



## Handicraft

For our handicraft lesson, we will create a Chinese paper lantern. We are using xuan (rice) paper for a traditional style, but feel free to substitute copy paper—or experiment with various types of papers (tissue paper, parchment paper, etc.). If you don't have chopsticks, you can use craft sticks or small wooden dowels.

The plum blossom is the national flower of China, so we are including that as a template, or your children might want to choose a different design. We highly recommend using markers instead of paint, and if you use rice paper, please put blotter paper underneath since markers could bleed through.

*"I've filled him with the Spirit of God, giving him skill and know-how and expertise in every kind of craft to create designs ... he's an all-around craftsman."*

~ Exodus 31:3-5

Handicraft Lesson

# Chinese Paper Lantern



## A Brief History of Paper Lanterns

For centuries, delicate paper lanterns have glowed softly in the evenings across China, lighting festivals, celebrations, and quiet garden paths alike. Their origins can be traced back over two thousand years to the Han Dynasty, when lanterns were first used as practical sources of light. Over time, they became something much more—objects of beauty, craftsmanship, and cultural meaning.

Traditionally made from bamboo or wooden frames and covered with fine rice paper or silk, lanterns were often painted with graceful images of flowers, birds, landscapes, or calligraphy. Red lanterns, in particular, came to symbolize joy, prosperity, and good fortune, and they are still commonly seen during important celebrations.

During festivals such as the Lantern Festival, which marks the close of the Lunar New Year, streets and homes are filled with glowing lanterns, creating a warm and magical atmosphere. Some lanterns even carry riddles or messages, inviting others to pause, reflect, and delight in the experience.

Lanterns were also used in temples and homes as offerings of light, representing reverence, remembrance, and the desire for wisdom. In ancient times, scholars and artists alike delighted in decorating lanterns, turning them into expressions of poetry and personal reflection. In this way, each lantern became not just a source of light, but a small window into the heart and mind of its maker.

Beyond their beauty, lanterns carry deeper meaning. Their gentle light has long been seen as a symbol of hope—guiding the way through darkness and representing the brightness of new beginnings. Whether hung in a home, carried in a procession, or set aglow in a garden, each lantern reflects both artistry and intention.

As you create your own lantern, you are stepping into this long and lovely tradition—bringing together simple materials, thoughtful design, and soft light to make something both meaningful and beautiful.

### Supplies Needed:

- Rice (xuan) paper
- 18 Chopsticks
- Markers
- Glue gun (low-temperature recommended)
- Glue stick (or school glue)
- Scissors
- Garden shears or wire snips
- Ruler
- Twine
- Small set of fairy lights (**battery-powered only**)
- Optional: tassel



## Instructions:

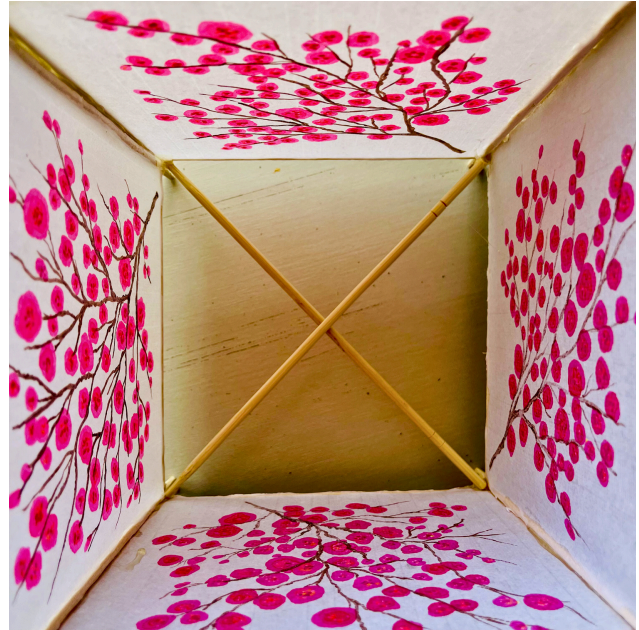
1. Using a ruler and pencil, mark one-inch guidelines at the top and bottom of eight chopsticks.
2. On eight additional chopsticks, measure six inches and cut them to size using garden or wire snips.
3. Attach the shorter chopsticks to the marked guidelines on the longer ones using a hot glue gun, creating four separate panels.



4. Apply glue (either a glue stick or school glue) to each panel and carefully attach rice paper. Let dry completely, then trim away any excess paper.
5. Decorate each panel with abstract plum blossoms or your own design using markers. (A plum blossom template is included—try placing it beneath the rice paper to trace.)



6. Once all four panels are complete, run a line of hot glue along the edge of one chopstick and join two panels together at a right angle. Continue until the complete lantern is formed.
7. Measure the inside of the lantern's base. If necessary, cut two more chopsticks to fit (our chopsticks fit perfectly without being cut), then hot glue them diagonally across the bottom to form an "X."



8. Cut four pieces of twine, each about 14-16 inches long. Tie one to the top of each corner, then gather and knot them together at the top to create a hanger. Trim excess, then add a small amount of hot glue to keep in place.
9. Optional: Attach a tassel to the bottom of the lantern for decoration.
10. Place small battery-powered fairy lights inside the lantern to complete the look. Hang and enjoy!



## Plum Blossom Template

For students who don't feel confident in their drawing skills, we have provided a *Plum Blossom Template*. Please note: We have kept it intentionally "sketchy" because Chinese art should be abstract and organic. (If using rice paper, we recommend placing the template underneath.)

