Basket Weaving Activity Instructions

Supplies Needed:

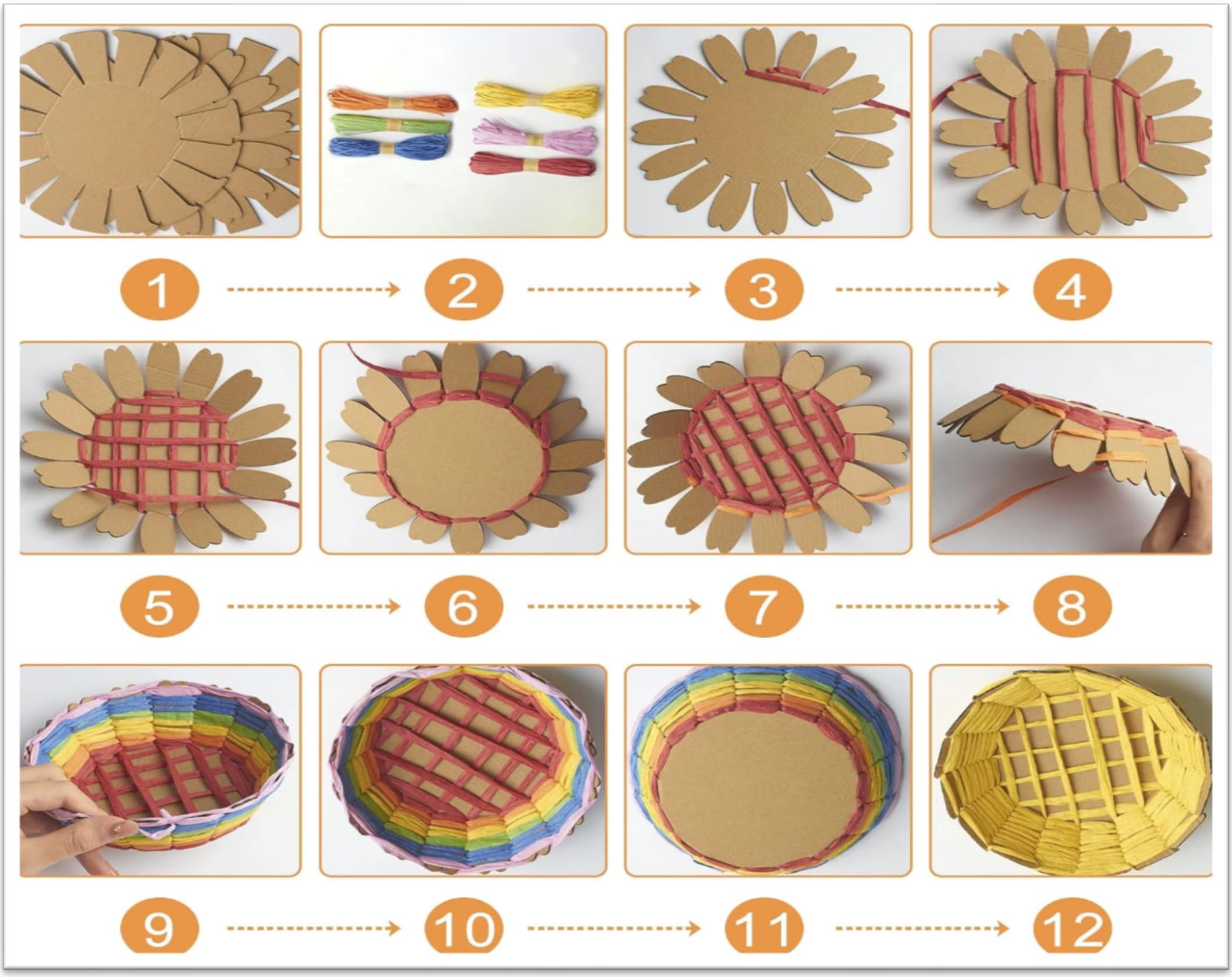
- Glue sticks
- Colored pencils
- Base sets (try searching for “basket making forms” or “basket weaving supplies” online)
- Paper ribbon twine

Instructions:

1. Select a base and twine.
2. Color your base any colors you like, wherever you do not plan to use the twine to cover it up.
3. Glue the twine around one of the sections of the base.
4. Design your own pattern across the bottom of the base by running the twine from one side to the other. Once you’re done designing the base, cut off any extra twine.
5. Glue a new line of twine to a different section and begin to weave the twine by going in and out between the sections. Repeat this all the way around.
6. If you want, add a new color of twine.
7. Keep going in and out between the sections until the twine reaches the top of the basket, and then cut off any extra twine.

More information on basketry, including weaving techniques can be found at https://www.sfomuseum.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Woven-Legacies-Ed-Prog-2011_0.pdf

Examples of the many shapes and uses of basketry can be found at https://www.sbnature.org/uploads/pages/AmericanIndianBasketryCatalog01072019-1555019465.pdf



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Rattle lid basket, Tlingit, Southeastern Alaska, 2–32a,b

Basketry caps, Yurok, Northwestern California, c. 1890s–1920s, 1–164418, 1–70955

4. Fancy basket (detail), Passamaquoddy, Maine

- Basket weaving is over 8,000 years old and it's one of the oldest Native American Crafts!
- Baskets are used for gathering food, storing goods, cooking, and ceremonial purposes. Each tribe developed its own unique weaving techniques, patterns, and materials based on the environment around them, such as willow, pine needles, or river reeds.
- Beyond being useful, baskets often held deep cultural and spiritual meaning. Designs tell stories, represent nature, or symbolize tribal identity. Basket weaving was also a way to pass down traditions, with skills taught from one generation to the next.
- In many Native American cultures, baskets are recognized as forms of art that reflect creativity, skill, and cultural identity, and they continue to be made today to preserve heritage and share history.

While making your basket, think of these questions:

- Baskets can have images woven into them, what types of things would you put on a basket?
- Basket weaving is passed down from mothers to daughters, what types of things are passed down in your family?
- Baskets were usually made from plants found in their environment, what plants are around you? Could you make a basket out of them?