

# Lantern Making

**You will need:**

## Withies

Buff willow withies are strong, light and bendable and are used for making the structure of the lantern. They come in bundles of various lengths, the shorter withies (120-150cm) are quite thin and can usually be bent without soaking. Mainly used for small lanterns.

The longer, thicker withies (180cm) need to be soaked overnight to avoid snapping when bent. Leave them in the bath or a convenient stream! When making the lanterns keep the withies damp to keep them pliable.

## Bamboo Canes

To carry your lantern. Saw up to required lengths

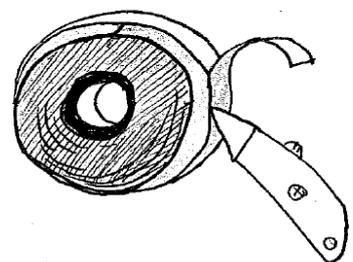
## Masking Tape

Used to join the withies together. Don't use low tac tape, it's not strong enough! Tear or cut strips ready for use.

## Gaffa Tape

Used for strong, structural joints eg fixing in the carrying stick. Cut down the centre of roll with a craft knife to make thinner strips.

## Tissue Paper



Used to cover the structure. We use wet strength tissue paper, it's very strong and doesn't disintegrate in the rain. Only use ordinary tissue paper to colour over the top of the wet strength tissue paper.

## pVA Glue

Dilute with water 50/50. Used to stick tissue covering over the structure.

## Wire

Thin wire sometimes used to make joints stronger.

## Lights

To light the lantern.

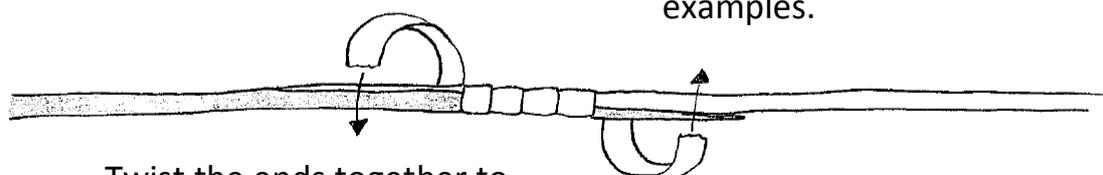
### **Equipment:**

Pliers or secateurs to cut withies, craft knife to shape the ends of withies, saw, scissors, plastic sheet or bin bags for table covering, glue brushes/sponges and containers. Cable ties for moving joints.

# Techniques

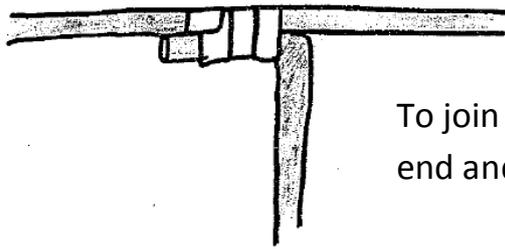
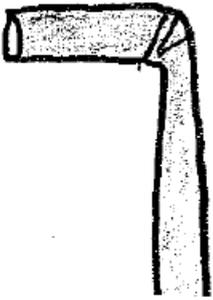
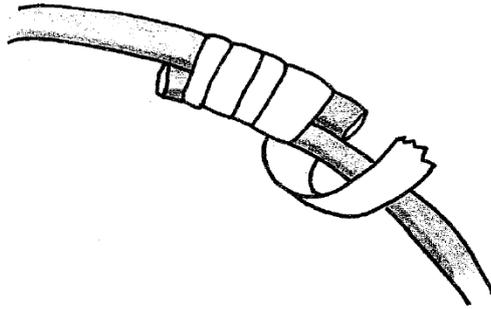
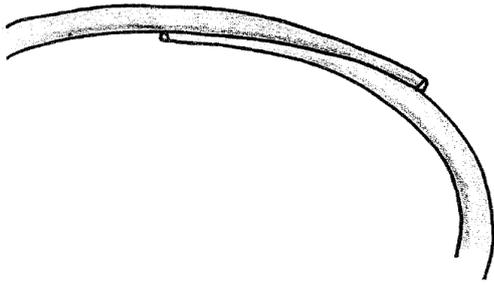
1. If necessary wipe any excess moisture or mould! Off the withies before using.
2. Cut the withies to lengths required.
3. Join the withies with masking tape.

Here are some different examples.

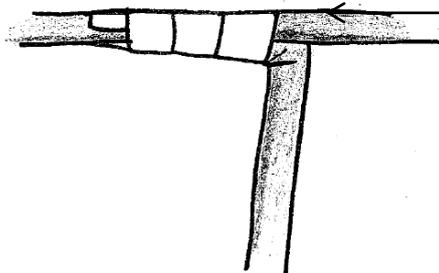
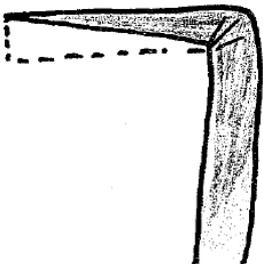


Twist the ends together to make longer withies.

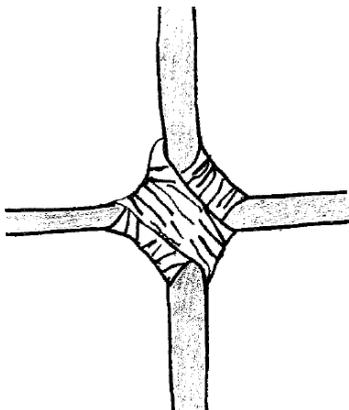




To join a withie at an angle bend the end and tape together.



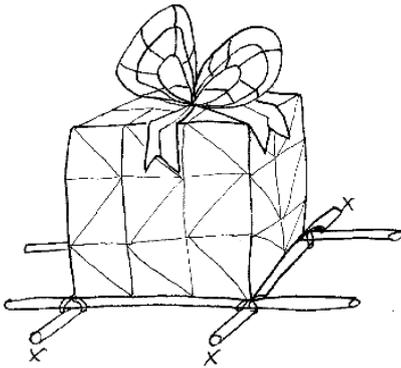
To make a neater joint shave the end with a craft knife.



Cross join. Wind the tape diagonally from back to front on each side until it's secure and squeeze tight. Also known as a figure of 8 joint.

## Lantern Size

Think about the size of your lantern, who will be holding it, and where will it have to go e.g. through a door! If it's too big it will catch the wind and make it very difficult for the carrier.



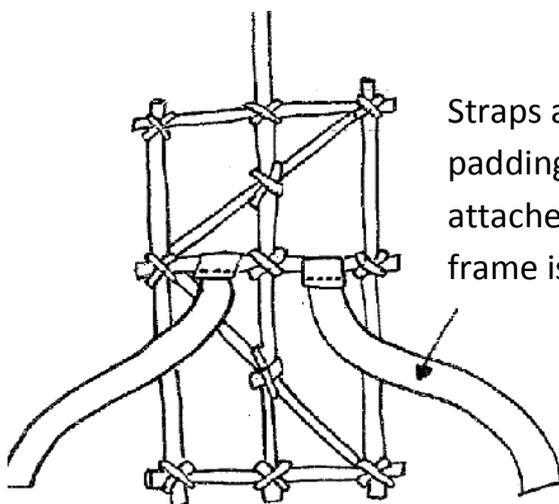
A lantern can also be built on a frame and carried by more than 1 person.

Bamboo frame

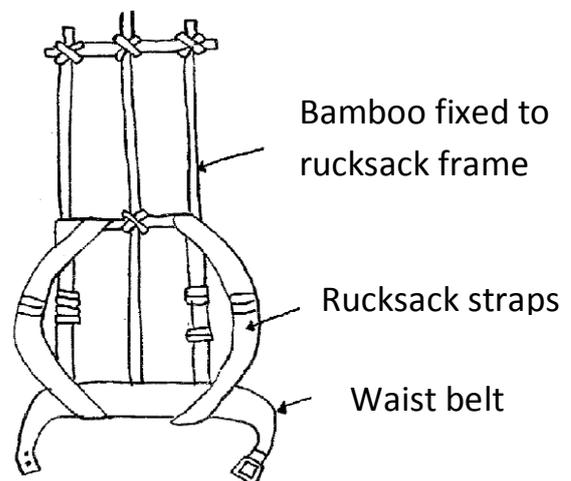
## Frames

Large lanterns need to be attached to a frame made from bamboo, so they can be strong, safe and comfortable to wear. You can also use an old frame rucksack or baby carrier. Saw the bamboo to the right lengths and fix with duct tape in a figure of 8. It needs to be very tight and secure. Wire can also be used to strengthen joints.

Bamboo frame



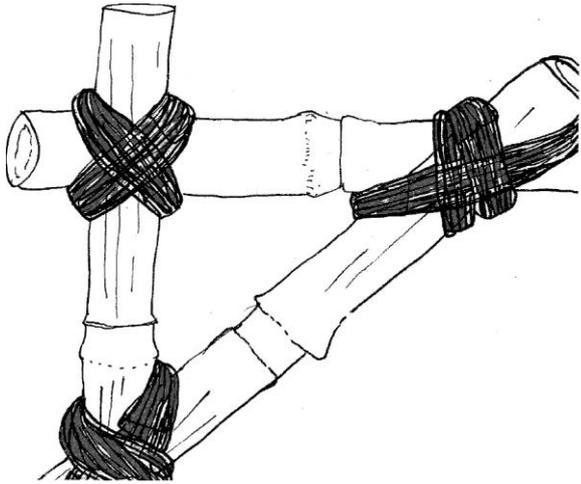
Straps and sponge padding is attached after the frame is made



Bamboo fixed to rucksack frame

Rucksack straps

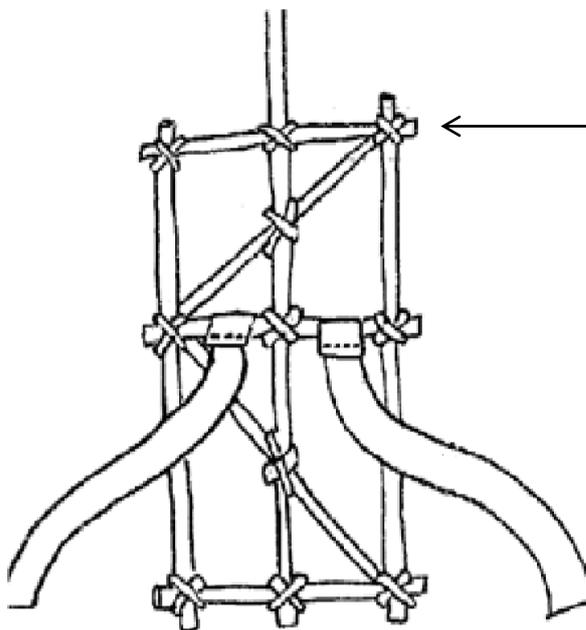
Waist belt



Close up. Figure of 8 on a bamboo frame.

## Safety

Never carry large lantern if you are unwell or have a bad neck or back. Always have extra help to guide you if your visibility is impaired by the lantern.



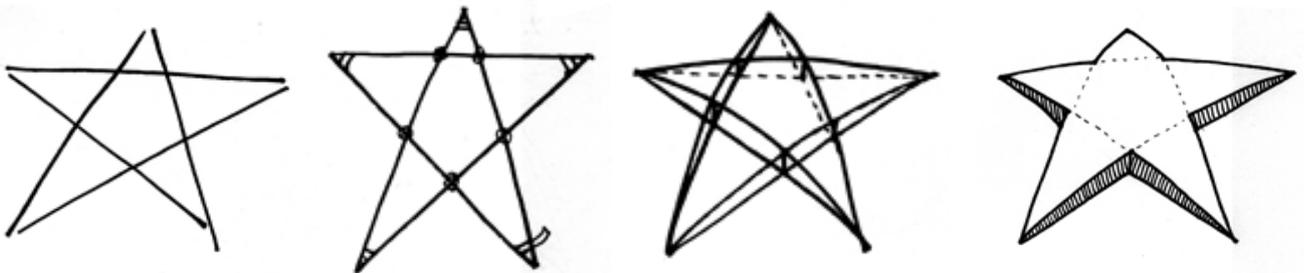
This cane must sit against the shoulders, not at the back of the neck as it could cause injury if the carrier falls.

This cane must sit on the hips not on the lower back.

# Basic Shapes

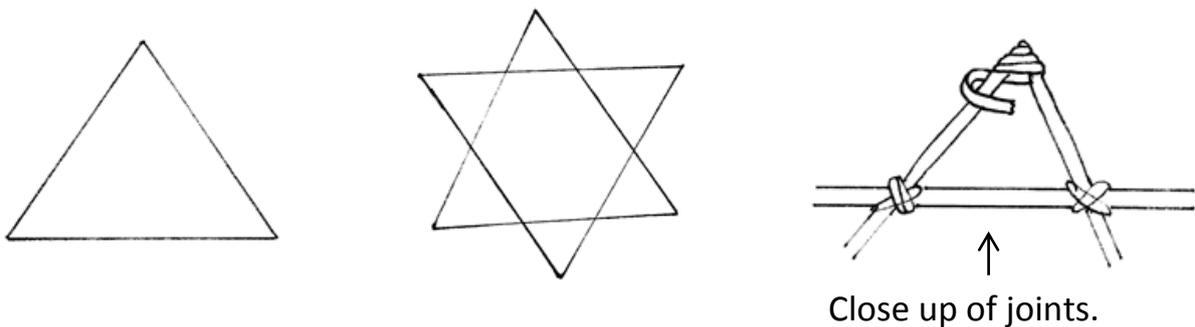
## 5 pointed star

1. Cut 10 withies the same size, arrange into 2 stars and tape the joints.
2. Lay 1 star on top of the other, matching shapes as best you can. Tape the star tips together.
3. Cut 5 small, thick pieces of withie (spacers), make sure there's room for your light source.
4. Pull the centre of the stars apart and fix the spacers to the 5 joints in the middle, creating a 3D star.



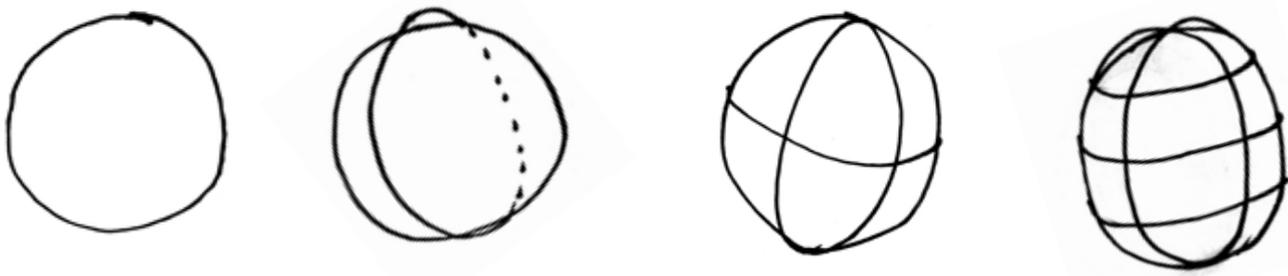
## 6 pointed star

Cut 12 withies the same size and arrange into 4 triangles. Tape 2 together to form 1 star and the remaining 2 for a second star. Cut 6 spaces and follow the instructions as above.



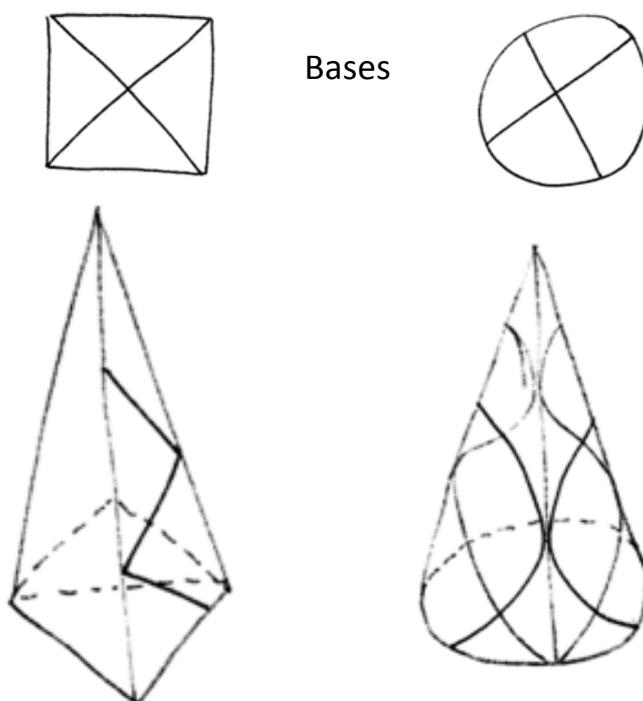
## **Sphere,** (head, sun, anything round!)

1. Make 4 withie circles the same size.
2. Put 3 circles together to make a rough ball shape and tape at top and bottom.
3. Turn 4<sup>th</sup> circle on its side and pull over to the centre of the ball and tape in place.
4. Make smaller circles to fit over top and bottom of the sphere.



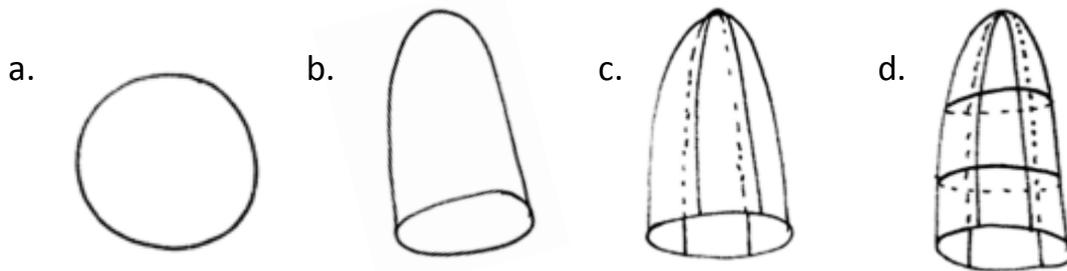
## **Pyramid,** (basic Lantern shape or simple body).

1. Make a base of thick withie with cross struts to strengthen, ( can be square or circular).
2. Cut 4 withies the height of the pyramid. Fix them all together at the top.
3. Tape the bottom of the 4 withies evenly on to the base.
4. Use flexible withies to strengthen the sides.

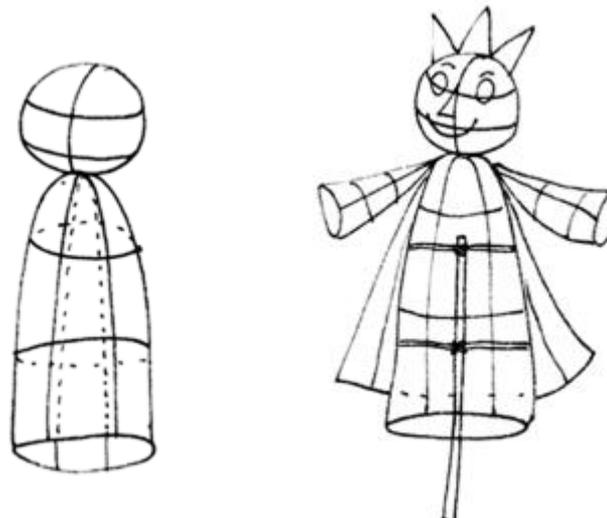


**Figure,** ( shape can be adapted to make nativity figures).

1. Head-sphere
2. Body-
  - a. Make a base with a circle of thick withie.
  - b. Bend a long withie into a U shape and attach the open ends to the base.
  - c. Repeat twice spacing evenly around the base and join uprights at the centre top.
  - d. Attach more circles spaced up the body to strengthen.

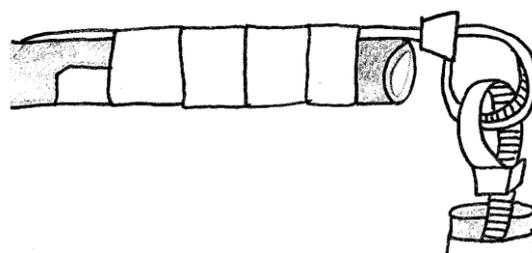


3. Attach head to body add arms, wings, features, hats etc.

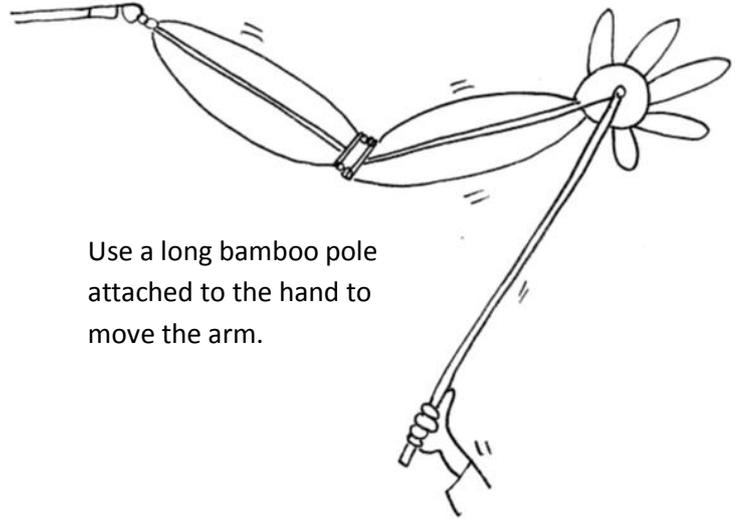
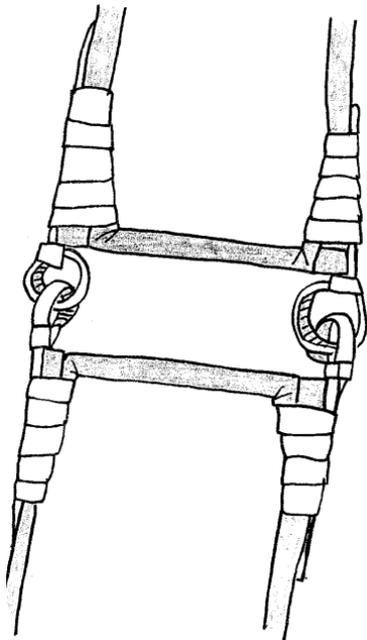


Movement

Adding movement to your lantern makes it more fun , you are able to interact with the crowd eg a waving arm or a wobbling head. Arms can be attached to the frame with cable ties. The joint below has a lot of movement.



If you want a joint with limited movement like an elbow use two cable ties.



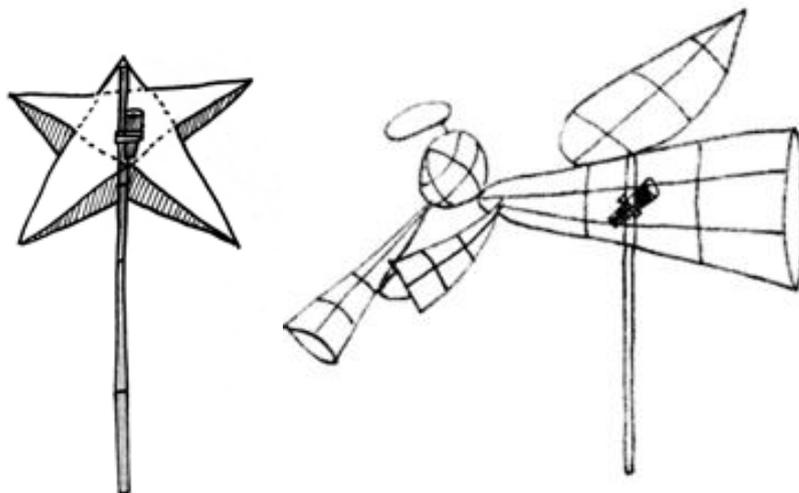
Use a long bamboo pole attached to the hand to move the arm.

## Carrying Stick

( The lantern can be supported by a bamboo cane or thick withie).

### a. Integral stick

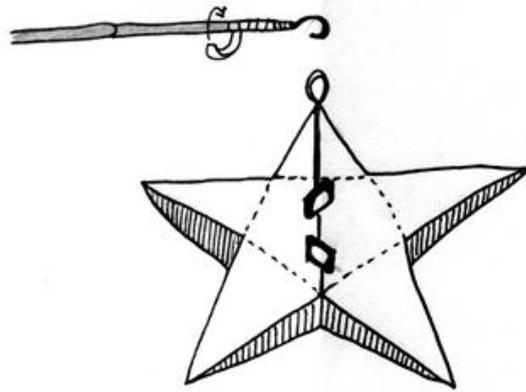
A bamboo cane cut to the required length, with a saw, is fixed through the centre of the structure with enough cane left underneath to use as a handle. The cane can be secured with withie cross struts, and should be fixed securely with gaffa tape or wire. The light source can be fixed to the cane.



### b. Separate stick.

Make a hook from strong wire and attach with gaffa tape to the end of a bamboo cane.

Remember to make a wire loop at the top of the lantern before its covered in paper. Now you can hold the lantern high for all to see.



## Lighting the lantern

Small torches, bike lights, strings of battery powered christmas lights, glow sticks or battery powered bulbs can all be used to light your lantern.

Remember to attach withies inside the lantern to fix your light source to. Arrange and stick strings of lights on to the withies before covering in paper!

## Covering your lantern

You can use wet strength tissue paper or imitation grease proof paper, (this is more opaque and needs a brighter light source), you can use coloured tissue paper over the top but don't paint the lanterns as it blocks out the light.

Stick down plastic to protect the tables and cut the paper into suitable sizes. With a large brush or sponge apply diluted P.V.A glue (half water) to both sides of the paper. This will become transparent when dry, tightening over the structure and helps to waterproof it. Try not to overlap the paper too much . As you cover the frame paint the withies with undiluted P.V.A to help the paper stick. Decoration can be applied with coloured tissue paper once the lantern is completely covered with wet strength tissue paper and is dry.

Leave open areas or flaps so you can access your switches and light source.

# Suppliers

## **Willow withies**

Musgrove willow, [www.musgrovewillows.co.uk](http://www.musgrovewillows.co.uk) ,01278 691105

Coates, [www.englishwillowbaskets.co.uk](http://www.englishwillowbaskets.co.uk) , 01823 490249

Jacobs, Young and Wesbury, 01444 412411

## **Wet strength tissue**

Musgrove Willow, 01278 691105

Richards and Appleby, 01685 843384

## **P.V.A glue, canes and tape**

Trago Mills, Modern Grates, Arts shops and building suppliers.