

The Cordage Site

by Carol J. Ellick, M.A., RPA, SRI Foundation
cjellick@srifoundation.org

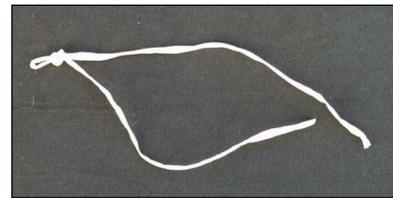
Age: age 5 and up

Objectives: Provides an introduction to the making of cordage, and the preservation of perishable materials. Participants will make a twined bracelet with a bead.



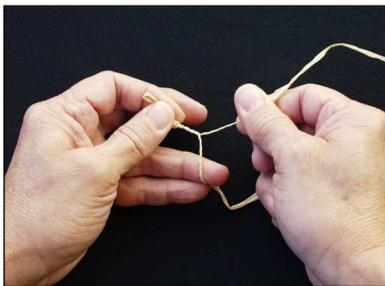
Materials: natural, un-dyed raffia; “turquoise” (plastic) beads; masking tape; instruction pages; table

Preparation: Photocopy 8 instruction pages for placement on the table. Cut a sufficient quantity of raffia for the event into approximately 20–22 inch segments. Fold each piece in half and knot close to the bend, forming a small loop. Bundle bracelet blanks into packets of 25.

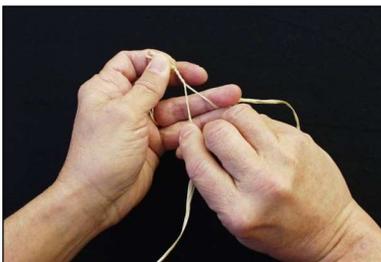
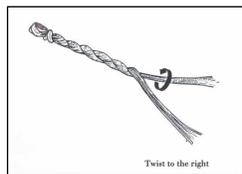


Practice making cordage so that you can easily explain the twisting and crossing motions of fingers and materials.

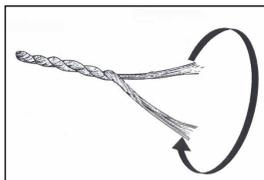
Number of volunteers: 1 volunteer to every 1–2 children



Procedure: Give each visitor a pre-knotted piece of raffia. Have them hold the knot between the thumb and first finger of their left hand. With the thumb and first finger of their right hand, they will twist the top piece of raffia to the right (away from themselves).



They will make several tight twists, about 1/4 inch in length, then cross the twisted piece over the untwisted piece (toward themselves). This twisted piece gets held between the ring and pinky finger of the left hand so that it doesn't unwind.





They will repeat with the new top piece—twisting, then crossing over the other strand towards themselves. This continues until the cordage is long enough to encircle the wrist. When complete, slip a bead onto the two ends then tie a knot to end the cord. The bracelet can be made to encircle the wrist by putting the end-knot through the loop and tying a loose knot.

What they take away: Each person gets to take their bracelet.

Preservation message: Illustrates a fragile technology that is often missing from archaeological sites. Not everything that people used when the place was occupied is preserved in a site over time. Perishable items rot or deteriorate for many different reasons.

DIRECTIONS

Tape the end of the raffia and the knot to the table.

Grip each strand with the first finger and thumb.

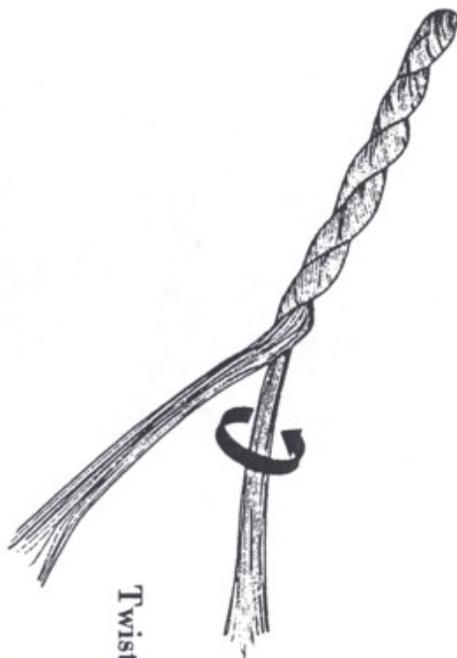
Twist the individual strands, turning to the right.

(Push thumbs to the right)

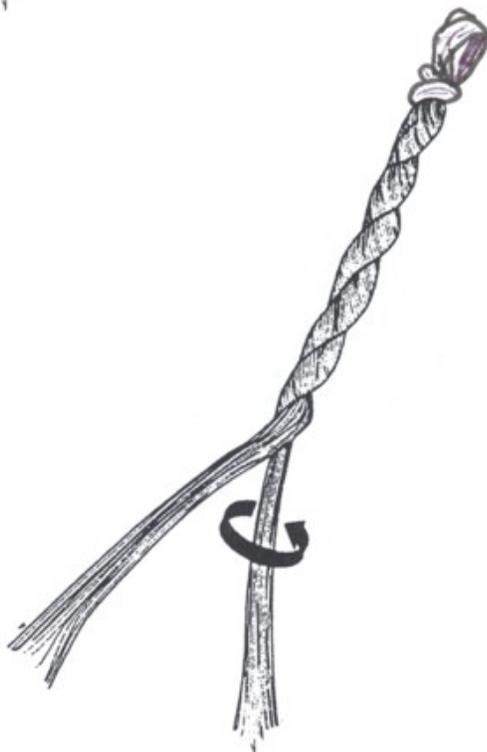
After a length of each is twisted tight,

switch the right strand over the top of the left.

Continue twisting and switching sides.



Twist to the right



Twist to the right

Cross over to the left

