

African Art



Four African art projects to learn more about life in Africa and standing together with our global neighbours



Introduction

Hello children

This booklet invites you to get creative and enjoy some art projects inspired by the wonderful continent of Africa.

As some of you are not in school at the moment, I have tried, as far as possible, to limit the need for lots of equipment that you may not have at home.

Art, whether it's painting, modelling, dancing or singing, is something that is enjoyed across the world. It is something that we all share.

The Covid 19 pandemic has affected every country on Earth. People across the world have been isolated, scared and sometimes poorly.



But there is good news. Different countries are now working together to help each other, care for each other and pray for each other.

In your school this year, many of you will have been involved in the diocesan 'Standing Together' project. You may have completed work in your school about the holocaust, Black Lives Matter or perhaps you made a peace pole.

All these projects help us to learn that, by standing together, we can play a small part in creating peace and unity across the world.

Each of the art projects below remind us of that important message. I hope that you enjoy them.

Sue

Sue Bowen

Diocesan Schools Advisor

Paper Weaving



Africa is famous for its traditional colourful fabrics which have been worn by people for hundreds of years and are still popular today.

Look carefully at the African textiles above. These pictures were taken in an African market. Which textile draws your attention the most?

Many African women wear their most colourful outfits to church on Sundays. Worship is seen as a celebration of life and love of God. Wearing your best clothes is a sign of respect.

These patterns can also be seen on other materials. Look at the wooden posts pictured here inside a restaurant in Rwanda's capital city, Kigali.



The patterns are usually repeating designs using bold colours and simple shapes. Follow the steps below and have a go at creating your own African pattern. The pattern will be repeated by weaving strips of paper to create the design.

1. Use 2 pieces of paper measuring 10cm by 10cm create two mini sample patterns. Use simple designs such as zigzags, diamonds and circles. You may find it easier to practise first on scrap paper by copying some of the designs above. You will need to work neatly in pencil first, then complete your sample work using coloured pencils or felt tips. For example, you may fill one paper with lines of blue and red zig zags and the other with green and red circles in a spiral.

2. When your samples are complete, you will need two A4 sheets of paper. Divide each page, using a ruler into equal strips for the patterning you have chosen to do from your sample.

DO NOT CUT OUT YOUR STRIPS YET.

3. On each of the different strips, create your pattern, first in pencil. Draw your pencil lines in lightly in case you need to make adjustments.

4. Once your designs are complete, begin cutting your strips on the straight and equal lines you have created with your ruler.

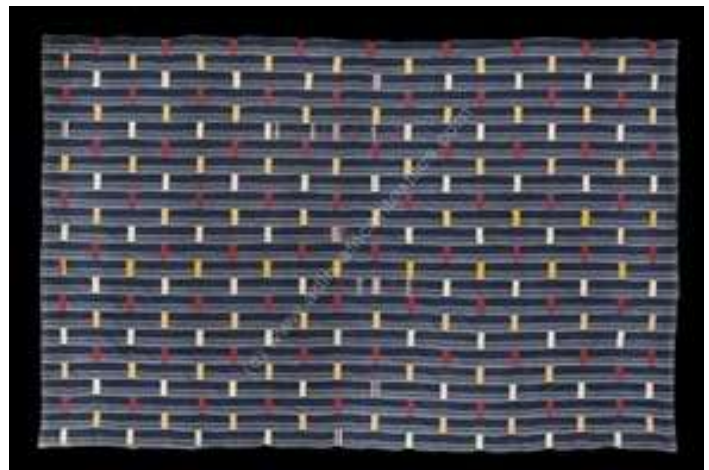
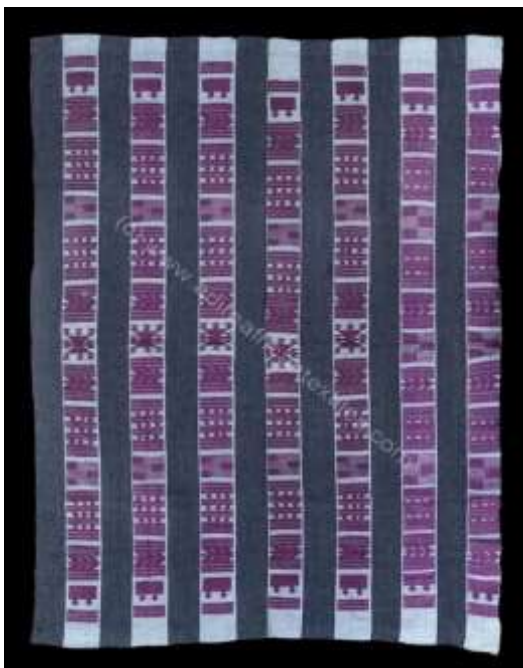
5. Now comes the best part. Experiment with the placement of your strips. How do you want your strips to interweave – two blue strips then one red one or three red ones and then one blue? It is up to you. Then start weaving your strips in and out to create your design.

6. Take a step back from your finished work and add any extra details to finalize your design.

Ask yourself:

Do my designs look like the prints made in African culture?

Could I use the colours from two countries' flags and weave them together to show unity?



Simple Figures



Look at the picture above. It shows hundreds of people standing together.

What is the first thing that grabs your attention?

What do you think they are standing together for?

What do you notice about the colours?

How are lines and shapes used in this picture?

Would you describe these paintings as realistic or abstract?

This piece of art hangs in the entrance to a luxury hotel in Africa. It has a price tag of more than £2000. The picture is on canvas and the people are made simple triangles of cloth with painted heads, legs and arms.

The picture is dramatic but actually very easy to create. It looks effective because of the number of people it shows standing together. You can imagine

where all the people in the painting might be – worshipping in a church? Chatting in a busy marketplace? Or are they perhaps children in an African school playground?

Here is how to create a picture like this:

1. Decide what you could use for your base – a canvas, a piece of card or a piece of paper.
2. Ideally you will need scrap pieces of cloth for the bodies, maybe your parents or teacher could let you have some old cloths or clothes that you could cut up. It would be great if they were bright colours. If not, you could cut out colourful triangles using old magazines or comics. Alternatively, you could just use plain paper, cut triangles and create African patterns on each one using crayons or felt tips. (see above for design ideas)
3. The size of the triangles will depend on the size of your base and how many people you want to have on your picture. Try to have enough to make it look like a crowd.
4. Once you have cut out your triangles, arrange them on your base until you are happy with your design. The closer together the people are the better it will look but remember to leave enough space for arms and legs. It doesn't matter if your arms and legs will overlap each other. Now glue down each triangle. Make sure that the glue is spread to all the edges to stop them sticking up.
5. Next use black paint or a felt tip to draw head on the top of each triangle. If you are using paint, this can be a fingerprint.



6. Next you will need to paint/draw on the arms and legs. Use could use a ruler for this to get them straight. If you are using paint, you can use black paint to paint the thin edge of a piece of card (from a cardboard box) and print on the arms and legs. It is tricky but you do get a nice straight line.

Remember that your figures will have more impact if they are simple, There is no need to add hands and feet.



You can use different coloured backgrounds to adapt this technique and create different kinds of pictures.



Adinkra Printing

Adinkra is a type of cloth worn in Western Africa. It is a printed grid pattern made up of combed grid lines and a small shape printed in the squares.

You will need:

Black paint

Paper

A small potato

Wide toothed comb

1. To make the grid pour some paint into a paper plate or tray.
2. Dip the comb deep in the paint so that most of the length of the teeth are covered.
3. Drag the comb along the paper, turning the comb over and adding more paint when needed until you have drawn a grid pattern.
4. Cut the potato in half and cut out a design from one side. Try to think of a simple shape that could stand for unity – a heart, a cross, two stick people standing together
5. Dip your potato in the paint and stamp the design in the centre of your grid.

