

Sashiko stitching

Art and crafts

30 minutes

(but can take less time or be extended)

You will need:

2 pieces of fabric, 20cm x 20cm per person (old shirts work well)

A selection of Sashiko patterns, printed out (available online)

Long darners (one each)

Cotton perlé thread

Scissors

Pattern

Frixion pen

Large groups



Focused
Engaging
Relaxing

Sashiko is a mindful and peaceful activity that enables participants to stitch, share and chat. This 500-year-old technique from Japan can create both simple and more complex designs depending on the participants' knowledge of stitching.

To begin:

Place the fabric on top of the pattern, and then hold them up at a window so that you can see to trace the pattern onto the right side of one of the pieces of fabric. You can do this using the Frixion pen.

Next:

Put the second piece of fabric under the fabric you have just drawn on and line up the edges. Cut a piece of thread that is no longer than the length of your arm. Thread the needle. Put a knot in the end of the thread and secure the knot between the layers. Start to stitch the design using running stitches. You can also use the pattern provided to see which way to stitch. Where the curves intersect, the stitches should not overlap or cross.

As you all stitch together it can be a lovely time to talk.

You might like to ask:

When did your group learn to sew?

What have you made?

What is your favourite stitch?

When you are stitching what do you think about?

Any other questions that your group comes up with...

Don't worry if you don't finish your embroidery in a single session. This is something that your group could keep coming back to and developing if they enjoy it, or something that they could take away to finish in their own time.

The Sashiko embroideries you create are a memory of a moment which you can keep adding to e.g. by creating larger pieces like samplers. The pieces can also be joined together to make a fabric book/journal.

You could also:

While there are pre-printed Sashiko panels available to purchase online, you can also encourage participants to create their own designs. If you want to try this, you can do it on 5mm graph paper!

Try other Sashiko patterns and use them to make greetings cards, patchworks and scarves. You could also explore other Japanese textile techniques such as Boro and Kogin.

Credit:

Derby Quad,
GoldsQUAD / Phillipa Larkin.

