Beadwork Activity Instructions

Supplies Needed:

- For older participants:
  - Scissors: Check inventory/Storage
  - Colorful beads and letters
  - Bracelet String
- For younger participants:
  - Pipe cleaners
  - Pony beads

Instructions:

1. Design the Pattern
   a) Choose colors and shapes that reflect a story or a personal meaning.
   b) Patterns can be geometric, floral, symbolic, or abstract.
   c) Spell your name! Here are our suggestions, but you can use whatever colors you want:

Red	A, I, Q, Y	Orange	E, M, U
Yellow	B, J, R, Z	White	F, N, V
Green	C, K, S	Black	G, O, W
Blue	D, L, T	Pink	H, P, X

2. Prepare the Thread
   a) Cut a length of thread the size of your wrist and secure one end by tying it into a knot.
3. Add Beads
   a) Thread beads in the order you like.
4. Finish the Bracelet
   a) Tie off the thread securely.
   b) Add a clasp, button, or braided tie to fasten the bracelet.

Beads and beadwork represent a rich artistic tradition across many Indigenous Nations.

Beads and beadwork predate contact with Europeans. Beads were made from shells, stones, bones and seeds.

Different Indigenous Nations have unique styles and motifs, reflecting their distinct identities and artistic expressions. For example, Plains tribes often create complex patterns, while Southeastern tribes often use floral designs.

Beads can be used on blankets, bags, and jewelry like these examples.

Bag with spider and spiderweb design
Probably Lakota
Circa 1890

Saddle blanket
Niitsitapii (Blackfoot/Blackfeet)

While making your bracelet, think of these questions:

- If you were to tell a story using beads, how would you do it?
- What stories are important to share?
- Why do you think Native American use beads on items like bags?
- Traditionally, beading has been done by women, why do you think that is?