

The Art of the Book: Bookmaking



Activity, Time and Materials

ACTIVITY:

Books are containers for information. Over the course of this activity, participants will discuss books throughout history, from ancient scrolls and dime-store paperbacks to today's electronic books. Samples of different kinds of books will be shown and passed around for a closer look. The participants will create a book of their own to be filled at a later date or to be shared with others. This activity will include two separate sessions.

The culminating efforts of many of the activity plans in this compilation easily lend themselves to being displayed in book form. In reviewing other activity plans in this compilation, one easily recognizes that the outcome of activity plans dealing with such arts as the writing of blizzard stories, creating decorative Fraktur recipe cards, writing haiku based on weatherlore, or the creation of quilted greeting cards all could be modified and presented in book form. It is with this thought in mind that a bookmaking activity plan was developed.

TIME:

Two hours over two sessions.

MATERIALS:

- Card stock measuring 6" x 12" (several pieces per participant)
- Card stock measuring 6 1/2" x 12 1/2" (several pieces per participant)
- Thin ribbon or cord (measuring less than 1/2" in width) cut to 24" in length (two pieces per participant)
- Glue sticks (liquid glue may cause the paper to wrinkle)
- Scissors
- "Bone" paper folders or wide Popsicle sticks (one per participant)
- Card stock (for decorating covers)
- Decorative paper punches and edging scissors (for decorating covers; squeeze or push punches can be used by people with mobility and hand-strength issues)
- Markers (for decorating covers)
- Different kinds and styles of books (pop-up, electronic, picture, large print, and handmade books to show participants)
- The book *Sundogs and Sunflowers: Folklore and Folk Art of the Northern Great Plains*

“THREE PLAGUES” (LONELINESS, BOREDOM, HELPLESSNESS):

Discussion with others is a strike against loneliness. When you are interacting with others, you are less lonely. Learning something new also helps to combat boredom. Many elder participants probably have never seen an eBook or iPad up close. It will be new to most of them. When participants succeed at creating a book and can take pride in their handiwork, they will feel less helpless. The use of brightly colored paper and ribbon helps people with visual issues to be involved more effectively. The use of push punches allows people with hand-strength issues to be involved, while still creating beautiful designs.

The books that the elder participants create can lead to other activities that become vehicles for connecting them to others. For example: (a) a family journal, where family members pass the journal around and describe their day when they have the journal, then return it to another person who adds to it and passes it on again; (b) guest books for the elders’ rooms, where visitors are encouraged to write a joke, Bible verse, quote, or memory for the elders to read after the guests leave; or (c) a pen pal swap, where the book is passed back and forth with a pen pal from a local church or school. These creative exchanges encourage personal interaction, which is so desired by many care facility residents. These exchanges also give the elders something to look forward to.

ASSOCIATED MEDICAL STUDY:

“The cultural arts have gained attention for their potential to generate social and behavioral changes in people with dementia. Although individual cultural arts intervention studies have reported positive outcomes, most are excluded from systematic reviews because of methodological weakness. We reviewed findings from 27 systematic and integrative reviews of pharmacologic, psychosocial, and cultural arts interventions to identify promising outcomes as well as limitations in current approaches. Although results point to the potential success of interventions tailored to individual interests, most focused on limited measurements of individual change. In moving forward, cultural arts intervention research must not be limited to the tools of the clinical trial model. Instead, researchers should carefully rethink what constitutes rigorous and effective research for interventions aimed at creating a meaningful personal experience for the participant rather than measurable change.” [Abstract]

*--de Medeiros, Kate, and Anne Basting. “Shall I Compare Thee to a Dose of Donepezil? Cultural Arts Interventions in Dementia Care.” *The Gerontologist* 54, no. 3 (2014): 344-353.*

Cover photo: Handmade zigzag book by Bonnie Tressler, Jamestown, ND. The flowers, flower stems, and stars were made with push punches and decorative edging scissors.

Activity Plan

SESSION 1 (1 HOUR):

1. The activity director should discuss the plan with the participants, explaining what will be accomplished over the course of each session. Both sessions will entail the participants looking at and learning about different styles of books. During the first session, they will touch and see pop-up, electronic, picture, large print, and handmade books. In the second session, participants will construct a unique book and discuss how to use it.

2. The activity director could begin the session by reading a poem about books, such as “A Book” by Adelaide Love. (This and other poems can be found online.) Then generate a discussion about the role of books in the elder participants’ lives:

- What are your favorite books?
- What kind of schoolbooks did you have?
- Did you have your own schoolbooks?
- Were there books in your home growing up? If so, what kind of books? Do you remember what the books were about?
- What books did you read to your children? What were those books about?
- Did your parents read stories to you as a child? If so, what were the stories about?
- Did you read comic books? Did your children read comic books?

In order to foster an environment of true discussion, the activity director should share with the elder participants what his or her favorite books are and what books he or she reads to his or her children. Have the elders sit around a table with the activity director also sitting at the same table. Such a seating arrangement creates a tone better suited to discussion, rather than if the activity director were standing up at the front of the group and talking, which instead would create a tone of lecture.

3. The activity director should gather a variety of books: books that are beautiful, books that surprise, books that involve technology, handmade books, books with marbled end plates, pop-up books, old encyclopedias, a beautiful Bible, books that make sounds, electronic books, and so on.

Share with the elder participants the examples of the different kinds of books collected. Have a volunteer pass the books around. Allow time for the books to be examined. Encourage participants to open the pop-up pages or turn the electronic page.

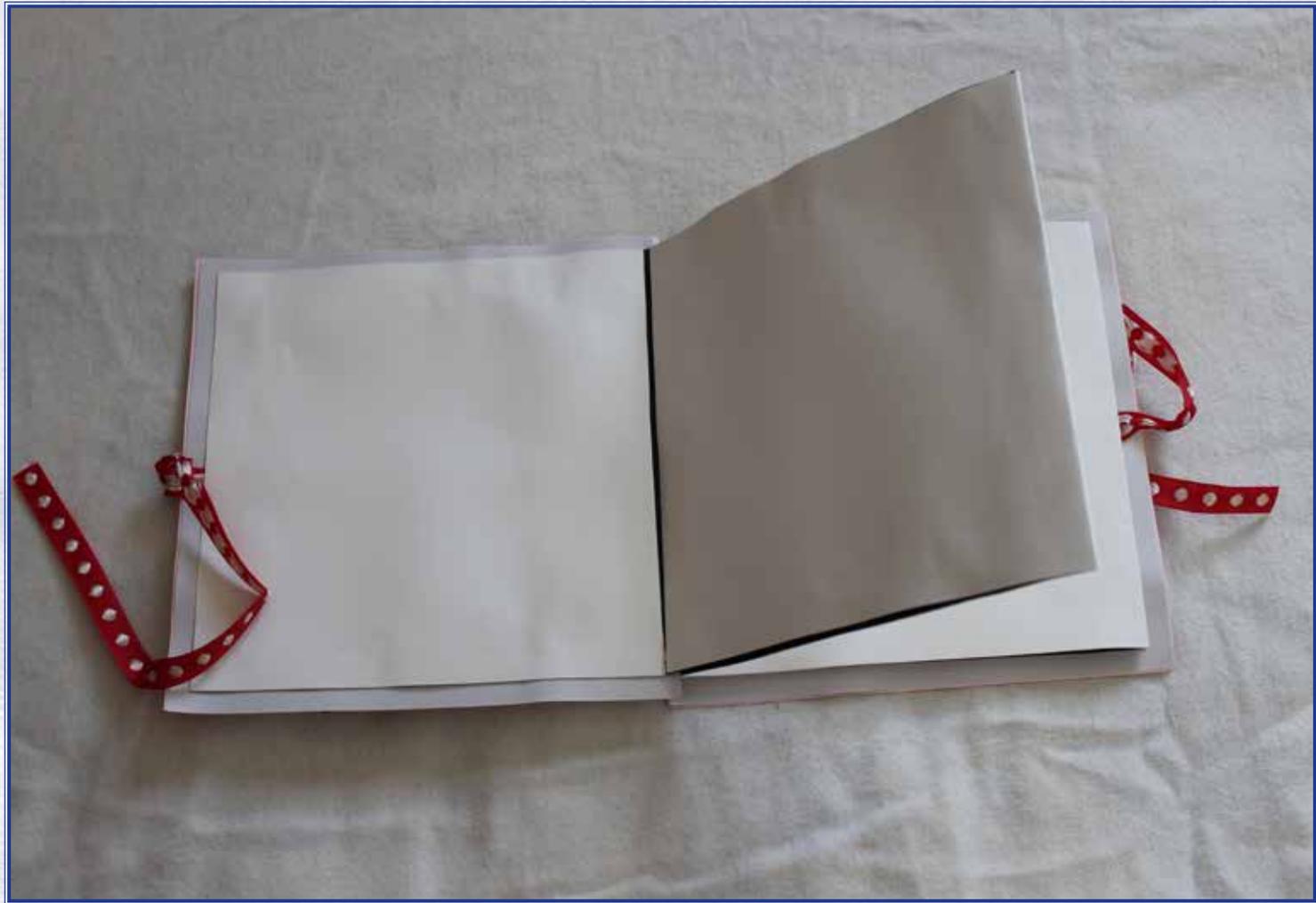
The activity director should mention that some ancient forms of books, though very rare, are still with us. Read aloud the text and show images to the group from the folklore entry “Spirit Trails and Sky Beings: Mythical Scrolls of the Ojibway Nation,” which can be found on page 38 of the book *Sundogs and Sunflowers*.

4. Show an example of the book that each participant will be making: a zigzag book with card stock covers and ribbon or cord closures. The pages of the book will be a finished size of 6" x 6". One of the

fun parts of a zigzag book is that either one side or the other can be opened to reveal different sets of pages.



Cover of a zigzag book made by Bonnie Tressler, Jamestown, ND.



Untying one side of the book gives one access to one set of pages.



Untying the other side of the book gives one access to a whole new set of pages.

5. A colorful variety of materials should be made available from which to construct the books. The more colors, the better. The activity director should show the participants the many color options that are available. Each participant should then choose his or her materials:

- Pages: 3 pieces of one color card stock, 6" x 12"
3 pieces of another color card stock, 6" x 12"
- Covers: 2 pieces of 6 ½" x 6 ½" card stock
- Closures: 2 pieces of ribbon or cord, each measuring 24" in length



3 pieces of black card stock and 3 pieces of red card stock, 6" x 12"; two pieces of yellow card stock to be used as covers, 6 ½" x 6 ½", and two pieces of grey ribbon.

6. Provide large Ziploc bags to the participants, asking them to store their selected bookmaking materials in the bags until the next session. Ask participants to write their names on the bags. Tell the participants where and when the next session is scheduled to take place. Collect the Ziploc bags.

SESSION 2 (1 HOUR):

1. Explain this session's activity with the participants: that the materials selected at the last session now will be utilized to create a book to hold their thoughts, as a guest book, to exchange with a pen pal, to pass amongst family members to describe their days, as a sketchbook, or any other practical use they may think of.

Note: If the bookmaking activity is being utilized to enhance the culmination of another activity plan in this compilation, such as the writing of blizzard stories, creating decorative Fraktur recipe cards, writing haiku based on weatherlore, etc., then modify your explanation and session accordingly.

2. The activity director should distribute the Ziploc bags of materials from the previous session. If new participants are in attendance, a volunteer may assist them in choosing their materials.

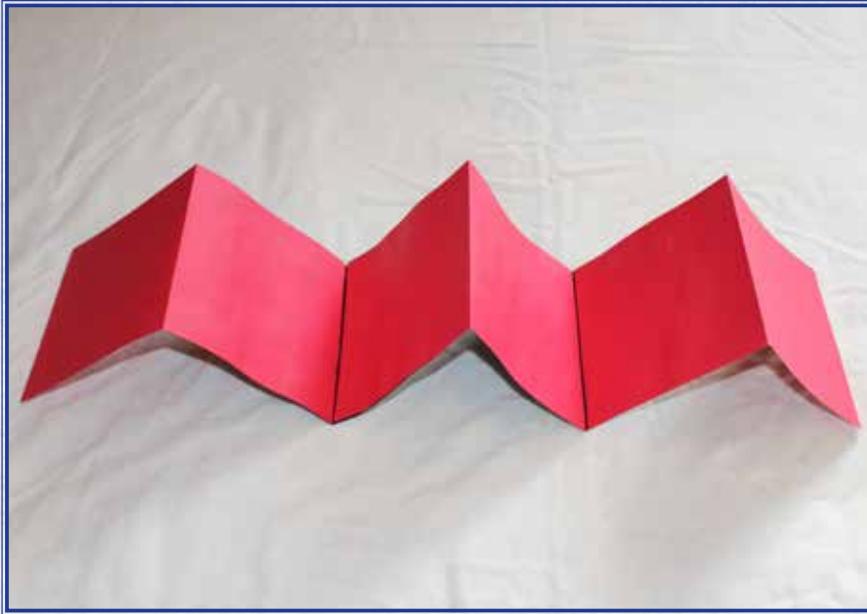
3. Begin with the 6" x 12" book pages. Fold all six pieces of card stock in half, 6" end to 6" end. Use a bone folder or Popsicle stick to make a crisp crease in each page. Cut one of the sheets in half along the crease.



4. Glue the pages together to make a zigzag pattern of alternating colors. To complete the alternating color pattern, glue the two cut pieces of paper to opposite ends of the pages.

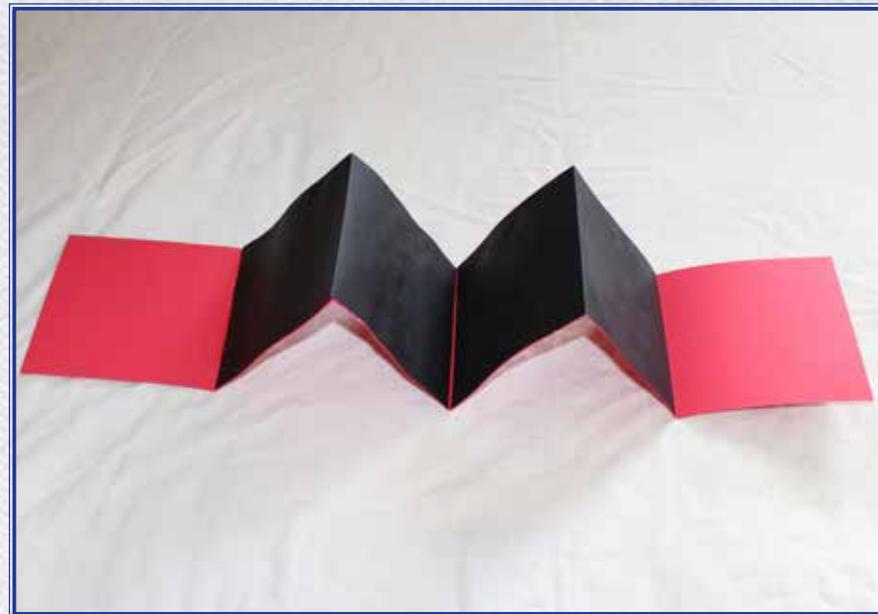


Arrange the folded sheets of card stock as shown above. The pages facing one another should be glued together.



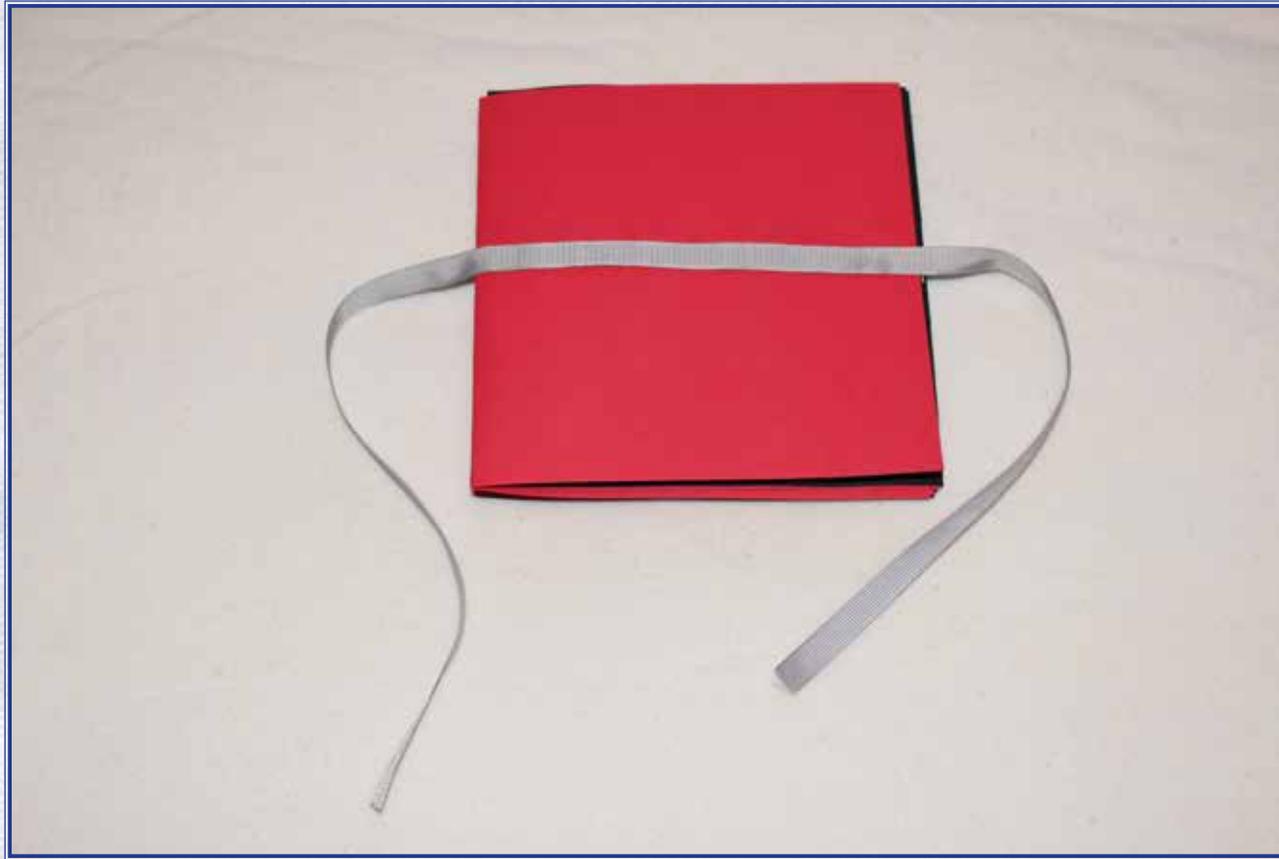
One side will look like this.

The opposite side will look like this. The two pieces created when one of the black sheets of card stock in our illustration was cut in half now should be glued on top of each of the red pages as shown at right. Afterwards, this side should be all one color, black.



5. Close the zigzag sheets of card stock into a book. Have the participants cut in half their 48" piece of selected cord or ribbon. On both end pages, center a piece of the ribbon so it runs horizontally

across the page and glue it down. Don't worry about the glue seeping through the ribbon. The outer cover will hide the glue.



Fold the pages into a book. Center and glue a ribbon so it runs horizontally across the end page. Do the same on the other end page.

6. Glue the 6 ½" x 6 ½" covers over the end pages, making sure both ends of the ribbon remain exposed.

7. Tie the ribbons or cord to hold the book closed.



Cover glued onto one of the end pages. The other cover is yet to be glued to the other end page.



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OPTIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR A THIRD SESSION:

After the books are completed, the book covers could be decorated. The possibilities for decoration are many: collage, using

rubber stamps, markers, etc. A wide variety of paper scraps, glue, scissors, decorative scissors, rubber stamps, and markers should be made available for the completion of this creative project.



This book was made to hold favorite family holiday recipes. It was decorated with ink and decorative rubber stamps.

AUTHOR • BONNIE TRESSLER:

Bonnie is a teaching artist who lives in Jamestown, North Dakota. Her artistic interests and skills are centered on book and box making, decorative Polish Easter eggs, willow basketry, poetry, writing, and collage. She is very active with the Jamestown Fine Arts Center. She works with the *Art for Life Program*, where she coordinates a pen pal letter exchange between the elders at Ave Maria Village, a skilled care facility, and local schoolchildren. Bonnie has done art residencies with elementary schools, senior citizen groups, the Sons of Norway, and numerous other organizations.

(Photos provided courtesy of Troyd Geist, North Dakota Council on the Arts.)

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