



Hearts in Unity "Counting Stick Puzzles" for Children in Tanzania, Africa

Supplies:

- Jumbo Craft Sticks (3/4-inch x 6-inch) -- 10 for each puzzle
- Sandpaper (fine grit)
- Acrylic paint
- Paintbrushes or foam brushes
- Masking tape (blue painters tape is recommended)
- Clear Acrylic Sealer Spray (any brand; matte or gloss finish)
- Ultra Fine Sharpie-brand permanent marker (black)

Please do NOT use crayons, water-based markers, colored pencils, chalk, glitter, paper, or any 3 dimensional decorations (pom poms, foam pieces, etc.) for this project.

Instructions:

1. Lightly sand the edges of the sticks, if needed, to ensure that there are no loose splinters on the edges of the wood. Inspect the sticks, and choose sticks that are as straight as possible (not warped, chipped or twisted).

Note: For a smoother painting surface, spray the sticks with a coat of clear acrylic sealer spray BEFORE proceeding with step #2 below. If starting with a coat of acrylic sealant before painting, you must still add another coat of the spray sealant over the acrylic painted design as described in step #6 below.



2. Line up 10 sticks, ensuring edges are even. Place two strips of masking tape across the sticks as shown.



3. Turn taped sticks over. Be sure to work on a protected surface.



4. Lightly draw desired design on the sticks with a pencil. Be sure to leave about 3/4-inch blank (no design) at both ends of each stick.



5. Paint your design, leaving about 3/4-inch unpainted at both ends of each stick. Let dry thoroughly. When dry, remove masking tape. Use an Exacto knife (razor blade) to split sticks apart if the paint is thick and the sticks are stuck together.



6. Following the instructions on the spray can, spray the painted side of sticks with a coat of clear acrylic sealer spray. Let dry. Spray the unpainted side of sticks with a coat of the acrylic sealant, also. Let dry thoroughly.

7. With the sticks in the correct order for your design, use a black ultra fine Sharpie-brand permanent marker to write the numbers 1 through 10, and the words **one** through **ten** on the ends of each of the sticks as shown in the photo below.



Decorating alternatives:

Using Permanent Markers.

If you would like to use permanent markers instead of acrylic paint, spray the clear acrylic sealant on both sides of the sticks FIRST so that the color from the permanent markers doesn't bleed on the bare wood. Two coats of sealant are recommended. If using permanent markers do NOT spray the colored design with the acrylic sealant as noted in step #6 of the instructions (the design may bleed)

Using Spray Paint.

If you would like to use spray paint, a coat of white primer spray paint on the bare wood is highly recommended (you can add the primer paint after the sticks are taped together.) If you use spray paint in dark colors, either tape off the end of the primed sticks so that the ends are a light color, or paint the ends with white/light paint for high contrast when writing the numbers and number words on the ends of the sticks in step #7.

Need more ideas?

- Do an internet search for:
 - popsicle stick puzzles
 - thumbprint art
 - easy painting ideas
- Use foam/sponge shapes
- Use stencils
- Trace cookie cutter shapes



When you complete a set of 10 counting sticks, and they are completely dry, rubber-band them together as a set (or put each set in a separate #10 envelope) before packaging and sending them to Hearts in Unity.

Hearts in Unity
P.O. Box 41
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USA

When Hearts in Unity receives the Counting Stick Puzzles that you made, each set will be placed in a fabric storage bag. If you know how to sew, and would like to participate in the project to make the fabric bags for the puzzles, please contact us for more information and the pattern.

Thank you for your help with this Counting Stick Puzzle project! The children in Tanzania will love your gifts!