



# True North Main Set Decorating Instructions



True North captivates kids with a cozy cabin, crackling campfire, and forest of firs... and friends! Group's imaginative design team makes it easier than ever to effortlessly transform your church into a wilderness wonderland with easy-to-find items like utility buckets, crumpled paper, and borrowed Christmas trees.

Check out instructions for how to build the following pieces and create a main set that's a tundra of fun!

- ▶ Smoke Plume
- ▶ Paper Tube Logs
- ▶ True North Tripod
- ▶ Crew Sign Base
- ▶ Fish Line
- ▶ Wild Animal Tracks
- ▶ Bucket Stumps
- ▶ Alaskan Wildflowers Sticks
- ▶ Paper River Rocks

# 3D Cabin Prop

Visit VBS Tools to download instructions and view a helpful how-to video to build the 3D Cabin Prop.



We stacked shipping pallets where we wanted to add height.

# Smoke Plume

### What you'll need:

- ▶ a way to project template
- ▶ marker
- ▶ white foam board
- ▶ yardstick or straight edge
- ▶ measuring tape
- ▶ cutting mat
- ▶ utility knife
- ▶ cotton batting (32"x5')
- ▶ silver spray paint
- ▶ 2 Cool Connectors
- ▶ gloves
- ▶ hot glue gun and glue sticks

### What you'll do:

#### Step 1

Project the Smoke Plume and Spine template. Before tracing, make sure the rectangle at the bottom of the plume measures 13" wide at the bottom and 16" tall. This will ensure that the plume is the right scale for the cabin and that it fits snugly in the chimney. Trace the smoke plume onto the foam board.

#### Step 2

Using a utility knife, cut out the spine shape.

#### Step 3

Score and cut tabs in the spine by cutting a 1/2" slit every 4 1/2" along the bottom straight edge. Score tabs on alternating sides so they can be bent in opposite directions.

#### Step 4

Hot glue the spine in the center of the front side of the plume.

#### Step 5

Using a utility knife, cut out the plume shape.

#### Step 6

Lay out the piece of batting, and place the plume face down on the batting. Cut off the corners of the batting following the shape of



the plume but being sure to leave plenty to wrap and glue to the back of the plume. Carefully flip the plume and batting over together and glue the batting to the back.

#### Step 7

To glue the batting to the back of the plume, pinch, twist, and gather the edge of the batting around the edge of the foam core, then hot glue to the foam core. Do this around the curve of the plume, then stuff the front of the plume with batting around the spine.

#### Step 8

To create "dimples" in the smoke cloud, push Cool Connectors all the way through the batting and foam board, and secure them in the back.

#### Step 9

Pull apart the cotton batting at the very tail of the plume so it has a wispy end.

#### Step 10

Add silver spray paint to the plume for smoke detail.

#### Step 11

Set the base of the plume into the chimney diagonally. It should fit snugly to hold it in place.

# True North Tripod

## What you'll need:

- ▶ saw
- ▶ drill with drill bit and screw bit
- ▶ 3 drywall screws 1 $\frac{5}{8}$ "
- ▶ two 1"x2"x8' boards
- ▶ measuring tape
- ▶ marker
- ▶ brown masking paper
- ▶ three 16" lengths of chain
- ▶ 3 small S hooks (optional)
- ▶ large plastic bowl
- ▶ black spray paint
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ spray adhesive
- ▶ gloves
- ▶ dropcloth
- ▶ dark brown, white, and black matte acrylic craft paints
- ▶ paintbrush and paint sponge
- ▶ paper plates to hold paint
- ▶ three 11" zip ties
- ▶ 8-10' of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " manila rope
- ▶ Electric Campfire
- ▶ 35-40 paper river rocks (see separate instructions)
- ▶ paper tube logs (see separate instructions)
- ▶ fishing line
- ▶ cotton batting
- ▶ hot glue gun and glue sticks
- ▶ packing tape
- ▶ fabric (for "soup"; we used yellow)
- ▶ wooden spoon

## What you'll do:

### Step 1

Measure and cut the two 1"x2" boards to 4' lengths. This should give you four pieces that are 4' long.

### Step 2

On three of those pieces, cut one end of each piece so it's not square. These are the tripod legs.

### Step 3

Use the fourth piece of 1"x2" to create the "branch nubs." Cut several pieces ranging in length from 4" to 6" with angled ends.

### Step 4

Drill pilot holes and then screw one or two nub pieces to each 4' length of board. Make sure to place them at least 12" from the top so they won't be in the way when building the tripod.

### Step 5

Cut a length of brown paper a little longer than the tripod leg. Fold the paper in half lengthwise. Wrinkle the paper by scrunching it so the folds and creases are lengthwise along the paper. Lay the tripod leg in the center of the paper. Spray the leg and paper with spray adhesive. (There's some absorption of the spray adhesive into the wood, so you will need to use a lot of



spray. Make sure you are in a well-ventilated area.) Move the leg to the edge of the paper. Roll the leg in the paper. Cut or tear holes where the nubs are to allow them to pass through the paper so the paper lies flat (but wrinkly) to the main board.

### Step 6

Cover each nub with a smaller piece of paper and spray adhesive. Wrinkle the paper and wrap it around the nub, making sure to cover the end.



# Fish Line

## What you'll need:

- ▶ saw
- ▶ drill with drill bit and screw
- ▶ 32 2½" drywall screws
- ▶ 16 1⅝" drywall screws
- ▶ 6 2"x2"x8' boards
- ▶ measuring tape
- ▶ marker
- ▶ brown masking paper
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ spray adhesive
- ▶ dark brown, light brown, white, and black matte acrylic craft paints
- ▶ paintbrush and paint sponge
- ▶ paper plates to hold paint
- ▶ 35-40' of ⅜" manila rope
- ▶ fish from the True North Giant Decorating Poster Pack mounted on foam board
- ▶ twine
- ▶ craft knife

## What you'll do:

### Step 1

Measure and cut the 4"x2"x6' to the following lengths:

- 6 76" (save the 18" ends; those will be cross pieces and base support)
- 4 18"
- 12-14 pieces ranging from 6" to 8" with 45-degree angle at one end and squarish point at the other end.

### Step 2

To create a ladderlike structure, lay two pieces of 78" 2x2 down so they are aligned at the top and bottom. They should be 6" apart at the top and 19" apart at the bottom.

### Step 3

Measure down 6" from the top of each vertical and mark it. Place the 18" piece across horizontally, centering on the mark. (Note: About 6" of the horizontal piece hangs over on each side.) Drill pilot holes and then screw in place with the 2½" drywall screws.

### Step 4

Measure up 44" from the bottom on each vertical and mark it. Place the 18" piece across horizontally, centering on the mark. (Note: About 3" hangs over on each side.) Drill pilot holes and then screw in place with the 2½" drywall screws.



### Step 5

At the bottom of each vertical, place an 18" support base on the outside of the 78" vertical. Position the base so there's more support in the front of the ladder structure, about 6" from the back of the ladder structure. (The horizontals are attached on the *back* of the ladder structures, which will face out when the fish stand is complete.) While someone holds the structure at a slight angle, drill pilot holes and screw each support base into place with two 2½" drywall screws per base. Make sure the support bases are flush to the ground and the vertical piece leans forward just a little. (The two ladder structures will lean slightly toward each other when the fish stand is complete.)

Repeat steps 2-5 to create another ladderlike piece. You will need two total, one for each side of the fish stand.

**Step 6**

Attach the 12-14 pieces that range in length from 6" to 8" anywhere on the ladderlike structures to create branch "nubs." Drill pilot holes and then screw the nubs onto the vertical pieces with 1 5/8" drywall screws.

**Step 7**

Cover the entire structure with masking paper to create a barklike texture on the outside.

Cut a length of masking paper a little longer than the length of the 2x2 vertical. Wrinkle the paper by scrunching it so the folds and creases are going lengthwise along the paper. Spray the verticals and horizontals with adhesive spray, and wrap the paper around the wood. Cut or tear holes where the horizontals go across the verticals and where there are branch nubs to allow the nubs to pass through the paper and the paper to lie flat (but wrinkly).

For the branch nubs, use a piece of paper that is cut 2-4" bigger than the nub. Spray with spray adhesive and then wrap the paper around the nub.

**Step 8**

Paint each piece to look like it is covered in bark. Use a dark shade of brown paint and lightly dry brush it on the paper. (Dry brush: Lightly dip the paintbrush or sponge in paint, then blot it on a paper plate so very little paint remains on the brush or sponge.) The creases of the paper "grab" the paint. For finishing touches, add light brown, black, and white accents. Allow the paint to dry.

**Step 9**

Wrap manila rope around each place where the horizontal and vertical pieces of wood meet.

**Step 10**

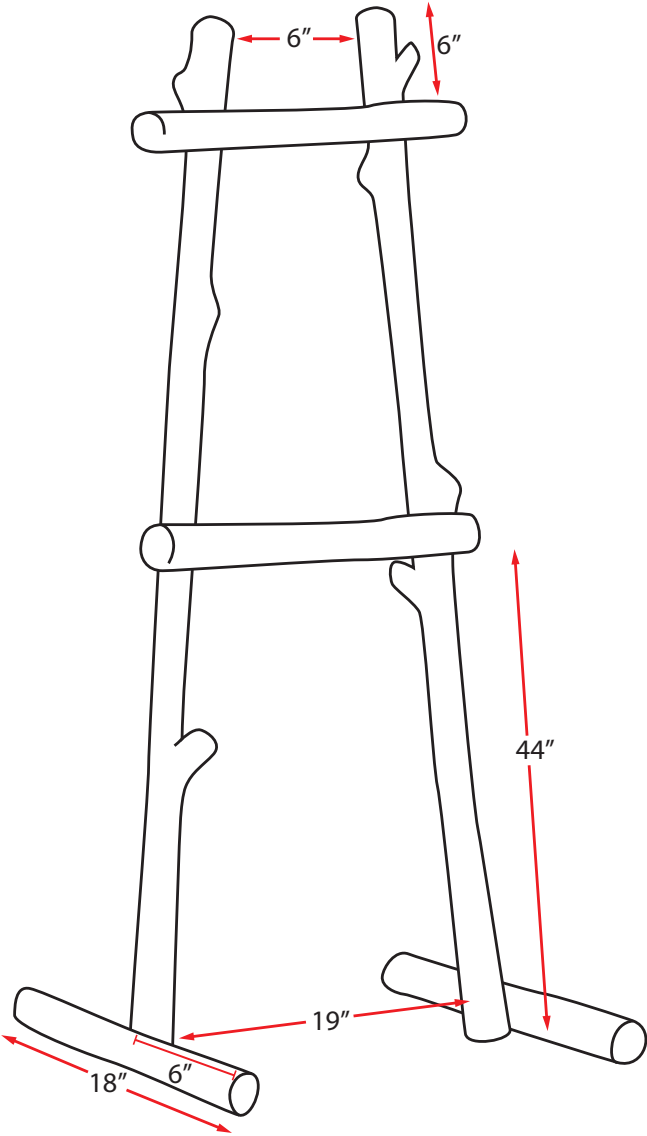
Mount the fish from the True North Giant Decorating Poster Pack on foam board. (See separate instructions.) Carefully cut a slit in each fish's mouth, and attach a small piece of twine. Create a loop in the twine so each fish can be strung onto a long rope.

**Step 11**

Determine where you want each ladder structure to be placed on the stage. Our pieces were about 6' apart. Tie a long rope between the top crossbeam of each ladder structure. String the fish on the length of rope.

**Step 12**

For finishing touches, hang a fishing net on one of the nubs and lean a fishing pole nearby.



# Bucket Stumps

## What you'll need:

- ▶ 5-gallon buckets
- ▶ pliers
- ▶ spray adhesive
- ▶ brown masking paper
- ▶ packing tape
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ dark brown, light brown, black, and white matte acrylic craft paints
- ▶ paintbrushes and paint sponges
- ▶ paper plates to hold paint
- ▶ gloves
- ▶ dropcloth

## What you'll do:

### Step 1

Remove the handle of the bucket. We were able to pull ours off with pliers.

### Step 2

Cut or tear a piece of paper a few inches bigger than the bottom of the bucket.

### Step 3

Tape the paper to the bottom of the bucket.

### Step 4

Cut or tear a length of paper to go around the whole bucket. Crumple the paper to make it wrinkly.

### Step 5

Spray the outside of the bucket with adhesive. Starting on one side of the bucket, press the paper into the side of the bucket, letting the paper crease and wrinkle as you go. Fold extra paper over the rim and tape it inside the bucket.



### Step 6

Paint the paper-covered bucket to look like a stump. We used a dry brush technique. (Dry brush: Lightly dip the paintbrush or sponge in paint, then blot it on a paper plate so very little paint remains on the brush or sponge.)

Begin by gently brushing dark brown around the bucket, then brush light brown. Add a few touches of white and black. The wrinkles and creases in the paper “grab” the paint to help it look like bark. For the bottom of the bucket (that is now the top of the stump) add ring details by making circular motions with the brush and keeping the colors lighter.



# Paper River Rocks

## What you'll need:

- ▶ gray paper (ours wasn't solid gray but was mottled)
- ▶ newsprint or any paper to stuff rock
- ▶ packing tape
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ gray, black, and white matte acrylic craft paints
- ▶ paint sponges or paintbrushes
- ▶ paper plates to hold paint
- ▶ gloves
- ▶ dropcloth



## What you'll do:

### Step 1

Cut a square piece of gray paper. To vary the size and shapes of the stones, vary the size square you start with. Most of our stones were made from squares ranging in size from 12" to 18". Lay the square of paper on a flat surface.

### Step 2

Use a larger piece of packing paper or newsprint as stuffing. Ball up the paper and place it in the center of the gray square. Beginning with one corner of the gray paper, fold the corners tightly over the ball of paper and secure with tape, like wrapping a present. Gather the other corners and edges, and tape them down to make the rock roughly rounded. The taped side will be the bottom.

### Step 3

Paint the rock using a dry brush technique, beginning with black, then gray, then white. (Dry brush: Lightly dip the paintbrush or sponge in paint, then blot it on a paper plate so very little paint remains on the brush or sponge.)

# Paper Tube Logs

## What you'll need:

- ▶ cardboard tubes of various sizes
- ▶ saw
- ▶ brown masking paper
- ▶ spray adhesive
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ packing tape
- ▶ dark brown, light brown, white, and black matte acrylic craft paints
- ▶ paint sponges or paintbrushes
- ▶ paper plates to hold paint
- ▶ gloves
- ▶ dropcloth

## What you'll do:

### Step 1

Cut a paper or cardboard tube to about 24" long. (Varying the diameter and length of the tubes adds a fun rustic feel to the log stack.)

### Step 2

Cut a square of paper 4" to 6" bigger than the end of the tube. Tape the square onto the end of the tube by using packing tape to all the way around the tube. For logs that look like they have been cut, tape the square tight to the end of the tube like a drum. For more rustic-looking forest logs, crumple the square and then tape it to the end of the tube with the paper pushed out to be more domed.

### Step 3

Cut a piece of paper 6" longer than the tube you are covering. Crumple the paper so that the wrinkles and crumples go lengthwise along the paper.

### Step 4

Spray adhesive on the tube. On the covered end of the tube, press the paper firmly to create a sealed seam. Press the paper into the adhesive all the way around the tube. On the uncovered end of the tube, simply tuck the paper into the end.



### Step 5

Paint the log using a dry brush technique, beginning with dark brown, then highlight with light brown, white, and black. (Dry brush: Lightly dip the paintbrush or sponge in paint, then blot it on a paper plate so very little paint remains on the brush or sponge.)

### Step 6

To make the wood pile next to the cabin like we did, you will need about 40 logs. Our logs ranged in size from 1½" to 3" wide and 18" to 24" long. Most of our logs were 3"x24". Two weighted crew sign bases with short pieces of PVC were used to hold up the vertical logs that hold the wood pile in place. (See separate crew sign instructions.)

# Crew Sign Base

## What you'll need:

- ▶ 12"x12"x $\frac{3}{4}$ " wood base
- ▶ drill with screw and drill bit
- ▶ pencil
- ▶ four  $\frac{3}{4}$ " wood screws
- ▶  $\frac{1}{2}$ " PVC male to slip adaptor (a PVC fitting that screws into the floor flange and the pole slides into)
- ▶  $\frac{1}{2}$ " floor flange
- ▶  $\frac{1}{2}$ " PVC pipe (we like to use 36" poles to attach our crew signs)



## What you'll do:

### Step 1

Place floor flange in the center of the wood.

### Step 2

Mark each hole of the floor flange, then remove flange and drill pilot holes.

### Step 3

Screw floor flange onto the wood.

### Step 4

Twist male PVC adaptor into floor flange.

### Step 5

Slide the pole into the flange.

Note: An easy way to weigh a crew sign base down is using a weight from a barbell.

# Wild Animal Tracks

## What you'll need:

- ▶ Wild Animal Tracks template from [group.com/vbsTools](http://group.com/vbsTools)
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ tape
- ▶ pen
- ▶ foam insulation
- ▶ hot knife
- ▶ bamboo skewers (1 per track)
- ▶ wire cutters (to cut the skewers)
- ▶ hot glue gun and glue sticks



## What you'll do:

### Step 1

Print the templates, and cut them out. Tape the pieces onto a scrap piece of foam. For the bear track, number the toes so you'll be able to put them back in the right order.

### Step 2

Use a hot knife to carve out each piece. Remove the template pieces to use again if needed.

### Step 3

Cut 3" pieces of skewer to use as spacers to put the pieces back together (for the bear and moose tracks). Poke two pieces of skewer into the foam where each piece needs to be added. Add the pieces. Use hot glue to secure the skewers in place.

Note: When applying the stamps to a surface, use a paintbrush to paint the stamp rather than dipping the stamp in paint. This makes a cleaner animal track.

Optional: Craft foam stamps can be made by cutting craft foam pieces and gluing them to a piece of foam.

## Alaskan Wildflowers Sticks

### Tissue Paper Fireweed

(tall purples and pinks)

#### What you'll need:

- ▶ bamboo skewers in various lengths, 12-30" long
- ▶ tissue paper in hues of purple and pink
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ glue stick or Glue Dots
- ▶ wire cutters (to cut skewers)
- ▶ floral tape
- ▶ scrap of foam insulation for a base

#### What you'll do:

##### Step 1

Begin with a piece of tissue paper 6" wide and 20" long. Fold in half, creating a long narrow 20"-long strip. (Layering several pieces together to fold and fringe makes building many stems go more quickly.)

##### Step 2

Fold an additional 6x20"-long piece to make another 3x20" strip of folded paper. On this one, cut a taper on the open edge of the paper so that the edge comes to a point.

##### Step 3

For each stem, you will need one tapered fringed piece and one or more rectangular fringed pieces depending on how long the skewer you are covering is.

##### Step 4

Fringe the folded edge by cutting every  $\frac{1}{4}$ " the entire length of the tissue paper strip. Pull apart to help open the loops of the fringe. Glue the open edges together. (As you get used to building the fireweed, you may find you do not need to glue the edges together.)

##### Step 5

Put a Glue Dot or dab a glue stick on the blunt end of the skewer. Place the point of the tapered tissue paper piece in the glue, then begin to twist the skewer. Add glue to the stick every 2-3" as the tissue paper spirals down the stick. You'll need to add a lot of glue. Add the second piece of tissue paper in the same way, starting where the first ends.

##### Step 6

For a nice, finished look, cover the remaining stick with floral tape.

##### Step 7

Press the stems into a foam base. As the stems get placed in the foam base, cut the skewers to various heights to achieve a natural wildflower patch, a bit like floral arranging.

Note: For longer skewers, we used cutters to cut them down before we wrapped the tissue paper. Some of the dowels and roasting sticks we used were 36" long. Long sticks may also use one tapered piece and two rectangular pieces of tissue paper. Regardless of how tall your fireweed stick is, leave 3-4" at the bottom of the stick free of tissue paper to place in a foam base.



# Alaskan Wildflowers Sticks

## Crepe Paper Lupine (short purple and pink)

### What you'll need:

- ▶ 12" bamboo skewers
- ▶ Alaskan Flower Crepe Paper (purple and pink)
- ▶ Lupine Petal template from group.com/vbsTools
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ utility or craft knife
- ▶ cutting mat
- ▶ floral tape
- ▶ scrap of foam insulation for a base
- ▶ Glue Dots or glue stick (optional)



### What you'll do:

#### Step 1

Fold the tissue paper to cut several petals at once. Place the Lupine Petal template on the tissue paper and cut around it. Each stem needs 15-20 petals.

#### Step 2

Open and separate the petals. Gently fold the middle part of a petal in half lengthwise and pull gently as you fold.

#### Step 3

Fold a half inch pleat in the middle part.

#### Step 4

Thread the petals on a skewer by poking through the center of the pleated part. If needed use a craft or utility knife to cut a small slit before threading on the skewer. Stack the petals crisscross on the stick.

#### Step 5

Add floral tape around the rest of the stick.

#### Step 6

Press the stems into a foam base. As the stems get placed in the foam base, cut the skewers to various heights to achieve a natural wildflower patch, a bit like floral arranging.

## Alaskan Wildflowers Sticks

### Crepe Paper Goldenbanner (yellow)

#### What you'll need:

- ▶ 12-20" bamboo skewers
- ▶ Alaskan Flower Crepe Paper gold yellow
- ▶ Goldenbanner Petal template from [group.com/vbsTools](http://group.com/vbsTools)
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ utility or craft knife
- ▶ cutting mat
- ▶ floral tape
- ▶ scrap of foam insulation for a base
- ▶ Glue Dots or glue stick (optional)



#### What you'll do:

##### Step 1

Fold the crepe paper to cut several petals at once. Note that each petal has 4 arms. Place the Goldenbanner Petal template on the crepe paper and cut around it. Each stem needs 20-30 petals.

##### Step 2

Open and separate the petals. Gently twist and then fold the middle part of a petal in half lengthwise, pulling gently as you fold.

##### Step 3

Fold a half inch pleat in the middle part.

##### Step 4

Thread the petals on a skewer by poking through the center of the pleated part. If needed use a craft or utility knife to cut a small slit before threading on the skewer.

##### Step 5

Cover the bottom of the skewer with floral tape.

##### Step 6

Press the stems into a foam base. As the stems get placed in the foam base, cut the skewers to various heights to achieve a natural wildflower patch, a bit like floral arranging.

# Alaskan Wildflowers Sticks

## Foam Base

### What you'll need:

- ▶ scrap piece of foam insulation
- ▶ hot knife or serrated knife
- ▶ paint (a color that will blend in with the ground of the set)
- ▶ paintbrush

### What you'll do:

#### Step 1

Cut the desired shape and size you want for your base. (For the main set, we used three bases that had wavy widths 8-12" wide at the widest point by 3½' long, and we had two bases that were 8"-12" wavy widths by 2½' long.)

#### Step 2

Paint the base a color that will match the ground on your set. In our case, we used beige tarps, so we painted the bases beige.

Note: When adding flowers to the foam base, also add plastic greenery to fill it out and give it a natural look.





## Spray mount posters to foam board

### What you'll need:

- ▶ posters from the Giant Decorating Poster Pack
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ binder clips
- ▶ spray adhesive
- ▶ foam board
- ▶ hot glue gun and glue sticks
- ▶ craft knife or utility knife
- ▶ cutting mat

### What you'll do:

#### Step 1

Roll the poster so the back of the poster is on the outside of the roll and the images are on the inside of the roll. Use binder clips to attach the edge of the poster to the edge of a sheet of foam board the same size as the poster.

#### Step 2

Spray the foam board with spray adhesive. (Make sure you are in a well-ventilated area.) Unroll the poster a few inches at a time, pressing firmly to the foam board as you unroll a little more. Continue spraying, unrolling, and pressing the entire length of the poster.

#### Step 3

Use a craft knife or utility knife to cut the poster and foam board out together, leaving crisp, clean edges with no margins.

#### Step 4

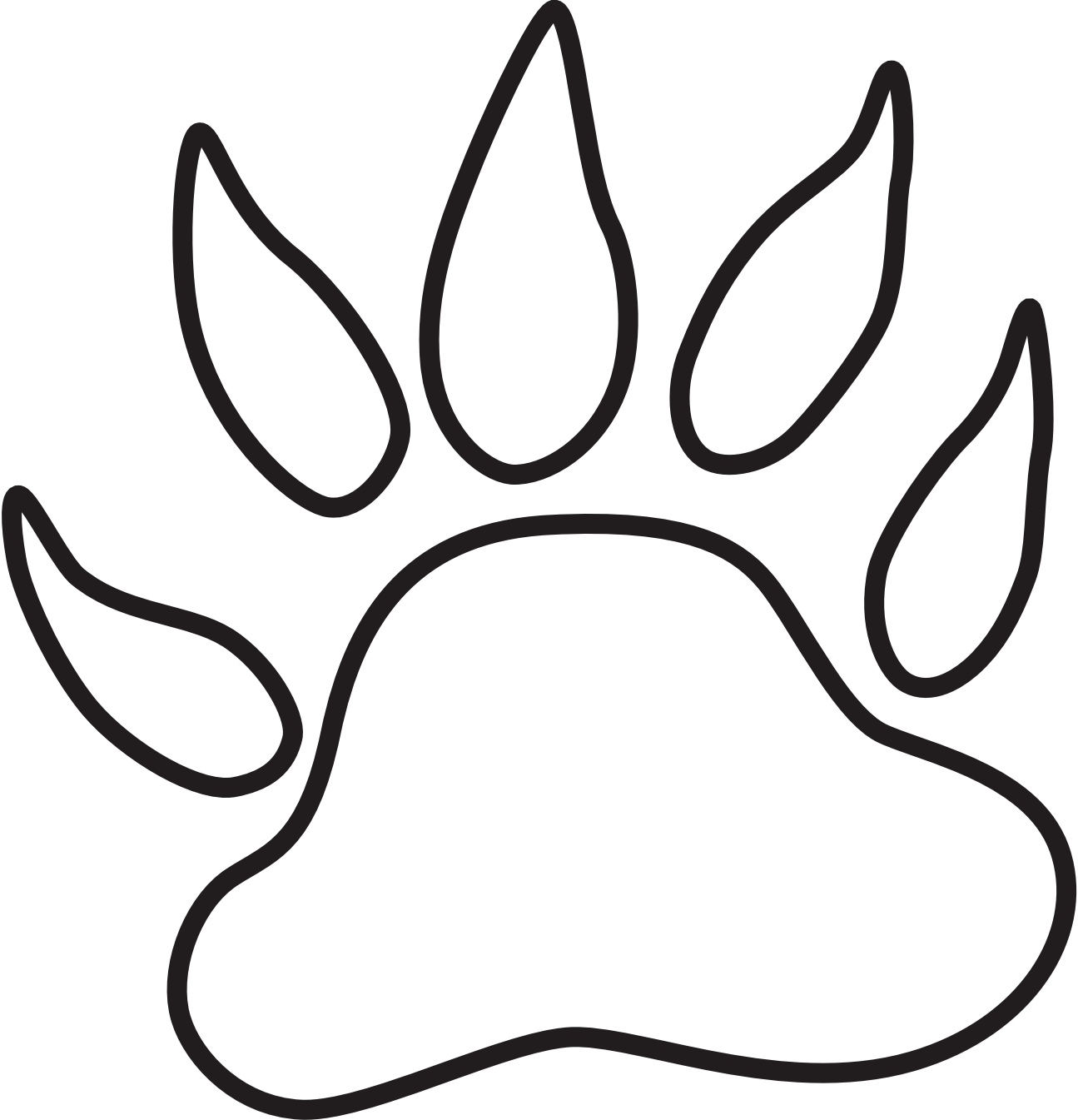
To seam pieces of the poster together to make a large piece, such as the canoe, place the pieces facedown, with the foam board facing up. Push the two pieces together, making sure they fit very snugly and line up evenly. Hot glue a 3"- to 4"-wide strip of foam board to cover the entire length of the seam.



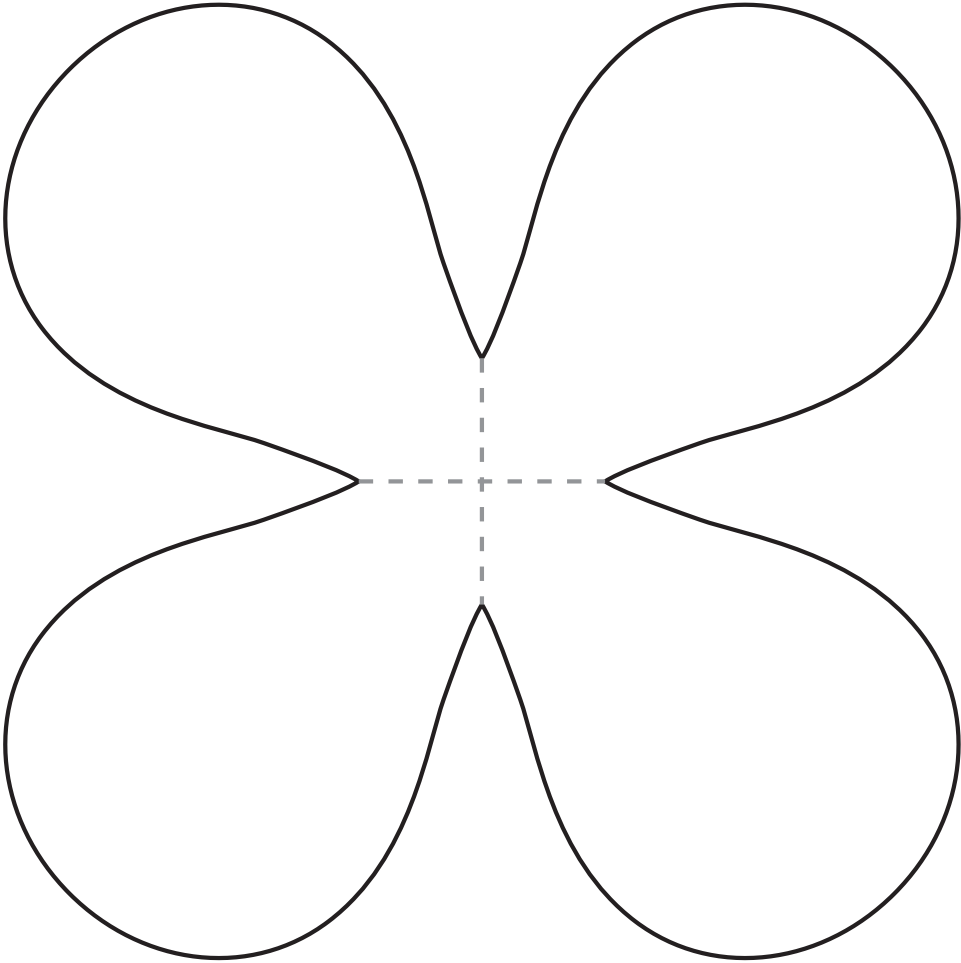
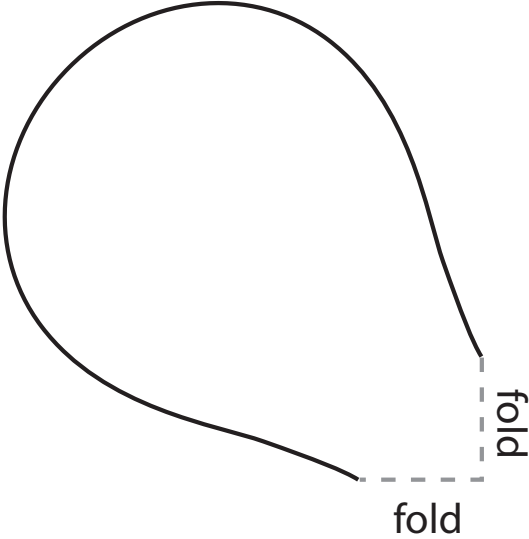
#### Step 5

Add easel back if needed. Cut out a 90-degree triangle from foam core. On the side with the 90-degree corner, score 1" out from the edge to create a glue tab. Bend the scored edge, and hot glue it to the back of the poster piece.

**Bear Print Template**



# Goldenbanner Petal Template



# Lupine Petal Template

