

# MANDALAS

- *green file folder containing patterns and samples of mandalas*
- *2 activity cards*

## **Items that may need purchasing by borrower:**

- *clear stones*
- *colored pencils*
- *paper adhesive gloss (glue)*
- *felt pieces*

*You will also need scissors for this activity.*

## Creating a Mandala Stone

Mandala, loosely translated from Sanskrit, means "circle," and is used in some cultures as a means of centering, focusing and contemplation.

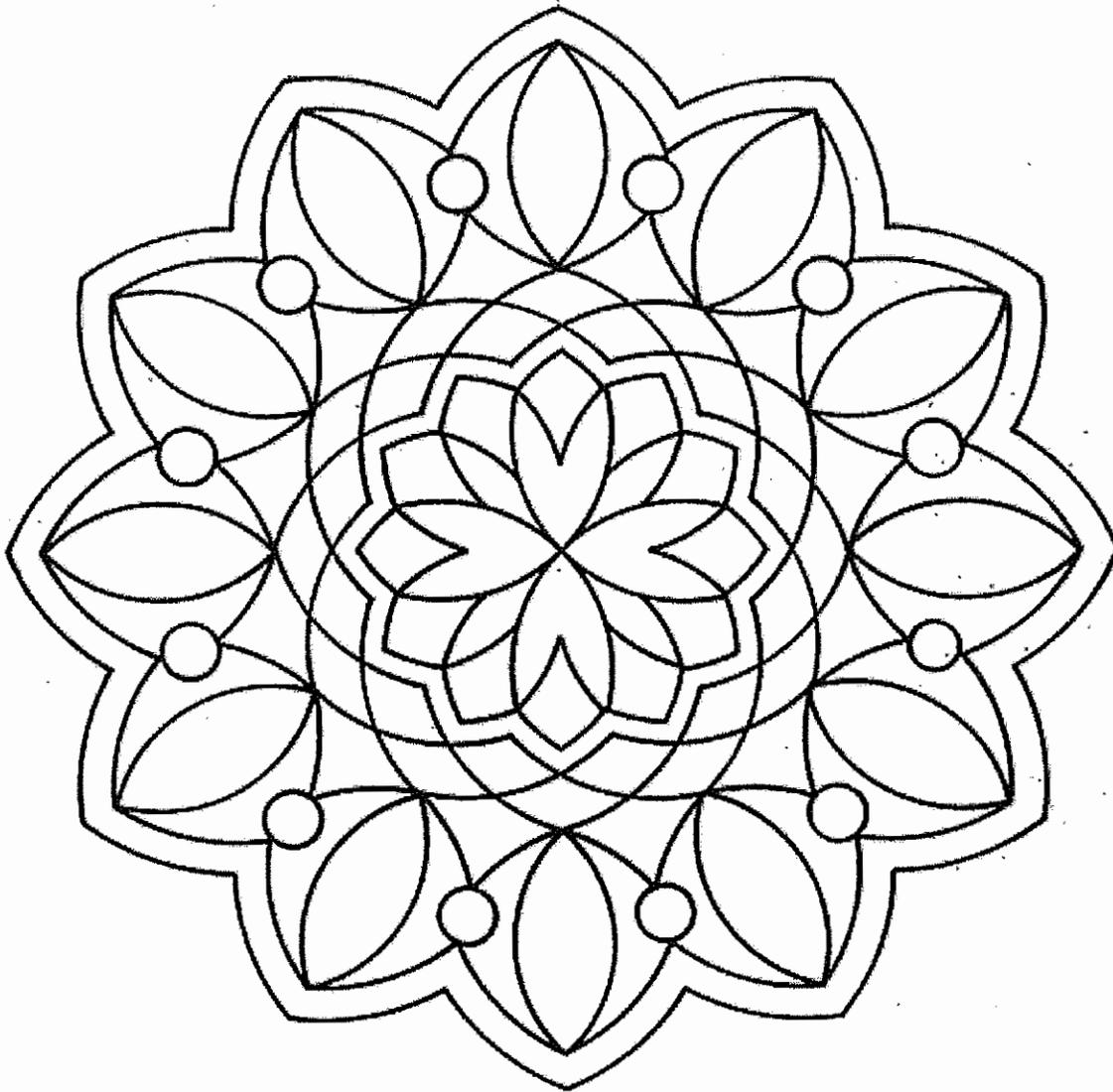
*As you experience the beauty of the mandala through creating your own unique design, or by coloring a copy, let the colors and symbols open your mind and heart towards God.*

1. Before you begin, invite God to join you in the process by praying in a way that is comfortable for you.
2. Close your eyes for a moment, clear your mind, and relax your body.
3. Open your eyes and choose a color to begin. You may almost feel as if a color chooses you.
4. Draw a circle on the center of the paper by tracing the circle pattern with a pencil.  
OR... Use one of the patterns provided.
5. Fill in the circle with color and form. Follow your intuitive impulses and allow the drawing to grow by itself.
6. Cut out the circle. (If using a pattern, center a glass stone on it and trace around the stone.)
7. Spread a little glue on the bottom of the glass stone, and place your paper circle over the glue, with the design towards the stone and showing through the glass. Let dry for a moment, and then glue a felt circle over the paper.
8. Look at your mandala and prayerfully reflect on it. Can you think of a title? What words or feelings come to mind as you consider colors and shapes?

Adapted from *Drawing to God: Art as Prayer, Prayer as Art*, by Jeri Gerding

Coloring mandalas is a relaxing activity that helps us feel centered and peaceful. This explains why it appeals to children and parents, the elderly, therapists and teachers, and those in the health and healing professions. It is a perfect activity for anyone who seeks relaxation, quiet and inner peace.

Here is a sample mandala from *Everyone's Mandala Coloring Book, Vol. 1*. Print it if you wish and color it. (Note: The actual size of each mandala is 8" x 8"; this printout may be smaller.) You'll find that coloring a mandala is very different from coloring, say, a flower.



## THE MANDALA

"Mandala" comes from the classical Indian language of Sanskrit, and loosely translated means "circle." Khyil-khor is the Tibetan word for mandala and means "center of the Universe in which a fully awakened being abides." Circles suggest wholeness and unity. The mandala is a design that devotees of meditation use for centering, focusing and contemplation. Each aspect of the mandala has significance.

Mandalas are found in many cultures and often used for sacred purposes. Individual designs vary greatly, but always have the following characteristics: a center, cardinal points that can be contained in a circle, and usually some form of symmetry. Tibetan mandalas are used for meditation. The process of creating the mandala is as important as the finished product, and it takes years to gain the skill and knowledge required to create a mandala. Indians in the Americas have created medicine wheels and sand mandalas. A Navajo sandpainting ritual may last from five to nine days and range in size from three to fifteen feet or more. Hildegard von Bingen, a Christian nun in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, created mandalas to express her visions and beliefs. From buddhist stupas to Muslim mosques and Christian cathedrals, structures build around a center is a common architectural theme.

For more on mandalas, check out --

*Creating Mandalas*, by Susanne F. Fincher

*Mandala: Luminous Symbols for Healing*, by Judith Cornell

*The Theory and Practice of the Mandala*, by Giuseppe Tucci

*Native American Mandalas*, by Klaus Holitzka

*Tibetan Mandalas*, by Tatjana Blau

## SETTING UP THE MANDALA ART CENTER

### Supplies needed

Squares of white paper and a circle pattern to trace

Sheets of mandala patterns to color

Colored pencils, pencil sharpener

Clear glass stones (Clear Jumbo Gems, found at JoAnn Fabrics)

Scissors

Clear acrylic adhesive - USArtQuest Perfect Paper Adhesive, Gloss (found at Michael's)

Felt

- Use a round table if possible, place cloth circle in middle of table and arrange directions on the cloth.
- Set supplies around the table

# Mandala

Before you begin, invite God to join you in this process by briefly praying in a way that is comfortable for you. Close your eyes for a moment in order to clear your mind and try to relax your body.

Open your eyes and choose a color to begin. You may almost feel as if a color chooses you. Next, draw a circle on the center of your paper by tracing around the dinner plate with a pencil. You may use a colored pencil to trace the circle in your chosen color if you prefer.

Begin to fill in the circle with color and form. You may begin in the center or around the edges. Although it is fine if recognizable images, such as suns, flowers, or rainbows appear in your mandala, do not consciously try to draw them. Remember to follow your intuitive impulses and allow the drawing to grow by itself. Use colored pencils along with the crayons or pastels if you want to include fine lines or small details. Work until you feel the mandala is completed.

Now turn the drawing, looking at it from all angles until you find a proper orientation that "feels right" and mark the top of your drawing with a small "t".

Mark the date on the back of the mandala, and if you do more than one in the same day, indicate the sequence.

Look at your mandala for a few minutes, perhaps from a distance, and see if you can think of a title that reflects your first impression of the work. Note it on your writing paper.

You may also decide to list the colors you have used and then write your associations (words, feelings, objects, memories, etc.) that come to mind as you consider color. You may also repeat this step, concentrating on the shapes in the design. Another idea is to pretend you are very small and are able to magically walk across the surface of the drawing and note your impressions as you go. If you allow your imagination free reign, different sensations of touch, temperature, road blocks, forbidden zones, and other unexpected experiences can emerge as you travel around the paper.

Attempt to express the central theme of your mandala, writing a few sentences. This can be derived from both the title and the associations. Be sure to record your final interpretation on the back of the mandala for future reference.

Sometimes the meaning of a mandala will be immediately evident. Sometimes it will be difficult, if not impossible, to come up with any verbal interpretation. Sometimes coming back to the same drawing a month or a year later will reveal fresh insights. Each time the experience is different and has its own value.

After you have made a few mandalas and are comfortable with the process, feel free to follow your own inclinations if you wish to deviate from the directions given here. You might find that initially, instead of choosing one color to begin, you want to pick two or three or even a handful. You might want to fill in the area outside of the circle or decorate its edges with a border design. You might want to begin with a smaller or larger circle. Just be careful to follow the basic format, which is to work in an unplanned and spontaneous fashion, using intuitive impulses to guide your choices. Don't stop to analyze until you are finished and, above all, don't try to make a pretty picture. Any time you try to force an outcome, you are pushing God out of the process.