

Gourd Painting: Step-by-step Instructions

Technique Discussion: Cleaning the gourd can be a dirty job. The students will use a cleaning mixture made of bleach and water. When the gourd is cut, it might smell. This is normal. The students will be using acrylic paints which will stain, so a smock or a set of old clothes is recommended.

Activity:

Supplies: Dried gourds, a handsaw, acrylic paint, acrylic varnish, paintbrushes (some fine), a separate brush for acrylic varnish, water, rags, bleach, sponges, tape, scissors, pencils or fine tip black marker, [Flower Pattern](#), [Sun Pattern](#)

Time: 2 - 40 minute classes with a 3rd class of 15 minutes to acrylic varnish work

Note to Instructor: Be prepared to use the saw for the students. The needed size of the patterns depends on the size of the gourds. The image can be reduced in size to fit.

Instructor Prep work: To save time, the gourds can be soaked in large buckets filled with bleach water. Soak the gourds for about ½ hour and set out to dry.

Part 1: Preparing the gourd (optional for students)

1. Gently clean the gourd with a bleach water solution. Allow to dry. Use a fine sand paper to sand the surface, removing any visible blemishes.
2. Using a handsaw or sharp knife, cut the gourd to create a bowl shape. Wearing a dust mask is advisable.
3. Remove the seeds and pulp from the inside of the gourd. Gently scrap the inside with a spoon, and then sand the interior and edges smooth.
4. Optional: Apply a wood sealer, such as Thompson's, to both the inside and outside of the gourd. Allow a week to dry. This should be done prior to painting.

Part 2: Painting the gourd

1. Select a pattern and cut out the outlined pieces.

[Flower Pattern](#): continue by cutting out the center and petals. With tape place the center on the bottom of the bowl and trace. Place the petals around the center and trace. Doing this allows the flower to fit into the curve of the bowl.

[Sun Pattern](#): Cut out the sun pattern. There are "slit" lines that can be cut to fit the sun into the different size bowls. Once the slits are cut the pattern can be overlapped and taped. Refer to *Sun Pattern* for detailed instructions.

2. Trace patterns onto the gourd, inside, outside or both, with a pencil or fine tipped marker.
3. Paint the outline black with a fine brush, then allow time to dry.
4. Fill in the painting with a variety of color choices, then allow time to dry
5. Apply varnish all over the gourd.
6. Allow to dry for one week.