

# DESIGN YOUR HENNA HANDS

Help your group discover the art of henna decoration using traditional patterns

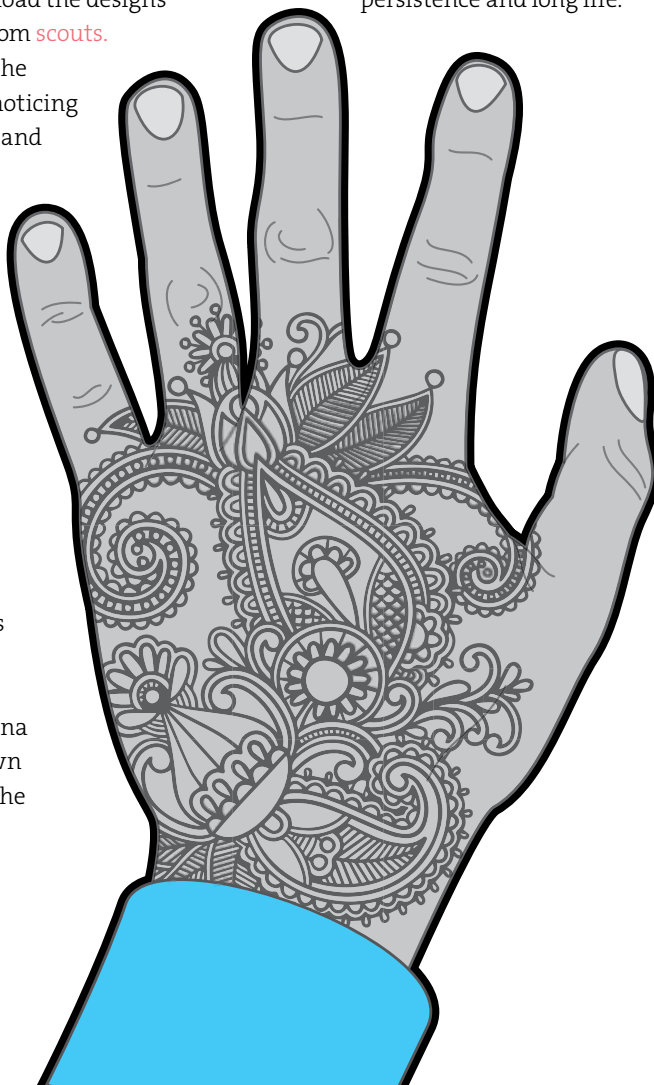
SUITABLE FOR **BEAVERS**, **CUBS**, **SCOUTS**, **EXPLORERS**

**1** Ask your section if they have seen henna art before; they may have seen some on their classmates' hands at school. You could also look at designs for henna hands on the internet.

**2** Divide your section into small groups. Download the designs for henna hands from [scouts.org.uk](http://scouts.org.uk) and look at the designs carefully, noticing recurring patterns and symbols and how the designs are spaced out. Ask the Scouts to pick out their favourite designs.

**3** In groups, ask each young person to take a plain piece of paper and trace around their hands and fill in their hand shapes with their favourite henna designs. Use a brown felt tip to recreate the colour of henna.

**4** Look up the meanings of some of the symbols and patterns used for henna hands designs. Some of the most popular include: circular flowers for the mandala, a spiritual Indian symbol which represents the universe; paisley, a symbol of abundance; and acacia leaves for persistence and long life.



**TIME NEEDED**  
20–30 minutes

## EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- A4 paper
- Brown marker pens
- Downloads from [scouts.org.uk](http://scouts.org.uk)

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## OUTCOMES

Young people will learn about Indian spirituality and discover some of their rituals. The art of painting henna on the body is associated with weddings, where crushed henna leaves are painted onto the skin. The Scouts will have a go at drawing these patterns for themselves and learning the meaning behind them.

## TAKE IT FURTHER

The Muslim religious holiday, Eid, is a popular time for henna painting; it's the way for a Muslim family to get their children excited about the celebrations. Now ask the young people to design their own pattern.

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