Smocked Friendship Bracelet

a Kids Can Stitch Program
Smocked Friendship Bracelet

The purpose of this Kids Can Stitch program is to introduce children to smocking. It is my hope that most children would leave with a completed project. If only the first 2 rows of the plate are completed, however, the bracelet should still be wearable. Smocking may not seem like beginning stitching; but in many ways, this project is easier than embroidering on a flat surface because the child can see exactly where to put the stitches.

Materials for each bracelet

- Grosgrain ribbon 10” x 7/8” (I used polyester for the prototype, but I’m looking for cotton; I think it would be easier to work with)
- #5 darnar
- 3 different colors of 6-strand floss (18” of each) or a yard each of #8 pearl cotton (the pearl cotton is much easier to work with). **TIP**—For youthful color combinations, check out the wallpaper books geared toward teens. Boys might also like colors from local sport teams.
- Elastic, about 4” (Dritz makes some really cute, patterned ½” elastic; it is soft, stretchy, and doesn’t fray.)
- Upholstery or other strong thread for pleating
- Sewing machine, machine needle, and thread (matching the ribbon)
- 3” x 3” heavy cardboard (to hold piece while smocking)
- **TIP**—I added a small pin cushion to the kit for the last class I taught. It was a great help in minding the needles, and good for the kids to learn from the start to park the needle in the right place.

Assemble bracelets prior to class

- Cut ribbon into 10” strips
- Pleat 5, half-space rows using strong thread
- Count out the 34 center pleats; release excess pleats with pleating threads pulled to the back.
- Tie off pleats tightly. The pleated area should be about 2.5” long. Tie neatly and evenly. If the student doesn’t finish all rows or if the final stitching is not quite adequate for holding the pleats, the pleating threads can remain to hold the work in place. That way, the child will still leave with a wearable item. **TIP**—the polyester ribbon doesn’t want to stay pleated, so the smocking has to be tighter than usual to hold the pleats in place.
- Trim unpleated ends to ½”
- On each end, fold end corners to the back, so ends form a point. Pin in place.
- With wrong side of ribbon up, slide elastic (right side up) under folded end (about ¼"

- Fold elastic to the right side over its folded end and the raw edges of the ribbon, and stitch around the point and across the end to form a triangle.

- Repeat for the other side.
- Slide the pleated bracelet onto the 3” cardboard, so it’s ready for smocking when it comes out of the kit.
- Smocked tightly, this size bracelet should work for the average 10-14 year old. You might consider making a couple slightly smaller or larger based on the children who sign up for your class. If you had a sewing machine ready, you could quickly stitch under a bit of the elastic if the bracelet is too large when it’s done.
- Since these are friendship bracelets, it would be nice if each child could finish one and take one to finish at home for a friend (they would also need extra floss).

Things to consider before the day of class

- Have kids register ahead, so you have an idea of how many and what age. Ask if the child is right or left-handed (The “Smocking the Wave” handout is specific). If you have a really large group, consider having two classes instead of one (unless they are all together, like a Brownie troop).
- If you can’t seem to find kids, send a flyer to local schools, contact scout troops (even boys), get in touch with homeschoolers.
- Always have extra kits to encourage siblings, parents, or friends to join in.
- Make sure the venue you choose is kid friendly!
- Make sure you have more time than you think you will need!

Contents of Prepared Kits
- Handout including:
  - Cover picture
  - "Smocking a Wave" for right or left hand
  - "Stitching Instructions"
  - "How to Read a Smocking Graph"
- Assembled bracelet on cardboard
- #5 darners in felt or pin cushion
- 3 colors of floss or pearl cotton

Additional Supplies

- Pin cushion (optional but very helpful)
- Scissors (Have kids bring scissors or have appropriate scissors available for thread cutting)

Getting started

- Each child should get a kit and a name tag.
- Introduce yourself, the program, and SAGA.
- Look at everything in the kit (They'll have it all out by now anyway!). Put away what you don't need to start.
- Show the children a piece of pleated fabric and a pleater, so they know how the pleats got there. Introduce the "How to Read a Smocking Plate" handout. It illustrates the vocabulary.
- If you have novice stitchers, they may need help stripping floss (unless you use pearl cotton—my preference!), threading needles, and knotting the ends.
- If you have a small group and ample helpers, you may be able to just demonstrate the wave one-on-one which is optimum. Kids love one-on-one attention. If you have a larger group, you should direct the students to the "Smocking a Wave" handout (this handout is right and left hand specific—it's the only one). Some of the kids will likely be able to work it out for themselves. You can also demonstrate on a large scale using wide striped fabric. I found some fabric intended for making flags with 2" strips that works great. You could treat the darker strips as pleats and the lighter ones as vallleys. An 8" or 10" upholstery needle substitutes for the danner and yarn for the floss.
- I have not made a provision for practicing before starting the bracelet. Feel free to provide each child with some pleated fabric for practice if you wish. I didn't think it would be necessary.
- Be positive above all else. We want these kids to come back!
- When you think the kids are ready, move to the "Stitching Instructions" which are specifically for the bracelet project. The "Stitching Instructions" handout does not repeat the stitch mechanics illustrated on the "Smocking the Wave" handout. It merely shows and explains row and color placement.
• Have fun and be flexible. Each group is different.
Smocking a Wave (Right Hand)

1. To begin, bring the needle and thread up through a valley.

2. Turn the needle parallel to the guide row and stitch from right to left through the top of the first pleat to the left. Pick up about the top 1/3 of the pleat.

3. Again, keeping the needle parallel to the guide row, take another stitch in the same direction through the next pleat to the right. This creates a down cable to anchor the wave at the base. Always keep the thread loop down below the needle to create a down cable across 2 pleats.
4. Always keeping the needle parallel to the pleating threads, move one pleat to the right and up to the next guide row. Stitch though the new pleat from right to left. Keep the needle up above the thread loop when traveling up.

5. Again, keeping the needle parallel to the guide row, take another stitch in the same direction through the next pleat to the right. Always keep the thread loop up above the needle to create an up cable across 2 pleats to anchor the wave at the top.

6. Travel back down to the original guide row and move over one pleat to the right. Keep the needle down below the thread loop. When traveling, the needle (not the loop) always leads the way. Again stitch through the top 1/3 of the pleat.
7. Just like before, move one pleat to the right and stitch through that pleat from right to left, keeping the thread loop down below the needle to create another down cable.

8. By moving the cable stitches up and down instead of keeping them on the same guide row, you create a zig-zag pattern called a **wave**. Here, the top and bottom of the wave are exactly one row apart. Waves aren’t always one row high. Sometimes, the wave might cover only ½ or ¼ the height of the row; sometimes, it might be as high as 2 rows. Regardless of height, it’s still called a wave.
Smocking a Wave (Left Hand)

1. To begin, bring the needle and thread up through a valley.

2. Turn the needle parallel to the guide row and stitch from left to right through the top of the first pleat to the right. Pick up about the top 1/3 of the pleat.

3. Again, keeping the needle parallel to the guide row, take another stitch in the same direction through the next pleat to the left. This creates a down cable to anchor the wave at the base. Always keep the thread loop down below the needle to create a down cable across 2 pleats.
4. Always keeping the needle parallel to the pleating threads, move one pleat to the left and up to the next guide row. Stitch though the new pleat from left to right. Keep the needle up above the thread loop when traveling up.

5. Again, keeping the needle parallel to the guide row, take another stitch in the same direction through the next pleat to the left. Always keep the thread loop up above the needle to create an **up cable** across 2 pleats to anchor the wave at the top.

6. Travel back down to the original guide row and move over one pleat to the left. Keep the needle down below the thread loop. When traveling, the needle (not the loop) always leads the way. Again stitch through the top 1/3 of the pleat.
7. Just like before, move one pleat to the left and stitch through that pleat from left to right, keeping the thread loop down below the needle to create another down cable.

8. By moving the cable stitches up and down instead of keeping them on the same guide row, you create a zig-zag pattern called a wave. Here, the top and bottom of the wave are exactly one row apart. Waves aren’t always one row high. Sometimes, the wave might cover only \( \frac{1}{2} \) or \( \frac{1}{4} \) the height of the row; sometimes, it might be as high as 2 rows. Regardless of height, it’s still called a wave.
How to Read a Smocking Graph

The horizontal lines (they look like black dashed lines here) indicate guide rows. They are the pleating threads which hold the pleats in place until you add decorative stitching on the right side or backsmocking on the wrong side. Pleating threads usually aren’t removed until all the smocking is complete. You should try not to catch the pleating threads with the needle while doing the decorative stitching; but even if you do, it’s not a disaster! This example has 5 guide rows.

The wide green lines in the illustration represent the pleats. Most smocking graphs don’t show them in color; sometimes they are just white, but they will always be shown wider than the valleys.

The skinny grey lines represent the valleys. They are the space between the pleats where the fabric dips down below the pleating thread.

This is what it looks like from the side

Valley
Guide row
Pleating thread

Pleats on the right side of the fabric. Sometimes they stick up higher than the pleats on the wrong side.

Pleats on the wrong side of the fabric. Sometimes they don’t stick up as high as the pleats on the right side.
Stitching Instructions

1. Start at row 2. Using 3 strands of floss or 1 strand of #8 pearl cotton, come up between the first and second pleats from the left (or from the right if you are left-handed). Follow the instructions in "Smocking a Wave" to complete a wave between rows 2 and 3. You should begin and end on row 2.

2. Next, use the same color and start at row 4. Come up between the first and second pleats from the left and work to the end moving between rows 4 and 3. You should begin and end on row 4.

3. Change to your second color. Work another row of waves just like you did in step 1. But this time, begin at row 1, and work the stitches between rows 1 and 2. You should begin and end on row 1.
4. Begin at row 5 and work another row of waves with color 2 between rows 5 and 4. You should begin and end on row 5.

5. Switch to color 3. The last color is a bit trickier because you will overlap the first 2 colors. With the last color, you will fill in the spaces between the waves that are already there. Start at row 3 and work a wave row just like before, but move all the way down to row 1. The last color waves will be 2 rows high instead of 1. Begin and end on row 3.

6. Finally, add the second row of the third color. This row will be a mirror image of the previous row. Again, start at row 3, but move up to row 5 instead of down. You should begin and end on row 3.
You’re done!! Congratulations, you learned the smocked wave!
KIDS CAN STITCH SAFETY GUIDELINES

1. Children should be supervised at all times.
2. Children should use round end scissors. When/if using small sharp embroidery scissors, children should be seated and closely supervised.
3. Have an appropriate means to handle pins and needles. This could include a flannel sheet to cover the table so items don’t roll onto the floor, a pin cushion or piece of felt to hold pins and needles, and perhaps a sewing kit to keep everything together.
4. If ironing is required for the project, it should either be done by an adult or a closely supervised child.
5. Have an emergency kit on hand.
6. Provide bathroom breaks and have an adult escort the child to the bathroom.
7. Make sure to have the Kids Can Stitch permission slip signed.
8. If you are providing snacks, be sure to inquire about allergies.
9. Instruction when using sewing machines should include a hand placement demonstration to avoid injury.

November 28, 2014
KIDS CAN STITCH PROGRAM

PARENT PERMISSION

I give my child permission to participate in the Kids Can Stitch Program.

__________________________  ______________________  ____________
Student's Name               Age                              Date

__________________________  ______________________  ______________________
Parent/Guardian’s Name (Please print) Signature Date

__________________________  ______________________  ______________________
Home Address City Zip Code

__________________________  ______________________  ______________________
Home Phone Work Phone Cell Phone

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In case of emergency please contact:

__________________________  ______________________
Name Relationship Phone

__________________________  ______________________
Name Relationship Phone

List any/all allergies ____________________________

RELEASE OF LIABILITY

I understand that the Kids Can Stitch Program involves the use of needles, pins, scissors, sewing machines, and other sharp objects that could cause injury to my child. I assume the risk that is inherent with allowing my child to participate in the Kids Can Stitch Program. I understand that The Smocking Arts Guild of America (SAGA), and __________________________, a Chapter associated with SAGA, assume no responsibility or liability for injuries/illnesses of my child. I further understand that I hold SAGA and the __________________________ Chapter of SAGA, its Board of Directors, agents, employees, and volunteers harmless from any and all liability or claims which may arise out of my child’s participation in the Kids Can Stitch Program.

Signature of Parent/Guardian ____________________________ Date ____________________
KIDS CAN STITCH PROGRAM

STUDENT RELEASE PICK UP POLICY

As parent/guardian of ________________________ I understand that the Kids Can Stitch

Student’s Name

Program will begin at _______________ and will end by _______________. In order to be
released at the end of the program, the above named student MUST be signed out by the
parent/guardian or by one of the individuals listed below.

__________________________________________

Parent/Guardian’s Signature

Date

When I am unable to pick up my child, I give permission to the following people to pick up my child:

__________________________________________

Name/Relationship

Phone Number

__________________________________________

Name/Relationship

Phone Number

__________________________________________

Name/Relationship

Phone Number

PHOTO/VIDEOTAPEING RELEASE

During your child’s attendance in the Kids Can Stitch Program, s/he may be participating in an
activity that is being photographed or videotaped; these photographs/video recordings may be used
for promotional purposes.

My child ___ may ___ may not be photographed/videotaped by the program for promotional
purposes.

As parent/guardian, I understand that I hold SAGA, and

__________________________________________, a Chapter associated with SAGA, its Board
of Directors, agents, employees and volunteers harmless from any and all liability or claims
which may arise out of or in connection with my child’s being photographed or videotaped while
participating in the Kids Can Stitch Program.

__________________________________________

Parent/Guardian’s Signature

Date

11-18-14
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