

Infused Medicine Pouch

Portable artwork that provides a pleasurable treat for the senses.

(art + history)

The personal practice of carrying a small pouch or bag for the purpose of healing, protection, spirituality, and remembrance has spanned many cultures around the globe since ancient times. In many Native American cultures, one of the most revered objects is a medicine bag. A common misconception is that it contains remedies similar to the modern definition of the word "medicine." In Native American culture, medicine also refers to things that are spiritual, supernatural, and of great personal significance.

In historic times, medicine people carried bundles filled with items for healing and ceremonial use. A more common person carried one that held very precious possessions representing their spiritual life. Considered holy and worn close to the body, a medicine bag was not allowed to come in contact with the ground and to touch a medicine bag that did not belong to you was considered a great offense.

Traditionally, a medicine bag is made with leather or animal skins and stitched with sinew or rawhide lace. They might be very plain or richly decorated with paintings, beads, quills, feathers, metal, fringe, etc. A modern medicine bag is often made with fabric.

Popular culture today often employs aromatic oils for improving mood, reducing stress, boosting energy, and other physiological remedies. Infusing a small pouch so that it can be worn or kept close by for sensory enjoyment can be a modern day version of the medicine bag. While it can be made in a much more traditional manner, this project uses a tiny canvas with a ready-made receptacle in the back side for small objects or an oil-infused scrap. Designs can be painted, stitched, or beaded in tribute to Native American artists.

GRADES 3-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed

Preparation

- Sort bead colors into a well palette or small muffin tin. For more space and extra security, use a sectioned storage box.



Materials (required)

Blick Mini Canvas, 2" x 2", package of 6, White (07197-1402) or Black (07197-2402); need one per student

Glass Indian Seed Beads, 3 oz, assorted colors (60725-); share a minimum of four across class

Roylco Mesh Paper, 7" "x 10" package of 24 sheets (01391-1001); need one sheet per class

Suede Cording Sets, assorted colors, 35 yds (73554-1003); share one set across class

Plastic 10-Well Paint Tray with Cover, 7.5"Dia (03068-1010); fill with beads and share six across class

Aleene's Quick Dry Tacky Glue, 4 oz (23884-1104); share six bottles across class

Sculpture House Duron Plastic Sculpting Tool Set, set of 12 (30322-1009); share two across class

Helix Shatterproof Plastic Ruler, 6" (55463-1006); need one per student

Roylco Felt Shapes, package of 500 (65308-1500); share one bag across class

Abbey & Sullivan Fragrance Oils, assorted scents (81504-); share a minimum of one bottle across class

Materials (optional):

Potpourri Glass Beads, 1 lb, assorted colors (61518-)

John Bead Czech Glass Seed Beads, 22 g tube, assorted colors (63842-)

Premium Leather Remnants, 1 lb (61706-1001)

ArtBin Prism Storage Box, 18 compartments, 1.75" x 11.5" x 6.5" (62979-1018) Graph paper

Prang Washable Fine Line Markers Class Pack of 144 (21267-1449)

Loew-Cornell Transfer Paper, 18" x 36" sheet, White (10501-1003) or Graphite (10501-2623)

Blick Mini Easel, 5" high (50360-1001)

Beading Needle, package of 6 (62981-1006)



Process

1. Plan a design for the front of the medicine pouch. For younger students, a simple geometric pattern is best. For best results, plan the design on a piece of graph paper sized the same as the canvas and use fine line markers to plan in color. Draw the design on the canvas with a pencil, using a ruler if desired or use transfer paper.
2. Select a single color portion of the design to begin with and fill that area with glue. Glue can be squeezed directly from the bottle or applied with a brush or small tool for greater accuracy. For best results, use a heavy-body tacky glue and not a soft-body glue that will spread out.
3. Pinch a few beads of the color planned for that area and sprinkle them into the glue. Tap gently with fingers to form a single layer. Beads can also be guided into place with a plastic tool.
4. Move to another portion of the design, preferably not adjacent to the area just completed. Repeat the process of filling with glue then adding beads until the design is complete. If desired, cover the entire design with a coat of glue when the design is complete. Set the canvas aside to dry.
5. Design a hanger, based on what the intended use of the pouch will be. To hang around the neck, cut a cord or lacing 24" to 30" in length. Attach by gluing the loose ends to the left and right sides of the canvas. The pouch could be designed with a shorter length of cord to hang as an ornament or attach with a clip to a bag, backpack or belt loop. To enjoy as a desk enhancement, place on a mini easel.
6. Once glue has dried, create a backing that will turn it into a pouch. Cut a piece of leather, paper mesh, or fabric so that it is 1/4" wider than the mini canvas. It can be the same height or created long at the bottom to make fringe. Run a line of glue along the sides and bottom of the canvas (leave the top open). Set the backing material on top of the glue, "pinching" it in so that the sides align and don't hang over. This will form a pouch that is accessible at the top side.
7. Place a few drops of aromatic oils onto a felt shape and insert the felt into the pouch. Enjoy the benefits of aromatherapy!

Options

- Beads can also be stitched onto the canvas using a beading needle. Stitchable area is limited to open area between stretcher bars.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Responding

Anchor Standard 8: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Connecting

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.



Step 1: Create a design on graph paper, then transfer it to mini canvas surface.



Step 2: Fill a section of the design with glue, and add colorful seed beads. Repeat until design is complete. Design a hanger.



Step 3: Glue leather or paper mesh to the back side to create a pouch. Insert a felt shape infused with aromatic oils and enjoy!

