

Title: India Cultural Art- Henna Hands

Grade Level: K-5

Objective: Students will design decorative doodles in the style of Indian cultural hand markings known as henna.



Lesson Plan

Materials: pencils, markers, scissors, glue, copy paper, construction paper.

Opening Activity: Henna is a dye that comes from a small shrublike plant. Many cultures and regions of the world, especially in India, use henna as a body paint for celebrations and rites of passage. Henna body art is usually applied to the hands, so we will create HAND HENNA PORTRAITS today. Introduce members to the ‘namaste’ or prayer hands as a way for them to show they understand a direction, using their hands and being respectful!

Core Activity:

- HAND TRACING, have students trace ONE of their hands, twice. Cut out each traced hand and glue them to a colorful background.
- Members should decide what style of design they want to create: henna tattoos often look like complex doodles, incorporating leaf and floral shapes and styles.
- When artists use henna paint they have to be VERY careful and skilled in applying the paint: because the henna dyes the skin pretty quickly. Members will create their ‘henna’ designs on the paper hands with markers to get a feel for how complicated this art form can be!
- Remember, the markers are ONLY for the PAPER HANDS, REMIND MEMBERS: “do NOT color on your skin with markers!!!”

Reflection: As members help clean up the space, ask them: What do your hands express? Are hands important symbols in American culture? Why or why not? What is the difference between how hands are seen in Indian culture versus American culture?