

# **Dreamcatcher Activity**

## **History & Instructions Handout**

Long ago in the days of the ancestors, some of the children of the people were having strange, frightening dreams. As the children talked to other children, the troubling dreams spread among them like the plague. The parents of the children were concerned. The people wanted their children to be happy but they didn't know what to do. The people went to talk to the shaman.

The shaman listened patiently as the parents told him about their distress. The shaman told the parents that he could help. But he would need to spend some time in counsel with the spirits before he would have a solution. The shaman would have to enter the dream world to find the answer. Upon entering the dream world the shaman was approached by the four elements: Air, Earth, Water and Fire.

Air had already heard of the parent's concern, and had carried the message on the wind to the other elements.

All spirits in the dream world loved the children and wanted to help return the children to their state of peaceful sleep. The elements and the shaman dreamed together for a long time. They finally came to understand that:

- Air could carry the children's dreams.
- Earth could hold the dreams within her hoop.
- Water could wash and separate dreams - the wanted from the unwanted.
- Fire could use the morning sun to burn up the unwanted dreams that are caught in the web.

Now all they needed was something to capture the dreams as they were carried by the air. Try as they might, the shaman and the elements could not think of a way to catch the dreams.

Grandmother spider had been listening! She said, " Beautiful, loving elements, I can help you as you help me every day. I can weave a special web that only wanted dreams can escape down to the dreamer."

And so she did, and the first Dreamcatcher was made.

The shaman brought the dreamcatcher with him when he made his journey back from the dream world. All of the families of the people made dreamcatchers. The families hung them above where the children slept, in a place that was seen by the sun. No longer were the children troubled by unwanted dreams.

Instead they had happy dreams and peaceful sleep.

And so, at last, Great Spirit looked into the dreams of the children and smiled...

## **DREAMCATCHERS**

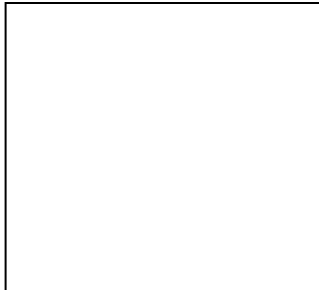
Dreamcatchers are an authentic tradition of the Ojibwe tribe. Ojibwe people would tie sinew strands in a web around a small round or tear-shaped frame, in a somewhat similar pattern to how they tied webbing for their snowshoes, and hang this dreamcatcher to protect sleeping children from nightmares, as we just read. They often have feathers and beads hanging from the netting. We are going to create our own dreamcatchers! Take a look at some examples I have provided to you.

# Dreamcatcher Instructions

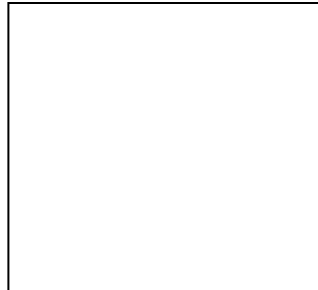
## Step 1:

Decide on the design of your dreamcatcher - use these thumbnail sketch boxes to plan it out. You can use beads, feathers, and string to make a very unique design. You can have 4 strings that hang down or just one.

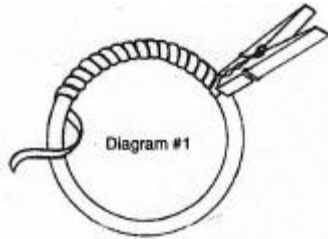
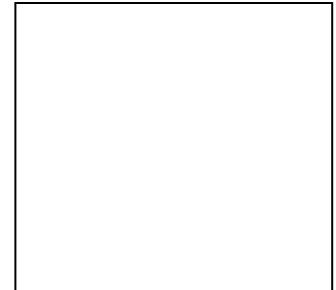
**Thumbnail Sketch #1**



**Thumbnail Sketch #2**

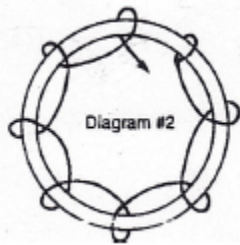


**Thumbnail Sketch #3**



## Step 2:

Use white glue and glue one end of the string/jute to the ring. Hold it in place with a little piece of masking tape (instead of a clothes pin as seen in Diagram #1).



## Step 3:

Wrap the string/jute around the entire ring. Keep it nice and tight and don't let there be any parts of the ring showing (see Diagram #2).

## Step 4:

Using a double knot, tie your long piece of waxed string to the inside top of the ring. Keep the string a ball or wrapped around a small piece of paper so you can easily fish it through.



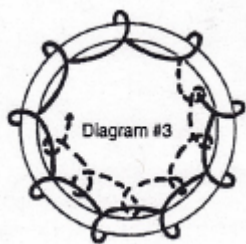
**Diagram #2b:**

## Step 5:

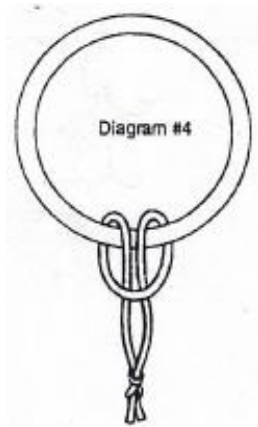
Anchor the waxed string using a half-hitch knot about 2 inches to the left of the starting point as shown in Diagram 2b. Continue anchoring every 2 inches or so around the whole hoop.

## Step 6:

When you get back to the beginning, continue anchoring on the string you just finished anchoring and continue like this until you only have a small hole left in the middle that you can stick a couple of fingers in (Diagram 3).



**You can add beads as you go if you want beads in the middle of your dreamcatcher.** Use a double knot to finish.



**Step 7:**

Take the small piece of masking tape off. Decide where the top of your dreamcatcher is and use a piece of string or Jute to make a hanger (Diagram 4).

**Step 8:**

Attach short strips of string or jute using the Diagram 4 method to the bottom and/or sides of the dreamcatcher. Attach beads and feathers to these strings using this method:

