

Scandinavian Culture: Woven Heart Ornaments and Gnomes

Time Needed

- 45 - 60 minutes depending on skill level

Skill/Grade Level

- The intention of this lesson is to be utilized for any grade level with modifications based on the needs of the audience.

Core Area

- Leadership & Citizenship
- Communication & Expressive Arts

Life Skills

- Giving
Responsible Citizens
- Working
Marketable Skills
- Being
Self-Responsibility
- Relating
Accepting Differences
Social Skills
- Caring
Sharing
Empathy
Concern for Others

Educational Standards

- National 4-H Mission Mandates

Core Curriculum

- Kentucky 4-H Leadership & International Programs

Objectives

Through the Kentucky 4-H International Program participants will:

- **Experience** different cultures through geography, history, symbols, language, government, economy, agriculture, customs, religion, arts, food, and fun facts.
- **Share** about their culture while exploring different cultures.
- **Process** connections between different cultures.
- **Generalize** interdependencies of different cultures.
- **Apply** knowledge to work cooperatively with others from different cultures.

Introduction to Content

According to the U.S. Department of Education International Strategy Report (2012-2016), in order for youth to succeed in the 21st century workplace, they must develop knowledge and understanding of other countries, cultures, languages and perspectives. The overall mission of 4-H is to provide opportunities for youth and adults to work together to create sustainable community change. This is accomplished within the use of three primary content areas, or mission mandates, - citizenship, healthy living, and science. The 4-H Citizenship Mandate places emphasis on young people being engaged and active members of their community, country, and world. Citizenship is the foundation needed to help youth gain a broader understanding of life.

Curriculum

4-Hers will increase their global competencies by:

- Identifying their role in the global society,
- Investigating the interdependences of cultures,
- Appreciating the accomplishments of other cultures,
- Cooperatively work with others from varying cultures.

Materials Needed

Woven Heart Ornament Lesson

- Paper (8 ½ x 11 inches, 2 sheets of contrasting colors)
- Template
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Craft Glue

Gnome Lesson

- Socks (3)
- Rice (3 cups)
- Yarn (approximately 22 feet)
- Scissors
- Rubber Bands (2)
- Hot Glue

Learn more at www.kentucky4h.org or contact your county extension office.



Woven Heart Ornaments and Gnomes



Introduction

- Where is Scandinavia?
 - Scandinavia is a region of Europe, comprised of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Scholars often include other Nordic nations such as Iceland and Finland.
- What is folklore?
 - Folklore is sometimes referred to as folk culture and can be defined as the study of customs, traditions, and folk tales of a group of people. Swedish scholars have defined folklore in two ways: 1) *folklivsforskning* or the “study of folk life,” including traditional materials and practices 2) *folkminnesforskning*, referring to folk knowledge passed down from generation to generation, through stories, songs, and plays, to teach traditions, beliefs, and customs (Kongas, 1963).

Background Information

Scandinavian Folklore

- King Gustavus II Aldophus of Sweden began compiling Scandinavian folklores in the early 17th century (Thompson, 1961). The folklore commonly included stories and legends of trolls and other mystical creatures, used to explain both natural phenomena and events in the life of people. The legends were at the heart of many holiday traditions and customs still celebrated to this day.
- Trolls are mythical creatures found in Norse Mythology. The word *troll* is derived from *trullan* referring to a “fiend, demon, werewolf and giant” (McKay, 2020). A broad definition of trolls can be found across Scandinavian folklore, as well as, modern fiction. Trolls have variable body sizes, from large giants to small gnomes, and a variety of personalities, ranging from malicious, to kind benefactors (Attebery, 1996).
 - Giant trolls in folktales were attributed to geological formations including “rock formations, lakes, and jaettegyter (giant potholes)” (Kvideland and Sehmsdorf, 1988).
 - The smaller, magical trolls more closely resembling humans, are found in folklore as troublemakers (Kvideland and Sehmsdorf, 1988). The *nisse* in Norway and the *tomte* from Sweden are two such gnome-like trolls, causing havoc if they felt disrespected or disturbed (Kvideland and Sehmsdor, 1988 & Legend of the Nisse and Tomte, n.d.).

Holiday Traditions

- The small trolls or gnomes from folklore have inspired modern Scandinavian holiday traditions. In one legend, the *nisse* or *tomte* felt insulted until they were given a Christmas porridge, called *julegrot*. The legend led to a tradition of leaving *julegrot* with butter out on Christmas Eve to appease the gnomes and bring good luck, wealth, and protection to the farm and family (Legend of the Nisse and Tomte, n.d.) or gifts (Schutte, 1924).
- The Germanic folk tradition of decorating the home with a Christmas tree was adopted by the Scandinavians. In Scandinavia, Christmas trees are often simply decorated with hand-made ornaments. Heart-shaped paper baskets called *Julekurver* are traditional ornaments, filled with nuts, candy, or other treats for children in the household (Cooper, 2020).

Instructions for Woven Heart Ornament

Instructions adapted from Schaefer Soderberg (2011).

- 1) Print the Kentucky 4-H Woven Heart Ornament Template. It contains 3 individual templates.
- 2) Use scissors to cut out all 3 templates along the solid lines.
- 3) Select 2 pieces of 8 ½ x 11 inch paper in contrasting colors (e.g. green and white, red and green, blue and yellow). Cardstock, felt, and fabric can be substituted in place of paper.
- 4) Fold one piece of paper in half, hamburger style.
- 5) Trace one of the curved templates onto the paper with a pencil. The flat side of the template with 2 slits should be flush with the folded edge of the paper.

Woven Heart Ornaments and Gnomes



Instructions Continued for Woven Heart Ornament

- 6) Keep the paper folded and cut along the traced lines.
- 7) Repeat steps 4-6 with the second piece of paper. Each paper should now contain 3 loops.
- 8) Begin weaving the loops, one at a time. Weave the paper in and around to create alternating colors or a checkered pattern.
- 9) To create a handle for the basket, trace the rectangular template on a scrap piece of colorful paper.
- 10) Using scissors, cut out the handle.
- 11) Glue the handle on the top of the basket, securing each end of the handle to the inside of the heart.
- 12) Allow the ornament to dry.
- 13) The ornament is ready to hang and fill with candy!
- 14) Step by Step Instructions (with photos) are included with this lesson.
- 15) Video Instructions: <https://youtu.be/UH6ki3Jztk8>

Instructions for Scandinavian Gnome

Instructions adapted from Van de Looij (2019).

- 1) Fill a sock with 3 cups of dry, uncooked rice. Pillow stuffing and beans can be substituted for rice.
- 2) Tie the open end of the sock securely with a rubber band, creating a tight seal.
- 3) Trim and remove the excess sock.
- 4) To create a nose for the gnome, pinch the sock 1/3 of the way up from the base. Pinch the sock into the size and shape desired.
- 5) Secure the nose with a rubber band.
- 6) Place the sock filled with rice, into a colorful sock. Fold the open end of the colorful sock inside itself, creating a neat top edge, securely under the nose.
- 7) To create a hat for the gnome, place a sock with a colorful pattern on the head of your gnome. Decorate the hat with pompoms, buttons, etc. (optional).
- 8) To create a beard for the gnome, wrap 22 feet of yarn in loops approximately 9 inches wide.
- 9) Tie the loops together in the middle using an 8 inch string of yarn.
- 10) Cut the loops of yarn on both ends.
- 11) Hot glue the yarn beard in place.
- 12) Give your gnome a name and place it in its new home!
- 13) Step by Step Instructions (with photos) are included with this lesson.
- 14) Video Instructions: <https://youtu.be/OtoGGxHc-Jg>

Reflect and Apply

- 1) Think about your own culture, what are ways you celebrate a holiday with family and friends?
- 2) Think about your own culture, what are common creatures in your own folk stories, legends, and fairytales?
- 3) What are ways you could use this lesson to bring joy to others?
- 4) What is something you learned about Scandinavian culture through this activity?
- 5) What does this lesson make you wonder about the Scandinavian cultures?

Extended Learning

- Research more about Scandinavian culture and traditions.

Civic Engagement

- Make woven heart ornaments and send them to friends and family members.
- Research more about relationships between the US and Scandinavian governments.

Communications

- Organize a pen pal program with the help of the 4-H International Program.
- Give a demonstration on how to make Scandinavian woven heart ornaments or gnomes in the 4-H Communications Program.

Future Readiness

- Join the Kentucky 4-H International Program to expand your understanding of your role in the global marketplace.

Volunteering

- Ask your family to host an international delegate through Kentucky 4-H.

Junior Mentor/Teen

- Plan and conduct a workshop with younger members where you show them how to make woven heart ornaments and gnomes.

Woven Heart Ornaments and Gnomes



Supporting Projects or Events

Kentucky 4-H International Program provides various experiences for youth and families to open their home to the world.

- International Summer Short Term Program (Inbound to USA)
- International Summer Short Term Program (Outbound from USA)
- Academic Year Program (Inbound to USA)
- Kentucky 4-H International Service Learning Program



Expand Your Experience

- Read more Scandinavian Fairytales, Folktales, and Fables at: <https://fairytales.com/region/scandinavian> AND <http://users.skynet.be/fa023784/trollmoon/TrollBlog/files/4c5b38b5c8a85cc197feab317e575cb-43.html>
- Read: *Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend* edited by Kvideland and Sehmsdorf (1988)
- Learn about the history of Scandinavia by watching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6pv8sFMpsU>

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