇ Foam board, cups, or modeling clay (to use as holder for drying beads)
- ◇ String or wire
- ◇ Samples (optional)

## **INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO LINK:**

View this instructional video to guide you in creating your paper beads:

[https://mediaspace.msu.edu/media/Michigan-State-University-Extension-4-H-Grab-Go-Crafts-Africa-Beads/1\\_7xk0kfxz](https://mediaspace.msu.edu/media/Michigan-State-University-Extension-4-H-Grab-Go-Crafts-Africa-Beads/1_7xk0kfxz)

## **PROCEDURE: How to make paper beads**

- ◇ Use a ruler, pencil, and plain paper or cardstock to create your own templates for making beads. For example, create long, rectangular, tapered, or triangular shapes that are 1/2 inch to 3/4 inch wide at one end and from 6 inches to 10 inches long. Then trace the template on to colored paper and cut the colored paper out.
- ◇ Start at the wide end of one colored paper strip and wind it around the straw or wire (whatever you chose for the hole size). Add the glue to help hold it. Just be careful to not glue your bead to the toothpicks if they are used. Generally, it will not stick to the wire or plastic straws. Apply glue thinly on the end of the strip on the inside of your paper.
- ◇ You may need to use the wet clothes or paper towels when your hands or the area gets sticky.
- ◇ Roll the beads slowly and evenly making sure to smooth the paper and keeping the edges even.
- ◇ Allow to dry by placing in a cup or into foam board or modeling clay.
- ◇ Finally, use the clear or glitter nail polish to give all the beads a protective coating. For a more matted look, you can cover with the glue or Mod Podge.
- ◇ Apply additional coats if needed. Two to three coats of polish are recommended.
- ◇ Allow to dry again.
- ◇ Once the bead is dry, slide it off the stick or straw.
- ◇ String the beads on to string or wire to create necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and so much more! Be creative!

## AFRICA: PAPER BEADS

**Art and Science** – Experiment with different types of paper (such as wallpaper, old maps, or even thin fabric). Try different sealers, different designs, and different techniques. Ask questions and make discoveries!

**Community** – Many organizations such as BeadforLife, Tears to Pearls, NEBSTAR, and the Nyaka AIDS Orphans Project support and empower villages through the purchase and promotion of these beautiful paper bead creations. Make paper beads as an environmental and recycling project or fundraiser.

**Reflection Questions:** What surprised you and why? When were you the most creative, and why do you think that is? What made you curious today? What can you do with what you learned today?

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

The activity was developed by Michigan State University Extension Educator Janis Brinn in 2020. It was updated in 2021. It is adapted with permission from “The Art of Rolling a Bead,” *Understanding Global Poverty: How Youth Can Make a Difference! BeadforLife: Curriculum for Youth Grades 6-12*, pages 43-44, as well as *African Cultural Heritage Series (4-H Bulletin 399A)*, by the Michigan 4-H Youth Programs Cooperative Extension Service, 1977.