

Wish Amulets

Make your wishes come true in the New Year! Children will create amulets with a wish or goal for the coming year to wear proudly or give to someone special.

Materials

- Scissors
- Colored paper
- Colored pencils or markers
- Hole puncher
- Tape
- String
- Raffia or yarn
- Small slip of paper

Instructions

1. Cut a long, small rectangle of colored paper, approximately 2"x 4."
2. Decorate the rectangle with any design you like using markers, crayons, etc.
3. Fold the rectangle in half and seal two sides with masking tape.
4. Write a special wish or message on a separate slip of paper and slide it into the open end of the pocket.
5. Seal the last open side (or leave it unsealed if you would like to be able to remove the message).
6. Punch a hole in the two upper corners of the amulet and string raffia or yarn through to make a necklace.
7. Wear your amulet with pride, or give it to someone special!

Keep the Discussion Going!

Sometimes the items we wear on our bodies do more than cover us up and keep us warm. Certain clothing or types of adornments can have special meaning to us because of their associations with people, places or ideas. *Do you have any items of clothing or jewelry that are special to you? Why are these items important? How do you feel when you wear them?*

For the Tuareg people of Niger, Africa, amulets are a type of necklace worn for protection and remembrance of the holy book, Koran. A Tuareg person will ask a holy person (and the local blacksmith) to create a metal amulet, or "gri-gri" (pronounced gree-gree), for various reasons—such as when they are traveling and want to be safe. It is believed the gri-gri will protect those wearing this blessing close to their hearts.

Goals

Social/Emotional Development

- Exploring why we wear what we wear
- Exploring the concept of goals and wishes

Cognitive Development

- Following instructions
- Setting goals
- Using creativity

Physical Development

- Building fine motor skills through cutting, folding, hole punching, and stringing an amulet

Literacy/Language Development

- Communicating goals or wishes verbally and in writing

To Learn More About the Tuareg People:

Books cited in this handout:

“Nomads of Niger” Carol Beckwith and Marion Van Offelen, 1983

“Africa Adorned” Angela Fisher, 1984

Books for children:

“One Night: A Story from the Desert” Cristina Kessler, 1995

