



HANDWORK FROM OUR HERITAGE LEADER'S GUIDE

Cultural heritage is the passing on by education, discipline, or training of anything valued or appreciated...a process, a skill, knowledge, understanding, traits, and traditions. Daily our grandparents are moving out of our lives taking with them this kind of information. If this information is to be saved at all, for whatever reason, it must be saved now; and the logical researchers are the grandchildren. In the process, these youth gain an invaluable, unique knowledge about their own roots, heritage, and culture.



ABOUT THE PROJECT

The *Handwork from Our Heritage* project has been designed with these purposes in mind:

1. To allow youth to learn skills of handwork arts not available in other projects.
2. Develop a means by which the handwork arts can be taught and passed on to youth today.
3. Encourage the involvement of senior citizens and other community members as resources in teaching handwork arts.

Several handwork art and craft areas are listed in this project. Under each AREA (i.e., embroidery, quilting, tole painting, etc.) Units are found. Each single Unit of an AREA is a project. Only one Unit is necessary to complete a project. For project completion 4-H members need to follow General Requirements for all Areas in the Member manual. This allows the member many project options within the *Handwork from Our Heritage* program.

Each AREA includes more than one Unit. In most Areas, Units are sequential and designed to be progressively more difficult. Younger members should be advised to start with the lower units. Youth starting with some experience or knowledge should take the unit that provides the most challenge. In some areas, such as quilting, the units focus on different types of a specific handwork and are not necessarily progressive. If a member has an interest in taking Unit 4 without having completed Unit 1, they may do so as long as they have the necessary skills to complete that unit.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THE LEADER

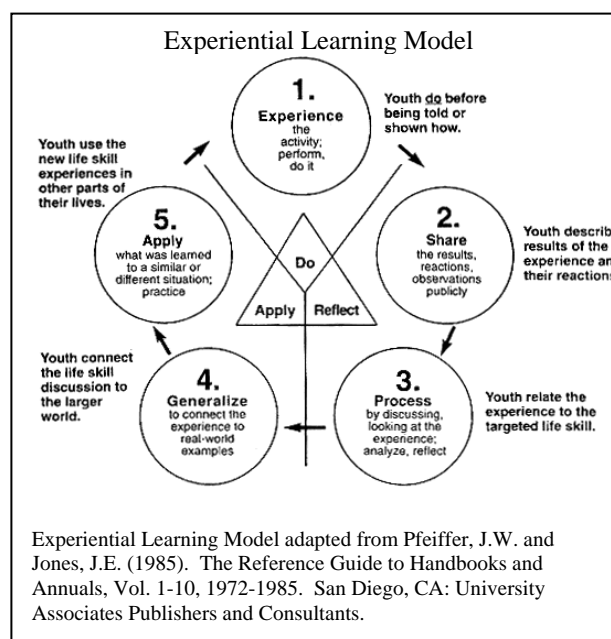
Experiential learning distinguishes 4-H youth development from many formal education methods. What is experiential learning? The traditional 4-H motto "learn by doing" is as appropriate today as it was when 4-H first began. Experiential learning is activity-based. It happens when a person gets involved in an activity, looks back at it critically, determines what was useful or important to remember and uses the information to do something else.

The greatest gift leaders can give is to help youth recognize themselves as capable people. Sometimes that requires leaders and adults to "sit on their hands" while youth learn on their own. A young person's positive identity and sense of worth is strengthened when she/he does the work, making mistakes and learning from the mistakes. Parents, teachers and leaders doing the work may rob youth of learning by trial and error, practicing skills and becoming competent and capable.

As members practice and learn a handwork they will be working through the Experiential Learning Model and gaining important life skills: self-motivation, critical thinking, problem solving and positive identity. As the leader you can help them through this process with your enthusiasm and thought-provoking questions. You can help them set goals, find resources and evaluate their progress.

GUIDING THE 4-H'ER

As you guide the members in selecting projects, keep in mind their skills and abilities, their interests, and their maturity. For example, a 9 year-old may want to learn to quilt, but age would indicate much too short an interest span to complete a full-sized bed quilt. You might suggest making a potholder, pillow cover, tote-bag, or some other appropriate item.



Each AREA lists requirements and suggestions made for making items for display, but these suggestions are not restrictive. Members may make other items not on the lists, if they include the skills to be learned in that unit. A member may make and exhibit more than one item if desired. You might encourage them to make a sampler or practice item to help them learn the handwork before they make their exhibit item.

RESEARCHING THIS PROJECT

Members are expected to “dig into” the heritage and write, in their own words, a history of their selected handwork. Material may be found in libraries, bookstores, magazine articles, fabric and craft stores, and on the Internet. Another good resource is the people in the community who are skilled in the craft. They may have books and magazines that are no longer available from other sources.

First year members should develop a general background of the handwork they choose. The background should indicate when and where the handwork art started, and what it was used for at the time. In subsequent years, they should expand their history to include information such as: types and kinds of materials used through the years, major changes that have occurred in the skill through the years, major uses and how they have changed over the years, and if the handwork had any major influence on the way people lived.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Demonstrations are a great way for members to share their newly learned skills with others. Members can demonstrate how to do one or more of the skills, share some of the history, show some examples, etc.