

Kids Weaving Camp Curriculum

Summer offers a wonderful opportunity for kids to explore new things. Introducing kids to weaving through a summer camp allows time for discovery, brings youthful energy to your shop, and might even inspire a life-long passion.

We developed this curriculum as a week-long half day class, but if your shop space and personnel can't accommodate this, it could also be adapted to a weekly class. When choosing a once-a-week option, it might make sense to plan the class around a single project. To help us develop this curriculum, we consulted with Suzanne Middlebrooks of Hill Country Weavers in Austin, Texas. She has been running children's weekly fiber camps for many years. Suzanne's classes are five, all-day classes and include other textile techniques along with weaving. Demand is so high that Suzanne runs 6 weeks of these classes during the summer months.

Ideas for a week-long half-day camp

Ages: 9-13

Time: 4 hours per day

Preparation

- Arrange tables so that 2 teams (2 per team) can work together, one group on one side and the other on the other side of the table.
- Equipment needed: Cricket Loom, 8-dent heddle, stick shuttle, warping peg, threading hook, scissors, paper for rolling up the warp onto the warp beam.
- Worsted weight yarn. You'll need 168 yards for the project bag. We used just one color for this example. Have the yarn in many colors available for use. We recommend not making black available for this first project because it is so hard for the kids to see.

Day 1: Warping

- Introductions
- Show the kids an example of the project they're going to make.
- Demonstrate warping by making a 2"-wide warp. You can use the weaving vocabulary so they become familiar with it.
- Have the kids pick their yarn color. Use a worsted weight yarn (not super wash), such as Brown Sheep's Nature Spun (which is the yarn supplied with our Cricket Kit). We like to use wool for this first project because it is very easy to work with and forgives much.
- Pair up the kids for warping. You'll have 2 teams of 2 at each table.
- See the teaching warping and weaving guide for step-by-step warping instructions and helpful hints.
- The kids like to pick their own colors.
- Kids work in pairs to warp up their looms. (See our warping guide.)
- If time allows, start weaving. See the warping and weaving guide for instruction on winding a shuttle and starting to weave.



Day 2: Weaving, rope making, washing the fabric

- Start weaving. If the kids didn't start weaving on day 1, have them begin on day 2.
- To break up the day, you can demonstrate rope making and have them work in pairs to make the handle for their bags. For this bag, we measured 42" for 12 strand rope. There is about 30% take up from the winding process. The finished handle should be approximately 19" long with 3" tassels. Tie overhand knots on both ends of the rope to create the tassel.
- Finish weaving the bag.
- Secure the ends of the fringe. We tied groups of 4 warp threads, clipping to about 2" long.
- Wash the fabric until heavily full to make a sturdy fabric for a bag. You can have the kids use very warm water and Dawn detergent to wash their fabric. This would be a good activity to do outside. Rinse in cold water. To further full the fabric, place in dryer on hot, keeping watch on fabric. Steam press. Most likely, you'll need to take the bags home to place in the dryer for further fulling. If the bags have dried, rewet slightly and place in a hot dryer, checking every 5 minutes. You may find that some colors shrink more than others.

Day 3: Decorating the Bag

- Decorate one side of the bag with needle felting (resource: needle felting kit from Bryson). We used bits of wool yarn for our needle felted bag. You can also use dyed fleece. Alternately, you could have the kids embroider the bag with wool yarn.
- When the bag has been decorated, the instructor should sew up the bag on a sewing machine. Just fold the fabric in half and sew up the side seams. We folded over the top of the bag down about 1" for a fringed top. Alternately, the students could hand sew, but generally our experience is that hand sewing isn't fine enough to produce a sturdy bag.
- Students sew on rope handle.
- Kids love to show off their finished pieces in a photo!
- Start warping for scarf project. See instructions for spaced and felted scarf. We use a sport weight yarn (not super wash) in an 8-dent heddle.

Day 4: Weave scarf

- Start weaving.
- You may find it helpful for the kids to use a heavy, 1" strip of paper for a spacer, but mostly the kids than just leave the space between woven sections. It doesn't need to be exact, because it all moves around in the finishing process.
- To felt the scarves, they will need to be felted in the washing machine. Check every few minutes and remove when sufficiently felted.



Day 5: Finish scarf

- Generally for a felted scarf, we trim the fringes, as they are a bit ratty from the washing process.
- Steam press the fabric.
- Take a photo of the kids with their finished scarves.

Additional activities to break up the day or for fast finishers.

- 8-strand braiding technique for a friendship bracelet. 3/2 pearl cotton is a good choice for this.
- Coaster mat with stir sticks and string.
- How to make a woven tie magnet

