

Mandala project first of many for kids at museum

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DAYTONA BEACH — For centuries, Buddhist monks and Hindu adherents have expressed their spirituality through mandalas, geometric sand paintings that spring from a dot symbolizing the seed of creation.

The monks pray as they work, silently hoping for world peace or maybe something more worldly, like rain.

When it's all over, the patterns scatter with the wind, symbolizing life's impermanence, according to Melissa Bresnahan, education coordinator for the Southeast Museum of Photography.

"It's all about committing yourself," Bresnahan said as she and Gary Lester helped children create their own mandalas recently with glue, crayons and sand. "While they are doing this they think about a wish, and when you are doing your picture, you should think about something important you want."

A monk doesn't lay down an outline, but it's OK to experi-

Next Projects

On Dec. 8, children will experiment with Polaroid cameras. They will tour the museum at 5 p.m. Jan. 16 and, inspired by Persian run crafters, will "weave" photo collages on Jan. 26.

For reservations, call 386-506-5469

ment, Bresnahan said as they laid their first strokes of color. Next came glue to hold the sand in place.

"That looks awesome," Lester said as 6-year-old Victoria Blackman mixed her own shade of green sand, weighing the cups in her tiny hands with the care of a chef mixing ingredients.

Eight-year-old Alexis De Jesus patiently encouraged her sister, 4-year-old Jasmine, as she squeezed glue onto her canvas, while 11-year-old Dillon Blackman struggled to funnel glue



Neighbors/VICTORIA ALDRICH

Jane Davis and her son, 6-year-old Thomas Varle, create a mandala during a youth art session Nov. 10 at the Southeast Museum of Photography.

down a straw.

"It's just a little experiment of mine," he said, shaking his head when things went awry.

Six-year-old Thomas Varle turned his head from side to side as he silently pondered where to lay his first drops of red sand.

"Don't forget to make a wish," his mother, Jane Davis, reminded him.

The program was the first of several free youth art events at the museum's new home inside the Mori Hosseini Center, in conjunction with National Geo-

graphic photographer Steve McCurry's exhibit, "The Path to Buddha," and photos by Iranian filmmaker/photographer Abbas Kiarostami and the late Andres Kertesz.