

Make Your Own Mancala

By Sr. Maria Grace Dateno, FSP

Mancala is an ancient game that has been played for thousands of years in Africa and has spread around the world. Actually, it is a family of games, because there are so many variations. Here is an easy way to make your own Mancala game.



Here's what you'll need:

- an empty egg carton
- colored paper, markers
- glue stick
- 48 small stones (or dried beans or seeds)
- two small boxes or plastic containers

Here's what you'll do:

1. Decorate your egg carton. Set the two small containers at the two ends.
2. To play, place four stones in each of the cups. The six cups near you are yours, the others are your playing partner's. The small container to your right is yours. The object of the game is to get the most stones in your container.
3. One player begins by taking the stones from one of his cups and dropping them one at a time in each cup, going counterclockwise. If the player gets to his last cup, he then places a stone in his own container. When a play ends like that, with the last stone being dropped in the player's container, he gets to go again. If he still has stones after placing one in his container, a player continues to drop stones in the other player's cups, until he runs out. (He skips the other player's container if he gets that far, and continues back to his own side.)

4. Stones that are dropped into the container stay there until the end of the game, but a player can “capture” the stones from the other player’s cups. To do this, the player must drop his last stone into a formerly empty cup on his own side. (The cup would then have one stone in it.) This allows you to take all the stones from the cup opposite it, on the other player’s side, plus that last stone, and put them in your container.
5. The game continues until one player has no stones left to play on his side and the other player cannot make a move on his next turn that will put any stones on the empty side.

