



Cherish Parrish (Ottawa/Pottawatom). *The Next Generation—Carriers of Culture*, 2018. Black ash and sweetgrass. Courtesy of the artist—Ottawa & Pottawatom—Match-e-be-Nash-she-wish Band. © Cherish Parrish

There are 573 recognized tribal nations in the United States, with over 634 First Nations in Canada. Women are cultural and creative leaders within these diverse communities. They not only are considered “vessels” for giving life, but also hold a significant place in keeping distinct traditions alive.

### Exhibition connection

Cherish Parrish is of Ottawa descent and a member of the Match-e-be-Nash-she-wish Band of Pottawatom Indians. *The Next Generation—Carriers of Culture* is a visual message to Native women around the world. Parrish, who says that **weaving** is “a generational gift that needs to be passed on and . . . nothing . . . speaks to that quite like pregnancy and motherhood,” combines the ideas of passing on traditional practices with honoring the legacy of Indigenous women by weaving a basket into the shape of a pregnant women in her third trimester. Created from spring wood and heartwood harvested from black ash trees, this piece was woven around a handmade mold and rimmed with sweetgrass. “Being a carrier of culture,” Parrish says, “that’s what you are as a Native woman.”

### Vocabulary words

rim

weaving

### Suggested reading and viewing

For youth (13 and older): *#NotYourPrincess: Voices of Native American Women*, edited by Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale

For adults: *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer

**Frist Art  
Museum**

919 Broadway  
Nashville, TN 37203  
[FristArtMuseum.org/arttrunks](http://FristArtMuseum.org/arttrunks)

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## Lesson 2: Weaving a rim

### Objective

In this lesson, inspired by Cherish Parrish's *Next Generation—Carriers of Culture*, you will add a border to your clay bowl by weaving a grass edging.

### Note to Art Trunk leaders

Fresh grass (at least 12 inches long) is best for this activity. If your participants have access to it (such as in their own yards or meadows), ask them to gather a couple of handfuls for this lesson. It's a great way for them both to spend time in nature and enhance their personal connection to their bowl.

### Materials

- grass (at least 12 inches or longer; one or more handfuls per participant)
- cotton thread or string
- scissors
- a ruler
- tapestry needle (one per participant)
- clay bowl with holes along the rim (created in Lesson 1)

If you are working with dry or brittle grass, you will also need:

- a large bin of water
- paper towels

### Steps

- 1: Make a bundle of grass that is one pinkie-finger wide. Tie one end of the thread tightly around one end of the bundle.
- 2: Wind the thread around the grass bundle, working toward the opposite end. When you reach it, knot the thread around it, and cut. You will be using this grass cord in the border you are about to weave. Repeat Steps 1 and 2 until you have as many cords as you think you will need.
- 3: (*If your grass is fresh and already pliable, skip ahead to Step 4.*) Soak your grass cords in the large bin of water until they are soft enough for weaving. (You will need to allow at least one hour for soaking; consider leaving the grass in the bin overnight.) Before you begin weaving, squeeze the cords over the bin and/or blot them with paper towels to remove excess water.
- 4: To begin the weaving process, cut a piece of thread that is at least 24 inches long. Pull it through the eye of the needle and tie the ends together to form a double 12-inch strand.
- 5: Take one of the grass cords. Hold it above one of the holes in your clay bowl. Push your needle through the hole from the outside, pulling through most of the thread but leaving a small tail on the outside. Tie this tail off and continue.
- 6: (6a) Pull the needle UP and BETWEEN the bowl and the cord. (6b) Then direct it through the MIDDLE of the cord and then back through the hole, attaching the cord to the bowl.
- 7: Pull the thread through the next hole, pushing your needle from the inside to the outside, and attach the cord to this spot with the same stitch (bringing the needle down through the middle of the cord and back through the hole).
- 8: Continue making this figure-eight stitch until every hole is connected to the cord.
- 9: For the second row and beyond, push the needle through the previous row of grass instead of through the holes in the clay.
- 10: If you are about to run out of thread and your border is not yet complete, knot the thread while you still have a few inches left, cut it from the needle, and tuck the ends into the grass. Go back to Step 4 to add a new double strand to your needle, and then continue weaving. When you are finished, knot the thread, cut it, and tuck the ends into the grass.

**Important: Your completed bowl is very fragile and cannot hold liquids. Avoid placing it near wet areas.**



