



Leather Luxe: Craft Your Own Wearable Art

1 hour · 3rd – 5th · Workshop · Teacher: Donna Bradley

Instructions: This lesson plan is your starting point — feel free to edit, rearrange, or customize it to fit your teaching style and your students' needs! These notes are yours. They will not be published anywhere.

Topics Covered

sustainable crafting · jewelry design · leatherworking basics · upcycling materials · fine motor skills · pattern making

Lesson Plan

1. Introduction & Leather Exploration (10 min)

- Pass around leather samples in different colors and textures for students to touch and examine
- Explain how we're using recycled leather to reduce waste and help the environment
- Show three finished jewelry examples (bracelet, necklace, keychain) and ask students which they'd like to make today
- Demonstrate safe handling of leather punches and cutting tools with clear safety rules

2. Design & Template Selection (12 min)

- Provide design worksheets where students sketch their two jewelry pieces using provided templates (feather shapes, geometric patterns, animal silhouettes)
- Guide students to choose leather colors from the available recycled pieces laid out on tables
- Have students trace their chosen templates onto cardstock to create their personal cutting guides
- Pair students into design buddies to share ideas and give each other feedback

3. Cutting & Shaping (15 min)

- Demonstrate proper scissor technique for cutting leather: firm, steady cuts following the traced lines
- Monitor as students cut out their first jewelry piece, offering hand-over-hand help for tricky curves
- Show how to use leather punches to create holes for stringing (teacher does the punching, students mark where holes should go)
- Teach students to smooth rough edges using the edge beveler tool in a supervised station

4. Decoration & Personalization (13 min)

- Set up decoration stations with leather stamps, acrylic paint pens, and embossing tools
- Demonstrate stamping technique: place stamp, one firm hammer tap, lift carefully
- Show how to add initials or patterns using paint pens designed for leather
- Guide students in adding beads, feathers, or metal charms using jump rings and glue

5. Assembly & Finishing (8 min)

- Demonstrate stringing techniques using waxed cord for necklaces or elastic for bracelets
- Help students tie secure square knots and add a dab of clear glue to prevent unraveling
- Show how to attach lobster clasps or adjustable sliding knots for sizing
- Have students complete a 'care card' with tips for maintaining their leather jewelry

6. Gallery Walk & Celebration (2 min)

- Students wear their creations and walk around to admire each other's work
- Each student shares one thing they're proud of about their jewelry
- Take a group photo with everyone displaying their finished pieces
- Hand out take-home materials list so students can continue leather crafting at home

Materials Checklist

- ☐ Recycled leather pieces (pre-sorted by color, various sizes)
- ☐ Child-safe leather scissors and cutting mats
- ☐ Leather hole punches (1-2 for teacher use)
- ☐ Cardstock templates (feathers, geometric shapes, animals)
- ☐ Waxed cord, elastic cord, and hemp twine in assorted colors
- ☐ Acrylic paint pens and leather stamps with alphabet sets
- ☐ Beads, feathers, metal charms, and jump rings
- ☐ Clear-drying craft glue and small glue brushes

Age Adaptations

Younger Kids: Pre-cut leather pieces into simple shapes (circles, rectangles, hearts) so 3rd graders focus on decoration and assembly rather than precision cutting. Provide pre-punched holes and use simpler knotting techniques like single overhand knots. Offer sticker decorations as an alternative to stamping.

Older Kids: Challenge 5th graders with more intricate cutting patterns like multi-layer designs or braided leather strips. Introduce advanced techniques like leather burning (teacher-supervised), riveting, or creating adjustable multi-strand bracelets. Encourage them to design custom templates from scratch.

Movement Break

Leather Fashion Show: Students stand and practice their runway walks while wearing their in-progress jewelry. Teacher plays upbeat music and calls out different walking styles: 'strut like a superhero,' 'glide like a dancer,' 'stomp like a dinosaur wearing fancy jewelry!' Students freeze in a pose when the music stops.

Bonus Activities

- Create leather gift tags by cutting small rectangles, punching a hole, and decorating with recipient's name
- Make matching friendship bracelets for a buddy using leftover leather scraps and coordinating colors
- Design a leather bookmark with stamped patterns and a ribbon tail
- Start a mini leather journal cover by decorating a rectangular piece to wrap around a small notebook

Workshop Outline (13 Sessions)

Sessi on	Theme	Key Activities
1	Leather Basics & Simple Bracelets	Introduction to recycled leather and sustainability in crafting, Learn to cut straight and curved lines using child-safe scissors, Create two basic wraparound bracelets with button closures
2	Stamping & Embossing Techniques	Master leather stamping with alphabet and pattern stamps, Practice embossing designs using stylus tools, Make personalized stamped pendants for necklaces
3	Layered Leather Necklaces	Learn to stack multiple leather pieces for dimensional effects, Explore color theory by choosing complementary leather layers, Create a two-layer geometric pendant with contrast colors

Sessi on	Theme	Key Activities
4	Beading & Embellishment	String leather pieces with beads to create mixed-media jewelry, Practice threading techniques and creating patterns, Make a leather and bead charm bracelet
5	Fringe & Texture Magic	Learn to cut fringe and tassels from leather strips, Create texture using edge tools and distressing techniques, Design boho-style fringed earrings or necklaces
6	Braiding & Weaving Skills	Practice three-strand braiding with leather cords, Combine braided leather with solid pieces, Make a braided leather friendship bracelet with clasp
7	Nature-Inspired Designs	Trace and cut leaf and feather shapes from templates, Add vein details using paint pens and embossing, Create a nature-themed necklace with leather leaves
8	Geometric & Modern Patterns	Cut triangles, hexagons, and chevron shapes, Learn to arrange geometric pieces into modern designs, Make a color-blocked geometric pendant necklace
9	Keychains & Bag Charms	Design functional leather accessories with metal findings, Practice attaching lobster clasps and key rings, Create two personalized keychains or bag tags
10	Mixed Media Masterpieces	Combine leather with fabric, ribbon, and metal charms, Explore different attachment methods (gluing, tying, riveting), Design a mixed-media statement necklace
11	Cuff Bracelets & Wrist Wear	Measure and cut leather strips to fit individual wrists, Learn to add snap closures for adjustable sizing, Create a wide decorated cuff bracelet with personal symbols
12	Animal & Character Shapes	Use templates to cut animal silhouettes (butterflies, cats, dinosaurs), Add personality with painted details and googly eyes, Make whimsical character necklaces or pins
13	Final Collection & Gift Making	Students design a complete jewelry set (bracelet, necklace, earrings or keychain), Create gift packaging using recycled materials, Host a jewelry showcase where students model their 13-week collection



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