

Tissue Paper Fish Kite



Weifang City of Shandong Province is widely regarded as "the world's capital of kites". There's an age-old custom still popular today. On the Qingming Festival, people fly kites as high and far as possible and deliberately cut the line, allowing the kites to drift in the sky with the wind. This is a symbol of letting go the unhappiness and sadness accumulated in the previous year, which is believed to keep illnesses at bay during the whole year. In addition, a kite is a carrier of hope. If a fish is drawn on a swallow-shaped kite, it has a hidden meaning of "the wish of surplus every year", because the word "fish" has the same pronunciation as that of "surplus" in Chinese. If bats, peaches, pine trees and cranes are painted on a kite, it means fortune, wealth and longevity.

Kids can use everyday materials, like tissue paper, markers, glue and a hole punch, to create this fun fish-shaped kite. Great craft for Children's Day in Japan.

Supplies

Tissue paper: 20" x 26" sheet of yellow to decorate for body (optional: green and pink for gills and eyes, scrap dark blue for pupils)

Fine-point permanent markers, crayons or stamps, or green and orange liquid food coloring to dye stripes as shown

1" x 20" strip of posterboard or other bendable, sturdy cardboard

Stapler

White glue

Single hole punch

Ball of thin cord

Instructions

Fold tissue paper for the body in half lengthwise to be 10" x 26".

To decorate: Draw gills at top and fins 12" below on each side with markers or crayon and decorate the fish as you like. (Note: If you prefer to make the kite look more like the photograph, follow directions for dyeing paper and gluing on gills and fins, below.)

Overlap ends of 20" cardboard strip 1" and staple to form a 19" ring for the bridle (fish's mouth).

Glue top end of fish's body to outside of ring. Overlap 1" at sides of paper and glue closed. Cut curves in tail leaving total length about 25".

Punch 4 evenly spaced holes in the ring (1 every 4 3/4").

Tie a 12" string in each hole. Tie the ends together so each string is 7" long when joined at the center. Trim excess string. Tie, then wrap more string around a stick or strip of stiff cardboard and tie the end where strings join on the bridle, so you can fly the kite.

To Dye the Paper:

Fold the 10" x 26" folded paper back and forth lengthwise in accordion folds to form a strip about 2" x 26".

Accordion-fold strip up in 4 1/2" lengths to be 2" x 4 1/2".

Mix 4 drops food coloring with 3 tablespoons water in a saucer. Spread out newspapers for drying.

Dip only the very corners at one end of the packet in orange dye and lift it out quickly so you don't soak the paper. The color will spread.

Dip the opposite corners in green dye.

Unfold the paper very carefully, touching only the dry places. (Wet paper tears easily, so it's a good idea to dye a few extra sheets.) Lay it on newspapers to dry. (If paper needs to be smoothed when dry, iron it under a sheet of paper on a low heat setting.)

To Add Gills, Fins and Eyes:

Cut 2 gills, 4 fins (2 pink and 2 green) and 2 eyes and pupils from paper. Glue pupils to eyes. When dry, glue 1 eye to center of each gill.

Continue with last 3 steps of kite directions. Glue gills and fins in place after attaching the body.

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