



“creating light”

Craft Event Resource

This Christmas, you can help young women become guiding lights in their communities, leading the way out of poverty.

Kurigram, in Northern Bangladesh, is one of the country's poorest and most disaster-prone regions. Life there is challenging and, for women in particular, opportunities are extremely limited. But now, things are changing for the better, as women are becoming powerful forces for change in their communities thanks to the work of Christian Aid.

Looking back, 21-year-old **Kakoli Khatun**, who lives in Kurigram, remembers, 'I didn't have any dreams a few years ago... To do something, I had to ask for money from my brothers and father.' Now, Kakoli splits her time running a successful business, while studying for a college degree.

Kakoli has found community in an extraordinary group of gifted women – artisans and entrepreneurs – who've set up a business to sell their beautiful craftwork online. Your coffee and craft event could help raise funds to enable more women like Kakoli to explore their potential and reshape their future.



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Three of the women featured in this year's Christmas Appeal are artisans creating beadwork, clothing and traditional Bengali Nakshi Kantha (quilts) which they can now sell online. One woman is running a community vegetable garden. Inspired by their creativity and hands-on approach, we want to encourage you to engage your community in crafting for their cause this Christmas, and this guide is designed to help you to do that.

Khaleda Begum received e-commerce training and is now teaching other women, while also focusing on her beadwork business, which she describes as 'the best thing in my life'. She now has a team of 10 and has been able to invest her earnings in education and livestock for her family.

In order to focus on Khaleda's story, you could run a beaded bracelet making workshop. Beads are a very inexpensive craft resource and beaded bracelets are very popular at the moment (thank you Taylor Swift!), so this would be a great activity for all ages.

The title of our Christmas Appeal this year is 'Time to Shine'. You might want to include the word 'shine' or 'light' or 'hope' spelled out in beads, as a reminder for the wearer about the projects that their involvement has helped support.



Crafting together is such a community-building experience. It's relaxing and mindful, but also affords us time to chat with one another. We would love to encourage you to use some of that time to talk about Khaleda and the other women featured in our Christmas appeal.

You can find out more on our website:
www.christianaid.ie/christmas-appeal

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Bracelet Making

You will need:

- Elastic beading cord
- Beads (glass beads are less environmentally impactful)
- Beading tray
- Bead stopper
- Large eye beading needle
- Jewelry glue



1 Measure your wrist, so you know what size bracelet to make. For reference, a small adult wrist is 7" around, a medium wrist is 8", and a large wrist is 9".

TIP: use a double strand of elastic to make stretch bracelets to give the bracelet extra strength.

Cut a length of cord that's twice as long as your wrist measurement, plus 12 inches. In other words: measure your wrist circumference, multiply by two, and add 12 extra inches.

2 Secure the end of the cord. Fold the cord in half, so you're working with a doubled length of cord. If you are using a beading needle, add it to the folded end. Place a bead stopper or binder clip on the cord ends so that the beads don't slide off as you string them. If you don't have a bead stopper or binder clip, you can fold a small piece of tape around the ends of the cord.



3 Lay out your beads. Arrange the beads in order before you start to string them on the elastic cord. Beading trays are great for keeping your beads from rolling around the table while you plan your design.

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Bracelet Making

4 String the beads onto the cord. If the holes of the beads are large enough, you may string them by hand. Hold the end of the cord in one hand, and use your other hand to place the beads onto the cord. If the bead holes are smaller, you may need to use a needle to make stringing easier.

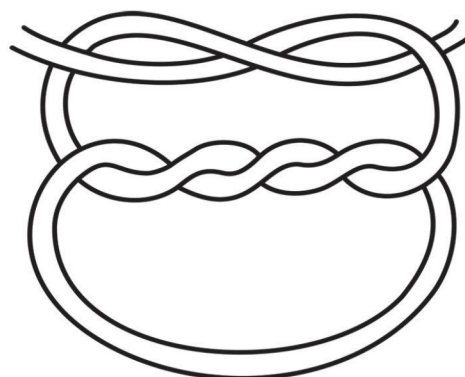
TIP: Try to put the bead with the largest hole on the cord first.

Keep adding beads until you have enough. Check the length periodically by wrapping the strung beads around your wrist. You don't want it to be too tight or too loose.



5 Tie a knot to secure the beading cord. Once you've added enough beads, knot the ends of the elastic cord together.

TIP: Instead of tying a regular overhead knot, secure the ends of the cord with a surgeon's knot.



SURGEON'S KNOT

6 Secure the knot with glue. Hold the beads away from the knot, and apply a small dab of glue to the knot. Once the glue has dried, gently stretch each cord end, and use small sharp scissors to trim the excess cord as close to the bead as you can.



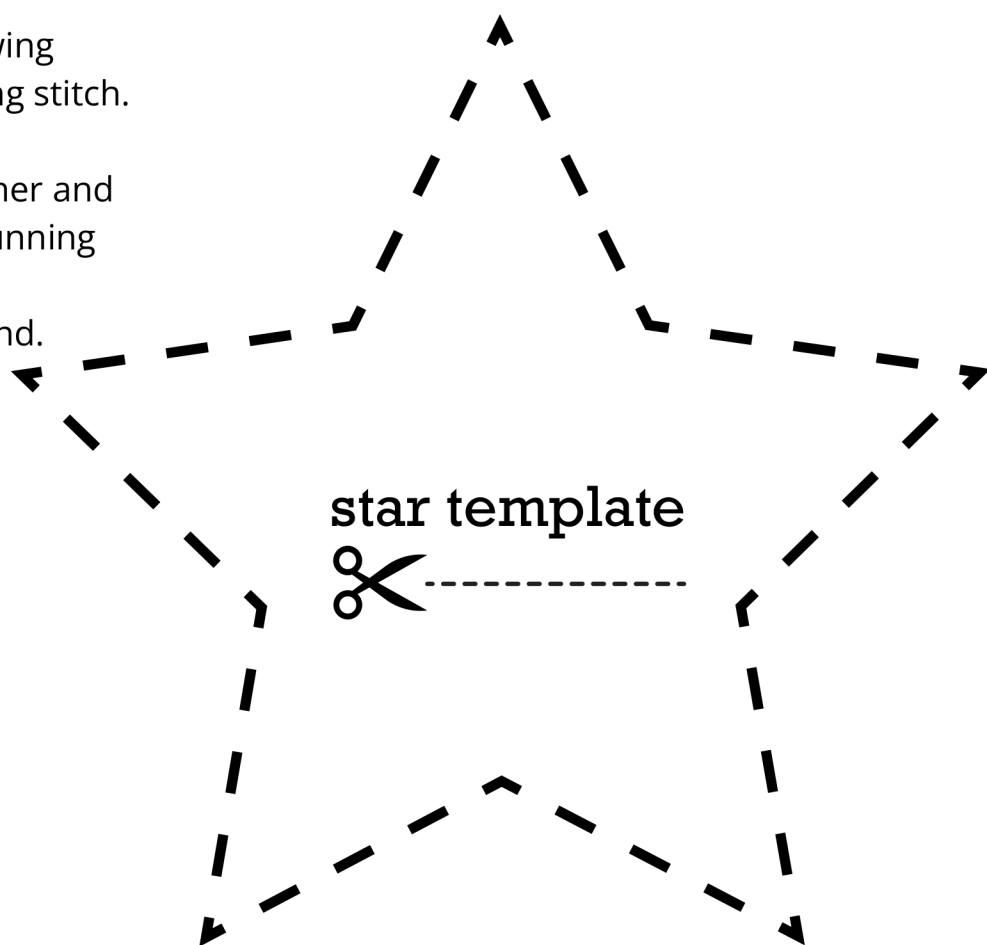
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Christmas Decoration Embroidery

You will need:

- Star template
- Green and red felt
- Embroidery needle
- White embroidery floss/thread
- Stuffing
- Ribbon
- Chalk

- 1** Cut two pieces of felt using the star template.
- 2** Use the chalk to draw a Bengali design on one of the felt stars (see designs on page 6)
- 3** Embroider the design by sewing over the chalk using a running stitch.
- 4** Put the two felt pieces together and using a blanket stitch, or a running stitch (easier for beginners) and stitch $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way around.
- 5** Insert a looped piece of ribbon and some stuffing, then sew the star shut.

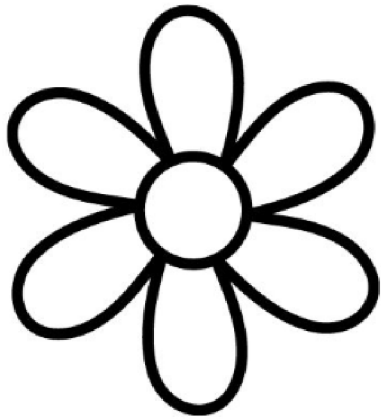


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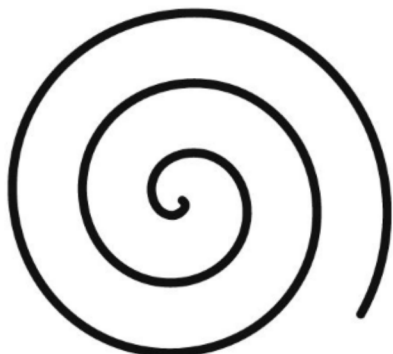
Nakshi Kantha traditional patterns to trace



Lotus



Flower



Spiral