



Pre- and Post-Visit Activities

The Meet the Makers: Bartering in Colonial America Program at the Mercer Museum

Grade Levels: Grades 2 -6

Program Summary:

The Meet the Makers: Bartering in Colonial America Program weaves a story for students to understand economic relationships in early American communities. Participants join a Colonial shoemaker and the owner of a general store and learn how people in early America bartered for the household objects they needed to survive. Costumed educators show how these tradespeople made shoes, tin-punch lanterns, iron nails and so much more using tools now on display in the museum.

The following suggested activities are for students visiting the museum and participating in The Meet the Makers Program. These activities are designed to be supplemental material to help students get the most out of their experience.



Pre-Activities:

Activity 1: Where is it from?

Ask students to look around the classroom or bring in objects from home. Do these items list where the item was made or what company made it? Students might find that most packaged items or clothing have that information. The goal is to see who or what made an object, and where in the world it came from.

During The Meet the Makers Program, students learn that during the Colonial time period people made products themselves, instead of being able to buy them from larger companies. If they couldn't make them, they might have to trade for objects around the world.

Split the students into groups and have each group examine their items.

- Is there a person's or company's name on the item?
- Does it say where it was made?
- How do you think it got here?
- Why do these objects have identifying labels on them while others do not?
- Were they made by hand or by a machine?

Bonus Extension: Students can research who or what company made a particular item. What is the background history of that person or company? Did they always make those items and for how long?



Activity 2: Let's Trade!

During The Meet the Makers Program, students learn why Colonial Americans traded and bartered for different goods and products. To get ready for that lesson, your class can practice bartering by having a “Trading Day” in your classroom.

Ask your students to bring in objects from home that they are willing to trade or have classroom items that students are able to trade around and return at the end of the activity.

On Trading Day, have each student set up their objects on a table or at their desk. Students then walk around and look at each other's objects. Next, bartering can begin.

Students ask to barter items from each other, just as Colonial-era artisans, tradespeople, and farmers did as a part of their routine.

At the conclusion discuss the following:

- What did you trade?
- Was it an equal trade? If so, why?
- How would your experience be different if you paid for your object?
- What was good or bad about trading?



Post-Activities:

Activity 1: Design a Pierced Tin Lantern Pattern

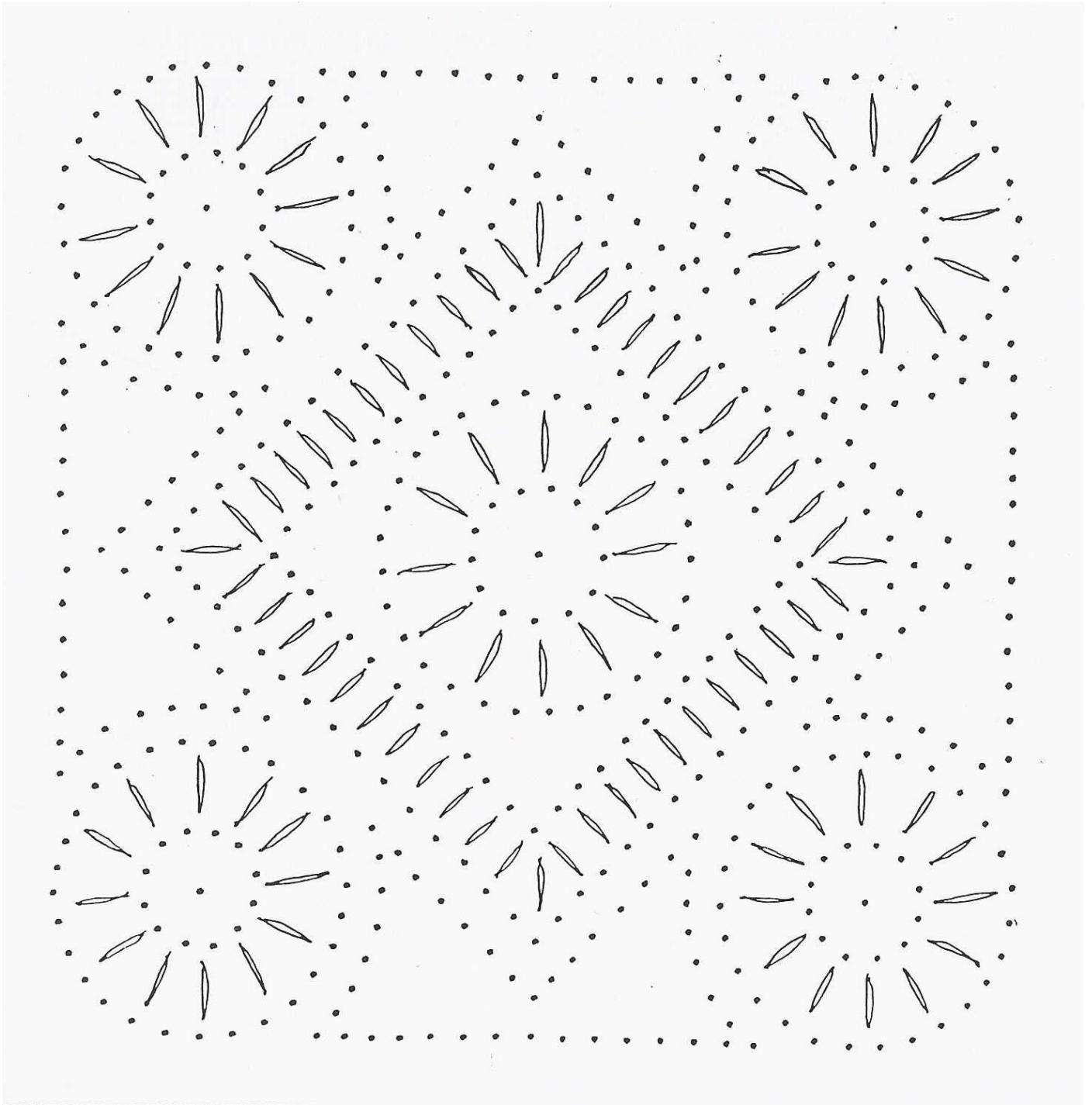
In the Meet the Makers Program you learned how tinsmiths made pierced tin lanterns. They used patterns to create intricate designs of dots and dashes on sheets of tin. An example of a pierced tin lantern pattern is on page 5.

Have your students think about what designs they would make on a pierced tin lantern. The pattern needs to be pleasant to look at and useful to let light shine through.

Next, you can hand out a piece paper and a sharp pencil to your students. Have them use the pencil to first draw the dots and dashes to make a design. Then, they can use the point of the pencil to poke through the paper where they have drawn the dots and dashes.

Students should consider and discuss as a class after the patterns are completed:

- Which designs will let them most light through?
- What kinds of shapes can be put in the pattern?
- Why would making a pattern be useful to a tinsmith?



Activity 2: Fill in the Tools Student Worksheet

Directions: During The Meet the Makers Program, you saw different tradespeople make products using tools. Using this knowledge, read the sentences below and fill in the blanks using the word bank at the bottom of the page.

1. People in Colonial America could make products themselves or _____ products with others to get what they wanted and needed.
2. The _____ sewed the uppers and the sole together to create a product that was worn.
3. _____ held Colonial shoes closed and on the wearer's feet. We use shoelaces today for this function.
4. Many small holes were added to tin lanterns with a _____ to let light to shine through.
5. A wagon carried the goods for the _____ to barter with in all the towns they traveled to.
6. Sugar, grown on islands in the Caribbean Sea, was transported to the docks in Philadelphia on a _____.
7. No one wanted to waste sugar so, _____ pinched off just a little bit from the top of a sugar cone.
8. A blacksmith made objects from metal, like nails or horseshoes, by heating up the metal and shaping it using a _____ and tongs.

Word Bank:

Buckles

Hammer

Tin punch

Ship

Sugar nippers

Trade

Shoemaker

Peddler

Fill in the Tool Student Worksheet ANSWER KEY

9. People in Colonial America could make products themselves or _____ **TRADE** _____ products with others to get what they wanted and needed.
10. The _____ **SHOEMAKER** _____ sewed the uppers and the sole together to create a product that was worn.
11. _____ **BUCKLES** _____ held Colonial shoes closed and on the wearer's feet. We use shoelaces today for this function.
12. Many small holes were added to tin lanterns with a _____ **TIN PUNCH** _____ to let light to shine through.
13. A wagon carried the goods for the _____ **PEDDLER** _____ to barter with in all the towns they traveled to.
14. Sugar, grown on islands in the Caribbean Sea, was transported to the docks in Philadelphia on a _____ **SHIP** _____.
15. No one wanted to waste sugar so, _____ **SUGAR NIPPERS** _____ pinched off just a little bit from the top of a sugar cone.
16. A blacksmith made objects from metal, like nails or horseshoes, by heating up the metal and shaping it using a _____ **HAMMER** _____ and tongs.