

Dermer Sled Kite Workshop Suggestions and Tips

These tips and suggestions are specific to the Dermer Sled kite kites, but many of the suggestions and tips will be helpful to any kite building experience.

If you are a first-time customer of our sled kite building materials, here are some helpful hints to make your workshop as successful as possible.

First, get some scotch tape dispensers, (3/4"), assemble your helpers, and practice making these kites in advance. We find that after you have made several, you should be able to crank out kites at a rate of about one in five minutes, exclusive of art work. If you plan on making these kites one at a time at a festival, give yourself lots of table space and lots of volunteer helpers. If you are building them as a class project, in a more controlled environment, you should be able to teach a 20-25 student class, third grade and older, how to build these step-by-step in about 30 minutes. Allow more time for art work, and lots of helpers for younger kids.

If at all possible, try to make these kites indoors. Outdoors, wind whipping the plastic around makes it harder. If you must make them outdoors, try to operate with a windbreak of some sort: in a tent with side walls, in the shelter of some building or structure, or at least downwind of an RV or van.

The best setup is to have one or more rows of table to work on with kids and parents on one side and trained helpers on the other. This way one helper can oversee several kites in progress at once. Two parallel rows of tables, or a square of tables, with the helpers on the inside, is ideal. Given that one helper doesn't have more than two tables to supervise, the more work stations the better. In a festival setup, you need some kind of queue system to keep order, perhaps one person handing out materials to children only when a work station becomes open. You want markers and scotch tape at each station.



Richard making kites with kids



If kids are 8 or older, a helper can tape one stick down on a sail and then let the child do the other side. Likewise, attach one end of the bridle string to one side and let the child do the same on the other side. If the child is younger, you will need to do both sticks and

bridle string for them, perhaps letting them press the tape down more firmly. Now let the child, whatever age, do tracing and/or art work on the taped down kite while you do other steps for the kids at adjacent work stations. This will keep a helper hopping! You will feel it in the small of your back after several hours. After a child has finished art work, add tail, remove the kite from the table, tie the loop in the bridle string, attach the flying line to the loop, and send them out. NEXT!

We have done this a lot. The best preparation for a festival booth is to have made a bunch of kites in advance. When you get overwhelmed, you can simply pass out pre-made kites to be decorated or just flown as they are.

The most common mistakes made on this kite by untrained helpers involve the bridle string. It MUST be properly attached to the sides of the kite all the way to the points on each side, it MUST be at least 60 inches long, (four times stick lengths), and the loop MUST be in the exact center. That means the loop can't be tied in advance, only after the bridle is attached to the kite.

It sounds like a lot of work, and it is. But it's worth it. These kites fly beautifully, and people will be amaze at how easily.



Miscellaneous Afterthoughts.....

You should have a few extras of everything in case of broken sticks, ruined sails, etc.

Be CAREFUL when passing out sails; they tend to static cling together in pairs.

Tails are an option on these kites, not a necessity. Extra tail is helpful in extremely windy conditions – for light to medium breezes two or three feet is plenty.

Tracing patterns are very popular – Below are a few examples. You can find them on-line, in coloring books, school logos, etc.

In looking for patterns, remind the kids that extreme detail will not show up in the sky. Bold, vivid, simple patterns work best.

To store the kites inside their winders, fold the kite in half first, then again so the two sticks are together. Then just gently roll the plastic up around the two sticks, fairly tightly, and take a few turns of the bridle line around it to keep it rolled up for insertion into the winder. This takes practice: the kids will have trouble with it. Fortunately, it's not necessary – just looks cool.

If a stick is broken on a kite after it is build, you need not remove the broken stick. Just tape another next to it as a splint. Then another on the good side so the weight remains balanced.

It is much better to fly in small group, rather than a mass ascension of lots of Kites. Tangles are inevitable. If you figure out a way to keep the kids spread out so they don't get tangled, let me know. But, when two kite lines DO get tangled, the cure is for the fliers to slowly move together on the ground. This will cause the cross in the lines to move down to them – standing with their winders adjacent to each other they can figure out how to uncross them.

Don't be impatient to fly the kites as soon as they are built. IF the weather's nice, fine. But if it's blowing really hard, wait for a calmer day.



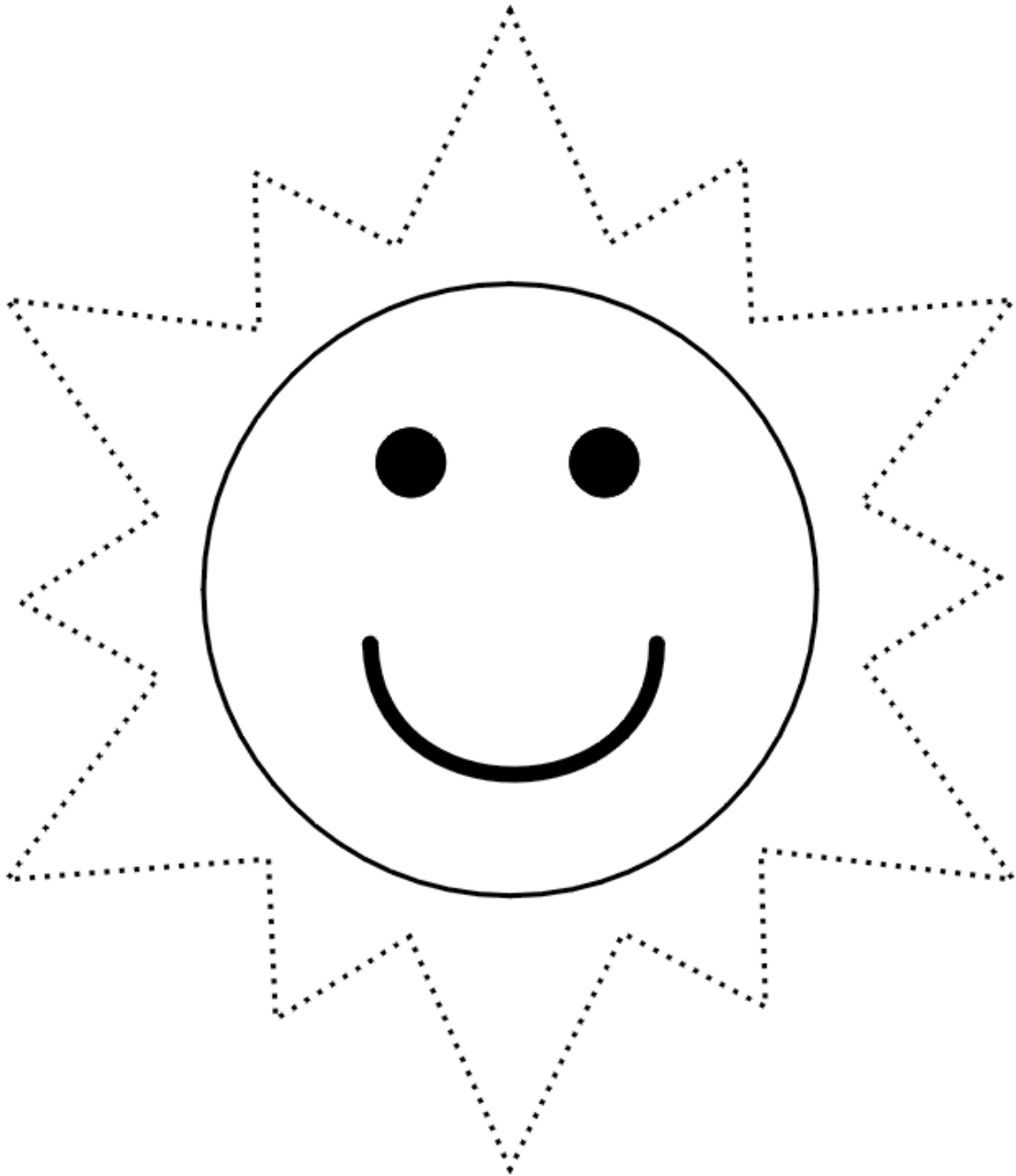
Good Winds,

Richard Dermer



Massive tangle - with a little patience it was undone in about 10 minutes!

Trace the rays around the smiling sun and then color the beautiful sun



How many points of sunshine rays can you count?

duck

