

A person wearing a blue denim apron over a light-colored shirt is working with clay on a wooden table. Their hands are shaping a piece of clay. In the background, there are various pottery-making tools and a bowl of water. The scene is brightly lit, creating a warm and creative atmosphere.

create

**CHARLOTTE MASON
HANDICRAFT GUIDE**

CHARLOTTE MASON HANDICRAFT
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

SAMPLE

WRITTEN BY

YEN CABAG

*The first complete CM handicraft guide created
specifically for the family*

create

**CHARLOTTE MASON
HANDICRAFT GUIDE**

SAMPLE

Create: Charlotte Mason Handicraft Guide

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A Brief Background: Who was Charlotte Mason?

Charlotte Mason was a British educator who lived from 1842 to 1923. She invested her life in helping improve education for children. Although she remained single until her death, she began with observing other people's children.

Some of her revolutionary ideas included emphasizing the importance of teaching parents and educators how the mind learns, and these findings are compiled in the books called the Home Education series. (Thankfully, these books are now in the public domain, and we also link to them here.) The first book was actually a compilation of a series of lectures she gave, which also eventually resulted in the forming of the Parents' Educational Union (PEU). This same group eventually launched a periodical called "Parents' Review," as a way of keeping members of the PEU connected.

During Charlotte's time in England, the general belief was that educated children can only come from educated parents (a mindset that is, sadly, still prevalent in the Philippines today). She advocated for "a liberal education for all," believing that her methods could apply to children from any social class.

To prove her convictions, she applied her findings to a group of children in a mining community, all ragtag, with little hope of ever achieving anything in life. To the surprise of the superintendent, her methods awakened the minds of these children, resulting in their carrying themselves with dignity and narrating back long pieces of literature with ease and confidence!

In 1891, Charlotte founded a school called House of Education in Ambleside, England, which focused on training governesses and other people who worked with young children. Around that time, the PEU added the word "national" to its organization name, making it the Parents' National Educational Union (PNEU). Soon, a Parents' Review School was put up, applying Charlotte Mason's philosophy of education.

Eventually, more schools sprang up applying her philosophy and methods, with Ambleside being the training college for the teachers, all with the hopes of making a liberal education available to all.

An Overview of the Charlotte Mason Method

The Charlotte Mason method has grown in popularity in recent years, reviving teachings of the British educator-reformer who revolutionized education in England in the 1800s. If you purchased this book and you're already familiar with the CM method, feel free to skip this section—or consider it a refresher! But if you stumbled across this book and it's the first time you've heard of the Charlotte Mason method, I hope I can help enlighten you a bit: what is it really all about?

The principles of a Charlotte Mason are a vital component of being able to apply it effectively. In this page, I will attempt to share a little bit—just a teeny bit!—about the principles that affect school lessons, in the hopes that you will be able to get a quick overview of what it can look like.

First, some principles to bear in mind:

- Every child is born a person.
- The child's mind has powers enough for helping him assimilate the knowledge he needs.
- The mind hungers for more knowledge, hence the need for a generous curriculum written in excellent language.
- Education is the science of relations.
- Knowledge is not assimilated until it is reproduced.

These are just a teaser of the principles that Charlotte Mason advocated, to give you the context for some of the elements that comprise a CM education.

Generally, a CM homeschool will have the following elements:

Living Books

Charlotte Mason attests that the child's mind feeds and grows on knowledge, and has the capabilities of understanding real knowledge. This is why, in a CM homeschool, we emphasize the importance of using living books, and plenty of them!

Narration

In believing that “knowledge is not assimilated until it is reproduced,” we use narration as a foundational tool for all CM school lessons (except Math and poetry). After a single reading, we expect our students to tell back what they heard or read.

A Rich Curriculum

Because a child's mind is hungry for plenty of living ideas, we expose him to as much of these as possible. This applies not just to books, but also to the greatest works of art, poetry, music, sculpture, and nature. This is the reason why we have things that we call “riches,” which includes:

Picture or Artist Study

Composer or Music Study

Hymns

Folk Songs

Poetry

Nature Study

As we expose our children to the greatest minds through their works of art, literature, music, and others, we also expose them to the Great Mind that created nature. Nature study is a foundation for all science lessons, encouraging children to observe, explore, and draw their observations from a young age.

Handicraft

Charlotte Mason believed in the value of teaching children to work with their hands, and not for busywork copy-pasting which eventually winds up in the trash, but making something useful or beautiful. *This is the reason we have decided to create this guide book, and we hope this can help you be consistent in having handicrafts as part of your children's weekly schedule.*

Copying great minds

Another important aspect of the CM method is copying great minds. This includes copywork, which involves copying passages word for word, as well as other “keeping” methods. For example, a commonplace book is kept for purposes of recording passages that we love. We also have things like picture study, where we study a painting by a specific artist and then “narrate” or “tell back” what we remember by drawing the painting from memory.

History chronology

An important aspect of a CM education is the way that we teach history. Instead of having dates, names, and facts to memorize, we teach history using living books, and

then use tools to show the movement of time and chronology. This includes the personal timeline, the history timeline, and eventually the Book of Centuries.

Just An Overview to Whet Your Appetite

Again, this is meant to be just a birds' eye view, and we hope it has stirred up your interest in learning more about the Charlotte Mason method.

There's still so much to learn and enjoy, and we encourage you to explore our website, sign up for our free e-book, and get connected with a community of other parents who want to give our children the benefits of this time-tested method.

SAMPLE

Charlotte Mason Handicraft

Do you know that a Charlotte Mason education is not all about books? Of course, we love living books! But because CM emphasizes the importance of a wide curriculum, we also make sure to include things like music, art, and teaching our children to work with their hands.

Handicrafts are a necessary component in a Charlotte Mason homeschool. With Miss Mason's emphasis on education being the science of relations, we endeavor to introduce our children and make them familiar with different materials and tools. Here's what Miss Mason herself says:

The children I am speaking of are much occupied with things as well as with books, because 'Education is the Science of Relations,' is the principle which regulates their curriculum; that is, a child goes to school with many aptitudes which he should put into effect. So, he learns a good deal of science, because children have no difficulty in understanding principles, though technical details baffle them. He practises various handicrafts that he may know the feel of wood, clay, leather, and the joy of handling tools, that is, that he may establish a due relation with materials. (Vol 6 Page 31)

Adjusting the Schedule to Include Handicraft

The Charlotte Mason method includes handicraft in the weekly work, but not just as a side hobby. Do you know that she recommends even adjusting the weekly reading requirements in order to include "one to two hours weekly for physical training and handicrafts"?

I admit, sometimes it's easy for us to let handicraft slide, thinking that it's not "as important" as all the other book learning! I stand corrected. Miss Mason believes in the value of handicraft, as you can see in the following quote:

Again, we know that the human hand is a wonderful and exquisite instrument to be used in a hundred movements exacting delicacy, direction and force; every such movement is a cause of joy as it leads to the pleasure of execution and the triumph of success. We begin to understand this and make some efforts to train the young in the deft handling of tools and the practice of handicrafts. Some day, perhaps, we shall see apprenticeship to trades revived, and good and beautiful work enforced. In so far, we are laying ourselves out to secure that each shall “live his life”; and that, not at his neighbour’s expense; because, so wonderful is the economy of the world that when a man really lives his life he benefits his neighbour as well as himself; we all thrive in the well-being of each. (Vol 6 page 328)

Indeed, the CM method emphasizes excellent execution, not just in written or academic work, but also for handicrafts. Because of that, we as the parents need to be mindful of what kind of work our children are able to do with their hands, so that we can avoid unnecessary frustration and stress!

The Power of Handicraft

Do you know that handicraft contributes to a child’s imagination? Take a look at this excerpt from a Parents’ Review article.

The child who knows how to make a basket, a clay model, a cardboard coalscuttle, an apron, a pudding, and who, later on, can design and work in leather or copper and ultimately bind a book, such a child has visions of a house beautiful and knows that it takes but a turn of the hand here and there to turn the barrack into the home. “Loving eye and patient hand, shall work with joy and bless the land.”

(From Imagination as a Powerful Factor in a Well-balanced Mind, by E.A. Parish, The Parents’ Review Volume 25, no. 5, 1914, pgs. 379-390)

Important Principles for Charlotte Mason Handicraft

Here are the points that Miss Mason emphasizes when we think about how to do handicrafts in a CM homeschool, in my own words (taken from Volume 1 page 315-316):

1. That they should not be made to work on create-and-toss projects

Miss Mason calls these types of arts and crafts “making trifles such as pea and stick work, paper mats, and the like.” Now, from the very start, she calls us to differentiate handicrafts from the typical picture of school arts and crafts. For most of us, the word “handicraft” conjures up endless mountains of papers with cut and glue projects that we struggle to toss in the trash for sentimental reasons—but which we know serve no other purpose!

Instead, handicraft in a Charlotte Mason homeschool refers to working on items that are useful or beautiful. Think of it in terms of the word “craftsman” and you will get a more accurate picture of what kind of activities are involved!

2. That we should teach the children “slowly and carefully what they are to do”

Here we are encouraged to take time to teach our children “slowly and carefully” what to do. This implies that learning a handicraft takes time. In fact, take a look at what Miss Mason says in Volume 6, *Towards a Philosophy of Education*:

Probably some educational authorities may decide to give one hour or two weekly to physical training and handicrafts, in which case the time-table must allow for so much the less reading.

(Vol 6 pg 126-127)

Here we can see the importance she places on including one to two hours a week to “physical training and handicrafts,” by saying that we need to adjust the reading schedule to make room for it! I admit, sometimes it’s tempting to over-emphasize the value of reading the best living books that we forget to spend time on teaching our children handicrafts!

Of course, if you do not know how to do the handicraft yourself, the good news is that these days, we have lots of videos that can teach us! For example, you can search for YouTube videos, or if you prefer more structured lessons CreativeLive has a few handicraft courses you can choose from!

3. That we do not allow haphazard work

The CM method places a high value on excellent work, and handicraft is just one way we practice that. We teach our children the process, and then we expect them to work at it wholeheartedly. Do you know that children already have a natural affinity towards beauty and perfection? All we have to do is call out that desire by not accepting “slipshod” work and encouraging them to give their best in all that they do.

4. That we should be mindful of what kind of work the child is able to do excellently.

Because we aim for excellent execution, we also need to be aware of our children’s fine motor skills so that we can choose a handicraft that he can do well in. For example, it will not be fair to expect excellent work in crochet from a child who is not even able yet to hold the necessary finger position for the yarn

How to Do Handicraft Lessons

Because we are encouraged to teach our child slowly and carefully, let's take a look at how we can teach handicraft to our children:

1. Pick a handicraft that's a good fit for your child's skills.

Remember, our goal for handicraft is excellent execution, and your child will only be able to do that if his work is something within his power to do! It will not be fair to expect a child who still struggles with fine motor skills to create intricate details on a clay sculpture, but he may likely be able to create the larger forms.

2. Remember that handicraft will involve movement.

I love this description of handicraft classes, making it a great bonding time with our kids:

Handicraft classes with us are not stiff and formal proceedings; children may move to fetch their materials or to get a better light on their models, they may talk. One sees the proof of the interest they are taking in the fact that at these times, they only want to talk about their work.

(From Imagination as a Powerful Factor in a Well-balanced Mind, by E.A. Parish, The Parents' Review Volume 25, no. 5, 1914, pgs. 379-390)

3. Start with the basic actions required.

For example, if your chosen handicraft is embroidery, you don't give your child a full-sized project right away. Instead, you start with teaching him or her how to do a

basic stitch. Then you get him or her to practice this over and over until it becomes almost second nature, and then you introduce another stitch, or perhaps apply that stitch to a pattern.

If your chosen handicraft is wood carving, you may want to start with a softer material, such as soap, and then work your way up to carving candles, and then wood. You might also teach basic strokes first.

4. Remember to teach safety precautions.

Handicraft can involve tools that some parents might cringe to let their child use. To be honest, before I learned CM's philosophy, I probably wouldn't have imagined letting a 7-year-old handle a knife for carving soap! But because I understood the importance, I had to teach my oldest son the safe way to handle the knife (for example, whittling in a direction away from his face!)

Of course, that may also include your being present when younger children handle tools that need to be used safely.

5. Encourage observation

Most handicrafts will require your child to make careful observation. For example, Miss Mason encourages teaching young children to sculpt with clay based on a three-dimensional model instead of a flat 2D drawing. Encourage them to observe.

Take a look at this excerpt from The Parents' Review:

Those of you who teach will know the expectant and pleased air of the child who comes to fetch a lump of clay. He knows that he is going to model an apple and he already sees in the clay the wonder of beauty which will be the result of his work. He is, at first, surprised that his efforts at modelling produce so strange a result, that when he would press he squeezes, that when he would make a dimple, he makes a hole. Gradually he comes to know that, first of all, he must think what he is going to do, and that after long thinking only may he venture to act. By imagination, he must see the

goal towards which he is working, with his brain he must so control his hands and arms, and that they will fashion for him the thing he has in mind. When he experiences this sense of mastery over material, he has taken the first great step towards independence, and he has the comforting sense that what he does will not be touched, that bad or good, it will stand as his work.

(From Imagination as a Powerful Factor in a Well-balanced Mind, by E.A. Parish, The Parents' Review Volume 25, no. 5, 1914, pgs. 379-390)

6. Schedule at least one to two hours of handicraft time per week.

One important thing to remember with handicraft is that practice makes perfect! CM school schedules usually left the afternoons free for things like nature study, handicraft, and other interests. If that's not wholly possible for you, at least make sure that you plot in a time slot for handicraft at least once a week. (Check out our post on creating a Charlotte Mason schedule.)

Adding Handicraft to your Charlotte Mason Homeschool Schedule

We hope this has helped you see handicrafts as the important component they are in your child's education!

How to Use This Handicraft Guide Book

In this book, we hope to give some ideas for handicraft, roughly divided by age, but we believe the parents still have the best sense of which kinds of craftwork your child is able to do at which age. Every child is born a person, and each one develops at a different pace, so please take the suggestions with a grain of salt and match them with your child's skills!

Note that *we put the handicraft under the youngest age group that we believe a child can do it successfully*. It does not mean that a child in Form 2 or 3 cannot do the handicraft listed in Form 1. Instead, we arrange the handicrafts that require greater fine motor skills in the higher year levels. This is why, if you notice, we have more handicraft options listed in the lower years.

Under each suggested handicraft, we include *a rough list of materials needed*, so it can help you decide which is the most manageable at your current life season, but also to encourage you to head out and get the stuff you need to get started!

Because our goal is to show you it's doable, we will share some *personal stories about our experience with each handicraft* (if applicable). As available, we will also include some photos of actual output by CM-homeschooled kids, ideally those in the Philippine context. We hope this can help inspire you.

Then, we hope to give you *a bit of starter instructions for each handicraft*. Our goal is not to be a comprehensive guide for every handicraft under the sun, but simply to give you a little bit of an encouragement, a little push, so to speak, so that you can see that it doesn't have to be super difficult! *For some of these, we put helpful tips or general instructions instead of step by step procedures*.

Indeed, a disclaimer is in place here: *we do not claim to be experts at all the handicraft options listed here*, and apart from a beginner's eye view of how it's done, we recommend you to make your own research, whether through books or videos online.

Once you find something that you feel you want to pursue long-term, we highly encourage you to look for more detailed instructions so you and your child can really delve into your chosen handicraft!

Note that we don't go alphabetical on our suggested handicraft; instead, if you want to go quickly to any given handicraft, feel free to use the Table of Contents links!

So without further ado, let's dig right in!

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Handicraft Ideas for Form 1 (First to Third Grades)

The Handicrafts best fitted for children under nine seem to me to be chair-caning, carton-work, basket-work, Smyrna rugs, Japanese curtains, carving in cork, samplers on coarse canvas showing a variety of stitches, easy needlework, knitting (big needles and wool), etc. (From Vol 1 page 315)

Taking into account what's available in the Philippines and in our current generation, here are some recommended handicrafts for Form 1. Bear in mind that we put the suggested handicrafts in the youngest age that they may be introduced, but they can definitely be continued into the higher grades as the child progresses in skill!

Origami (paper folding)

Materials Needed:

- Colored paper cut in squares
- Origami book, online guide, or YouTube videos

Although Miss Mason discourages cut-and-glue activities, paper folding is an exception, because it allows children to create items that are both beautiful and useful. In fact, paper sloyd is one handicraft that she recommends for younger children! (We describe paper sloyd more in the next section.) Take a look at this excerpt from The Parents' Review:

Paper folding enables children to design and execute their own models, raffia work provides them with Christmas and birthday presents, and affords such excellent opportunities for independent and original work.

(From Suggestions for Holiday Amusements by E. A. Parish, The Parents' Review Volume 14, 1903, pgs. 366-373)

Origami is the Japanese art of paper-folding. And the good news is that origami lets you create things that you can actually use, such as envelopes, gift boxes, paper toys, party decorations, and many more.

We have found that toddlers and preschoolers generally take to paper planes quite well, perhaps because it's not just a paper project but also a toy! Of course, it depends on the child's skill as to whether he or she can make a nicely folded paper plane, but with practice, it's quite possible for them to be able to make one that glides well.

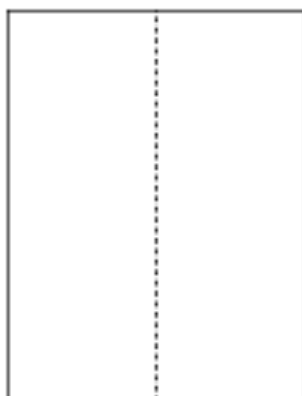
With my two older boys, I taught them origami in Form 1. But our youngest surprised us by being able to make paper airplanes, boats, and spaceships before he reached 4 years old! We would find all these paper toys strewn around the house, and yes it's clutter, but I can't really complain! :)



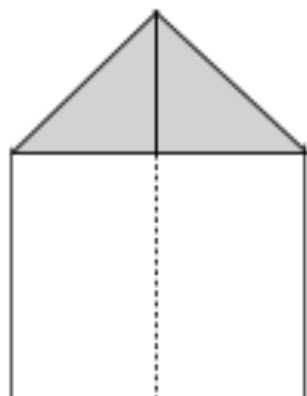
How to Make a Paper Airplane



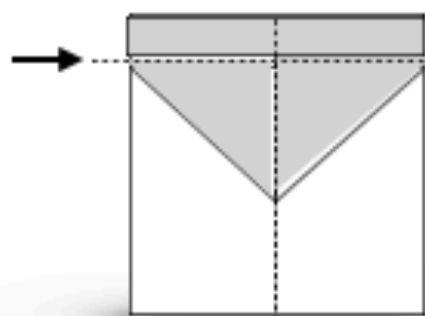
1. Start with a rectangular piece of paper.



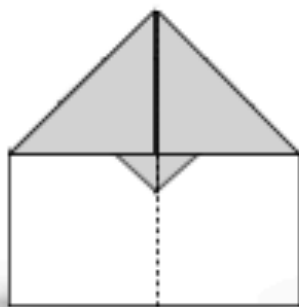
2. Fold down the center to form a crease.



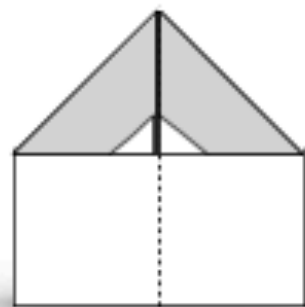
3. Fold down the top left and top right corners to form triangles on top.



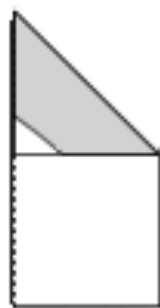
4. Imagine a line about an inch below the triangles' corners, and fold the top of your work down.



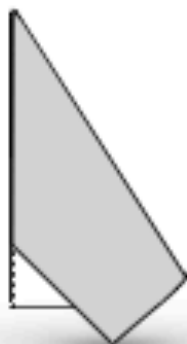
5. Fold down both the top left and top right corners again to form two new triangles.



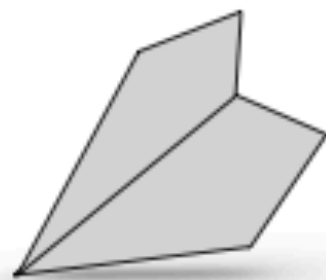
6. Fold up the two little triangles.



7. Fold your paper airplane down the middle.



8. Fold down the top corners of both sides of the paper plane.



9. Have fun tossing your paper plane in the air!

Paper sloyd

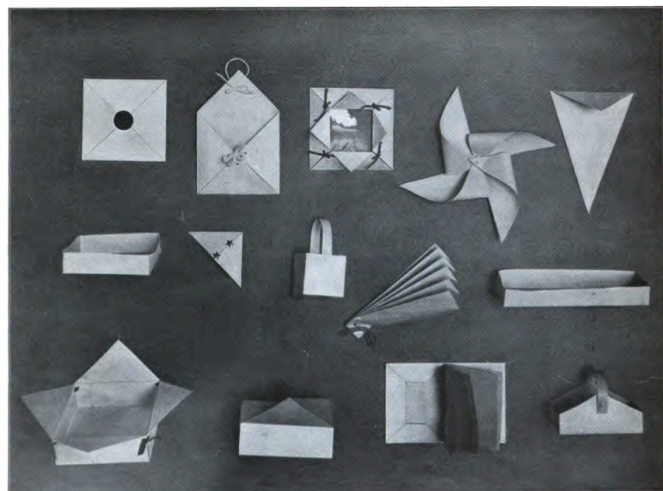
Materials Needed:

- *Thick paper or thin cardboard*
- *Ruler*
- *Pencil*
- *Scissors*
- *Pencil compass*
- *Puncher*
- *Possible additional materials: ties, paste, gummed parquetry*
- *Paper sloyd book (see free e-book link below), online guide, or YouTube videos*

Paper sloyd is a bit of a whole different ball game, because it involves the child actually using a ruler to make measurements. But Miss Mason highly recommends it, and it helps your child not just in terms of handicraft but also for visualizing math concepts! How's that for hitting two birds with one stone?

My oldest son was able to do paper sloyd in his early elementary years. I was happy to see him painstakingly making measurements on the ruler and making as straight a cut as possible. He would proudly hang his current work over his work desk for weeks at a time.

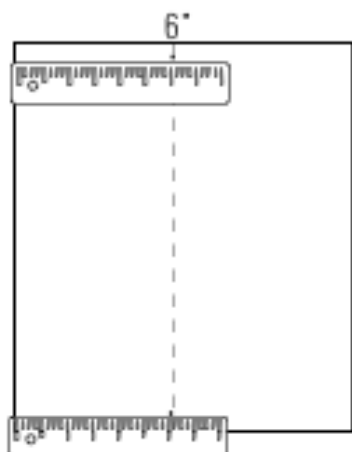
For paper sloyd, the public domain book **Paper Sloyd: A Handbook for Primary Grades** by Ednah Anne Rich is the most-often recommended among CM circles. You can download it [here](#), or buy a [hard copy version here](#). We also reproduce some pages from the book here for your perusal.



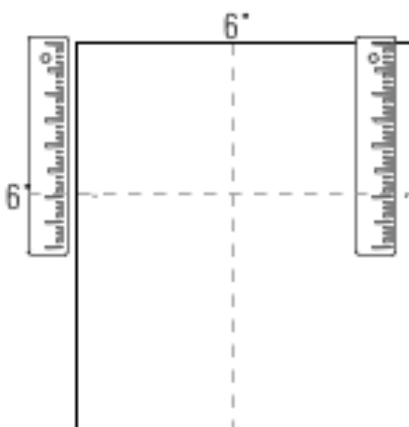
PAPER SLOYD MODELS FOR THE FIRST YEAR

How to Make a Paper Sloyd Envelop

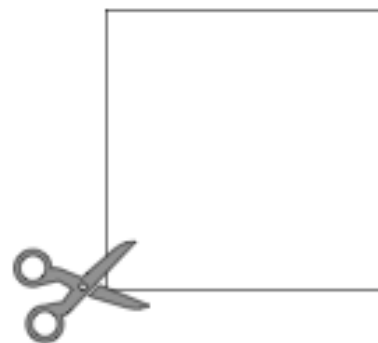
In the free e-book, the instructions for making an envelop begin with instructions for making a square piece of paper. Here are the instructions:



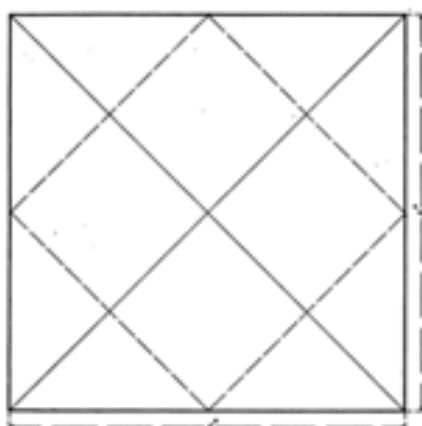
1. Place the ruler on the paper just below the top, even at the left; place a dot at 6". Slip the ruler to the bottom of the paper, even at the left; place a dot at 6". Draw a light line through the dots from top to bottom.



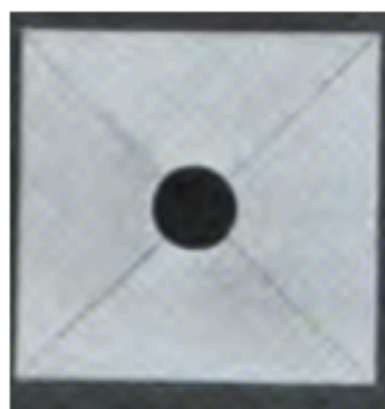
2. Place the ruler on the left side of the paper, even at the top; place a dot at 6". Place the ruler on the right, even at the top; place a dot at 6". Draw a light line through the dots from left to right.



3. Holding the paper at the bottom, cut the line at the right from bottom to top; turn paper to the right, and cut on the line.



4. Place the paper on the desk in the first position; place the ruler across the paper touching the upper left and lower right corners; draw a light line. Place ruler on lower left and upper right corners; draw a line. Fold upper left corner to the center; fold opposite corner; fold the other corners.



5. Inclose a letter in the envelope and seal the corners with 1" circle of gummed parquetry. (Yen: you may use a piece of flattened clay or Glu-Tack.)

Thank you for downloading this free sample!

To purchase the full e-book, head on over to:

CharlotteMasonInternational.com/Shop

