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The Gratitude Wreath

By Rondi Hillstrom Davis and Janell Sewall Oakes

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Bring a little bit of autumn indoors. Family and friends help create this wreath by sharing what they are thankful for on brightly colored leaves. Every member of the family can contribute to this beautiful wreath. This is a great, concrete, visual way to put meaning back in the holidays for children.

Materials: 18-inch diameter straw wreath Fall leaves 1 or 2 metallic paint pens 3 1/2-yards of 1/4-inch elastic 1 straight pin

Directions

1. Fill a large grocery sack with sturdy fall leaves.
2. As a base, use an 18-inch diameter straw wreath.
3. Wrap the wreath with the elastic. Start by securing one end of the elastic to the top of the wreath with a long straight pin. Wrap the elastic around the wreath at 3-inch intervals. The elastic should be snug against the straw, but not too tight. Once you have gone all the way around the wreath, tie the ends of the elastic together.
4. Using a paint pen on the leaves, have each member of the family write down what they are most thankful for.
5. Starting at the top and working clockwise, tuck the stems of two or three leaves into each band of elastic. Try to arrange the leaves so that no elastic or straw shows. This wreath should take about 15 minutes to construct. Hang the finished wreath on the front door and celebrate all of your family's blessings.

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We leave a basket of leaves near the door, and on Thanksgiving Day, all of our guests add their blessings to our wreath.

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Rondi Hillstrom Davis and Janell Sewall Oakes are the co-authors of the award-winning book

Together: Creating Family Traditions. To check out their website that's jam packed with family ideas, visit

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Peacock Feather Wreath

By Dawn Keadic

Making a peacock feather wreath is a very easy project and will result in a beautifully elegant finished product. This sort of wreath makes a beautiful adornment for your home at any time of year and can be enhanced by the addition of ornaments or left in its natural splendor.

For this project you will need a straw wreath base. The size of the wreath base which you choose to use will be a part in determining the size of the wreath. There is no right or wrong in a lot of this, it depends on what seems right to you as the creator. After you have chosen your straw wreath base, you will need to buy peacock feathers. The amount of feathers you buy will be determined by the size of your straw wreath base, the larger the wreath base, the more feathers you will need. There are great sources of peacock feathers on the internet or you may choose to visit a local craft supply store and pick out your own.

In buying a product of this kind, I usually buy a few more than I think I will actually need for my project. I find running short of supplies before a project is finished to be very frustrating and I've found that I

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can always add the surplus to my craft supply box and just knowing that they are there usually brings to mind some sort of fun project for which they can be used. You may also want a sharp pencil to help make openings in the straw wreath in which to place the feathers.

Before you start your wreath, you will want to look at your feathers and see if you want to cut them off at all. If you do, you will want also to trim the feathers at what will now be the quill end so that you can insert the quill itself into the wreath base. Insert the feathers into the wreath base about two thirds down. You may need a pencil at this point to create the openings for you. Set the feathers about three to four inches apart. When you have gone completely around the wreath base, you will want to go up about a half an inch, and repeat the same thing, setting these feathers over a bit so that they don't come directly over the other feathers. Repeat this for about two more rows. Then you will want to do one more row with slightly shorter feathers. This will give your wreath a fuller layered appearance.

Congratulations, you have just created a beautiful work of art wreath which is ready to be hung. Now you may decorate it if you so choose or leave it in its natural beauty. There is no right or wrong to this decision. What seems right to you as the creator is what is right.

Dawn Keadic enjoys decorating with wreaths, both indoors and outdoors. For more information on wreaths, including wreaths you can make at home, visit

<http://www.unique-christmas-wreaths.com>

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