

Kumihimo

A Japanese braiding technique

Kumihimo, also known as “gathered threads”, was originally used to decorate Buddhist scrolls. They were later worn to secure Samurai armor, to improve the grip of a sword’s hilt, and also used as kimono belts.

There are several types of braids that can be achieved. I prefer the simple 7 string for elementary students. Use 7 strings with a knot tied at the end. Slip the knot through the center hole and put 1 string in each slot. (There are 8 small slots in this disc, so there will be one left empty.) Hold the disk so that the empty slot is at the top. Count down the right side to the third string and move it to the empty slot. Rotate the disk so that the new empty slot is at the top. Repeat.

The 16 string kumihimo works well for middle school/high school level. Tie a knot at the end of the 16 strings and put the knot through the center hole. (There are 32 small slots in this disc.) Put 2 strings in the top 2 slots, skip 2 slots, then 2 more strings, then skip 2, and so on until every other pair of slots has strings. To weave this one, take the top right string and bring it to the right of the 2 bottom strings. Then, take the bottom left string and move it to the top left. Turn the disk to the next pair at the top right and continue this process. These make great bookmarks!

Supplies:

7 String kumihimo- Cereal box cardboard or similar weight, a cup to trace around, a pencil to poke the center hole, scissors to cut the slits, and yarn.

16 String or more kumihimo- Cereal box cardboard or similar weight, a roll of packing tape to trace around, pencil to poke the center hole, scissors to cut the slits, and embroidery string.

There are many patterns and ideas on Pinterest.