

## ***Khamsas (Good Luck Hands)***



Hands have always been symbols of strength and power. *Khamsas* are amulets, or good luck charms, in the form of a hand. They originated in Morocco and spread among many Mediterranean cultures.

The word *khamsa* means “five” and refers to the five fingers.

Khamsas are often so stylized that it is hard to recognize them as hands. Sometimes khamsas are five circles (fingers) placed around a central circle (palm).

A khamsa with spread fingers is an averting hand, while a closed, fingered hand brings good luck.

Khamsas that are worn as pendants are frequently made out of silver. The silver in sheet metal form is bent into the shape desired and soldered. To make a filigree khamsa, silver wire is twisted or braided together to form a thick rope that is then bent into different shapes and designs. The filigree can also be attached to a background of sheet silver. Some khamsas have good luck animals, like salamanders, incorporated into their designs. Others have precious stones and gems set into the metal.

### **HOW TO MAKE A KHAMSA**

#### **Materials Needed**

pencils                  scissors                  glue                  sequins

2 pieces of metallic foil paper or regular construction paper 6 ½ x 10 inches in different colours for each girl

#### **Directions**

1. Place your hand on the first piece of paper, making sure it fits within the edges.  
Position fingers in a way that pleases you.
2. Trace around your fingers, hand, and wrist.
3. Cut out the shape of your hand. Save the scraps.
4. Draw shapes and designs on the second piece of paper that will fit within the hand shape.
5. Cut out the shapes and glue them onto the khamsa.
6. Add more shapes of the contrasting colour, or build on top of the shapes with scraps of the original colour.
7. Glue on sequins. Let dry.



#### **Follow-Up.**

Mount khamsas on a large piece of cardboard and display them on the wall

Mount khamsas individually on cardboard or construction paper and display around your doorway.

The girls can write good luck wish poems, stories, or notes.

The girls can make mini. khamsas out of construction paper and wear them on string necklaces.

