

# Finger-woven Métis Sash Rainbow Bracelet Instructions

## Family Arts “Family Bubble” Festival 2021

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Finger-weaving has been used by both Indigenous and Settler peoples throughout the historical record. The first recorded use of Finger-weaving among the Indigenous People was recorded in the middle to late 1600's as a method of belt and garters. These early belts were made utilizing plant and animal fibers.

The Metis adopted these belts and garters from the eastern peoples as the voyagers who migrated west to the Red River Settlement. The traders brought sashes known as the Assumption Sash that were made in Assumption Quebec to the trading posts. By the time the Metis people adopted the finger-woven belts and garters they were made from thin wool yarn which they bought from the traders.



*1 Métis Sash by Rose Prevost*

### A few known facts about the Sash:

1. The colours of the Metis sash were made of colours that represent different times in Metis History. The colours are; red for the blood of the metis shed while fighting for our rights; blue is for the depth of our spirits; green for fertility of a great nation; white for our connection to the earth and the creator; yellow for the prospect of prosperity; black for the dark period suppression dispossession of Metis land; red and white colours of hunting flag; blue and white are the colours of the national flag; green and gold fertility growth and prosperity of the Metis Nation.
2. Metis women would weave family sashes that had a specific pattern and colour. i.e. lightning bolt, chevrons, diamonds, salt and pepper, and striped. The colours were numerous and were made from plant and earth dyes.
3. It has been said that the longer the man's sash was the more he was loved by his woman. Sashes wrapped twice around the wearers waist and once tied came down past the knee. Sashes were between 2 meters to 4 meters long and 20 to 30 cm wide.
4. Sashes were not just belts. They were used as for carrying packs or bales during portages, lashing items together, rope, scarf, wash clothes, as buffer when handling hot items and as a lead rope for a dog sled team or a horse halter rein.

## Supply List

To make a small sample of finger-weaving for a bracelet you will need the following:

- One stick from a tree, wooden doweling, chopstick or pencil. (Pencil diameter works best but any stick will work).
- Finger or Sock weight wool (or #3ply) in various colours. (For this tutorial we used 6 colours but 8 works we used Red, Yellow, Green, light blue, dark blue, purple, green, orange. For learning purposes having an even number works best). Cotton or wool work best, but acrylic can work almost as well
- Tape, c-clamp, heavy books or anything that can hold your stick to the table.



A limited number of pre-cut yarn supply kits have been created for the Festival for those that cannot access supplies. Find a link to order on the Family Arts Festival website.

## Follow along with the Video

You can follow along with our “How To” video on the Family Arts Festival website:  
<https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/parks-recreation-community/arts/family-arts-festival.html>

The following is a written version of the video instructions:

## Preparation

1. Cut 1 strand of each colour from 51 cm (20 inches) to 66 centimetres (25 inches), depending upon size of wrist (our supply kits were cut to 20 inches).
2. Take one strand of yarn
3. Attach each thread to the stick by:
  - folding the yarn in half
  - Wrap the folded end over the pencil and then pass the cut ends through the loop created by the folded end. (See video)
  - Continue in this way until all pieces of yarn are attached to the pencil.
4. Tape the ends of the pencil to your table.

## Start Weaving

1. Continue to weave in this method until the woven part can fit around your wrist.
2. Continue weaving in the same way always weaving from left to right.
3. Go back to the left side.
4. It is important to keep the threads in the order they were placed on the pencil.
5. Notice that this makes stripes that run across the weaving in a diagonal manner-- this is normal.
6. Place your fist string known as the weft around the end of the pencil to hold it in place temporarily.
7. Start each row with the outside left thread going under the next strand of yarn.
8. Take outside strand and start weaving starting with under then over repeating the pattern until you have woven across all the strands of yarn.
9. Take the strand of yarn hooked over the pencil and place over the strand of yarn you just used to weave with.
10. Then put it under the 2nd yarn then over the 3rd yarn, under the 4th yarn, over the 5<sup>th</sup>, under the 6<sup>th</sup> yarn and repeat until you are at the end.
11. With the ends of the strands of yarn facing you take the first strand on the left

## Finishing Your Bracelet

1. Braid the three groups by bringing the left side into the center.
2. Collect the loops together and pass one of the braided ends through the loops.
3. Once the woven strands can wrap around your wrist then take the strands of yarn and divide them in half.
4. Place the wearers hand through the circle.
5. Repeat the braiding steps for the other half.
6. Repeat this until the length is braided.
7. Take the right half of the strands of yarn and divide it into three groups.
8. The take the other braided end and loosely tie the two braided ends together.
9. Then remove the pencil from the weaving.
10. Then the right side into the center.
11. This will cause it to form a circle.
12. Tie the ends with an overhand knot.

Thank you for participating in Family Arts "Family Bubble" Festival 2021.  
Happy Family Day!