Needlepoint on Plastic Canvas

Purpose
Youth learn to thread a needle and use basic needlepoint stitches to create decorative needlework projects.

Facts to Know

Suggested group size: three to four children per adult volunteer

Time frame: group meeting 30 to 60 minutes

Recommended ages: 5- to 7-year-olds (kindergarten through second grade)

Materials:
- 2-inch square of No. 7 plastic mesh (seven holes per inch)
- White knitting yarn (4 ounces will yield 15 to 20 projects)
- Green knitting yarn (uses very little; scraps if you have any)
- One size 18 tapestry needle for each child

Background Knowledge

Needlepoint is a heritage skill. It is creating decorative needlework on a special open-weave canvas. The canvas is the background material covered by the stitches. The stitches follow a pattern and can be formed diagonally across the intersecting threads of the canvas or parallel to the threads of the canvas. Stitches cover the entire surface of a finished canvas.

Needle size is matched to the gauge of the canvas. The gauge of the canvas means how many threads it has per inch. The larger the gauge, the more threads per inch. The needle should be thin enough to pass through the holes of the canvas without distorting them.

Needlepoint stitches are worked vertically, horizontally or diagonally using five stitch groups: diagonal, straight, crossing, composite and pile. A sewing method or stab method could be used to draw the yarn though the canvas.

(Needlepoint, 2012)
Learning Activities

Do: Getting Started
Threading the Needle (five minutes)

1. Threading the needle may be done in a variety of ways.
2. Members will cut a piece of yarn no longer than 18 inches.
3. Encourage members to try one of the ways shown (Figures 1 and 2) to see which is easier for them.

(Needlepoint Instructions, 2012)

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Do: Digging Deeper
Basic Stitches (20 minutes)

1. Teach the half-cross and continental stitch. The half-cross stitch is easier and takes less yarn than the continental stitch, but it does not cover the canvas well. The continental fills better.
2. With members, talk about the use of the project, and then select the most appropriate stitch.
3. Use the following directions:
   a. To begin stitching, bring the threaded needle through a hole in the canvas from the back/underside to front/right side.
   b. Half-cross and continental (Figures 3 and 4) – bring needle up at one and at all odd numbers, down at two and at all even numbers. Shaded stitches indicate second row. The proper way is to stitch across the canvas. The figures also show the way to stitch up and down, if necessary. For the third row, continue as in first row, etc.
   c. Overcasting (Figure 5) – use double strand of yarn to overcast exposed edges as shown.

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To use a needle threader, push one end through the needle eye: slip the yarn through the hole and draw the threader out, pulling the yarn through the needle eye.

Paper strip method: Cut a strip of paper 1/4" wide and 2" long. Fold the strip in half and insert the yarn between the halves as shown. Push the paper strip with the yarn inside it, through the needle eye.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3
HALF CROSS

Figure 4
CONTINENTAL

Figure 5
OVERCASTING EDGES
1. Use the following directions:
   a. Stitch the tree in green first.
   b. Then fill in the remaining area with white.
   c. To finish, use white yarn to overcast around the edges. If the finished product will be placed in a frame, the edges do not have to be finished.
**Reflect/Apply**

**Reflect:** Bringing Closure (five minutes)

1. Talk with members about what they felt was hard, what was easy and what took practice.

2. Share examples of other needlecraft projects with members. These could be pictures or samples of projects. For example: cross stitch, knitting, crocheting or embroidery.

**Apply:** Going Beyond

1. Make a set of coasters. Cut plastic canvas to measure 5 inches square. Do the half-cross or continental stitch to cover canvas area and complete by overcasting around outside edges. Weave in yarn ends.

2. Make a needlepoint box. Cut six plastic canvases to measure 3 inches square. Do the half-cross or continental stitch to cover each canvas. Complete by overcasting around the outside edges of each piece, connecting the edges of two canvases together to form a box.

3. Find an idea for another design and make it, then share with your Cloverbud friends at the next meeting.

*(Passing on Needlework Skills to Young People, 2012)*

**Acknowledgements**

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**Resources**


For more information, see [www.ndsu.edu/4h](http://www.ndsu.edu/4h)