

# Needle and Thread:

## An Introduction to Embroidery, Handwork, and Beading for Girl Scouts

### For Juniors and Cadettes (grades 4-8)

**Purpose:** To introduce fiber arts, embroidery, and handwork to Girl Scouts by gathering information about past and current textile arts, learning about the tools and techniques, and creating or embellishing items with hands-on experiences.

This badge includes seven steps, some of which you may do at home, and some that can be done as a group activity. Field trips to a museum or exhibit and to a store are included. (Online options are available.) The last step is completing a simple project. You could do individual items or the whole group could do the same project.

#### Step 1

Learn about handwork by talking with someone who does or has done fabric arts or beading. Ask your relatives or friends if they did/do handwork such as embroidery, quilting, crochet, knitting, or other fiber arts. (You could also contact an area needlework club or guild for members to interview.) What did/do they make and what was it used for? Do they still use the items? Do they still enjoy doing the handwork?

Start a scrapbook with six sections. In Section 1, write about the person(s) you talked with and their handwork. You could include photos of the pieces and the name of the person who made each one. If possible, arrange a “show and tell” troop meeting to have the girls share their person’s pieces. If the girls don’t have any items, have them bring something they could do handwork on.

#### Step 1a (optional addition)

Learn about different cultures and how they used handwork. Examples: Irish or Belgian lace, American or English samplers to learn stitches and alphabets, English work (e.g., the Bayeux Tapestry), embroidery by Mary Queen of Scots, Blackwork in English/Spanish History, Applique in Panama, Japanese Shasiko with indigo cloth, Mexican rebozos, Hungarian embroidery, or American Quilts from scraps or art quilts. Most cultures have traditions of embroidery or beadwork. Add photos of examples and write about one country or type of embroidery or fiber art.

#### Step 2

Learn about tools that are used for embroidery and handwork.

Which tools are used for quilting? Lace? Beading? Knitting? Crochet? (Tools in embroidery might include different types of needles, scissors, hoop or frame, needle threader, fabric types, chart or design, marking pen, magnet to hold needles, pin cushion, etc.)

Make a list in Section 2 of your notebook for two or more techniques. Tell what each is used for.

### **Step 3 Basic Skills**

Have a group learning session and go over at least five of the following:

- a. Thread a needle.
- b. Mount a fabric on a frame or hoop
- c. Trace a design on to fabric
- d. Attach thread without a knot.
- e. Sew on a button or bead.
- f. Make a row of cross stitch on even-weave fabric/Aida fabric.
- g. Make a daisy flower with lazy daisy, satin stitch, French knot, stem stitch. (Descriptions of the stitches can be found through Internet searches, library books, etc.)

### **Step 4 Choose one:**

- a. Pocket or small purse of felt with embroidered design; use five embroidery stitches, including blanket stitch edges.
- b. Cross stitch design from a chart on potholder or towel
- c. Seasonal ornament, either drawn on felt and stuffed or cross stitched on evenweave fabric/Aida.
- d. Embellished tote bag with owl, hand-sewn buttons, fused fabric, and embroidery stitches.
- e. Beaded bookmark made from ribbon, with 3-5 beads on each end.
- f. Plastic canvas wiggle worm bookmark with wiggly eyes.
- g. Embroidered book mark on fabric with ribbon trim
- h. Eyeglass case for sunglasses. Draw design on canvas or stitch allover pattern.
- i. Decorate a tee shirt with beads or embroidered designs.
- j. Cellphone case.

What do I need to do this project? Tools? Fabric? Types of needles? Thread? Beads? Make a list. Include instructions in Step 3 of the notebook (will attach instructions for each)

### **Step 5**

Visit a museum with historic or contemporary textiles on display or visit an exhibit or craft show. You may also visit online textile exhibits with appropriate adult supervision. Write or draw what you saw.

### **Step 6**

Take a field trip to a craft shop, bead shop, quilt shop, or needlework shop. Learn about what is available. If there is no shop in the area, look for websites where supplies can be ordered. Order supplies for group. Obtain supplies for project selected in step 4.

### **Step 7**

Make something practical, pretty, or both. Make your selected item from the list in step 4. Have a show and tell in the group so the girls can share ideas and display their work.