

Instructions for weaving a complex Ojo de Dios, by Jay Mohler



Introduction

These instructions are not so much for one particular Ojo de Dios, but rather they present one example that is meant to demonstrate the skills needed for you to create your own personal creation.

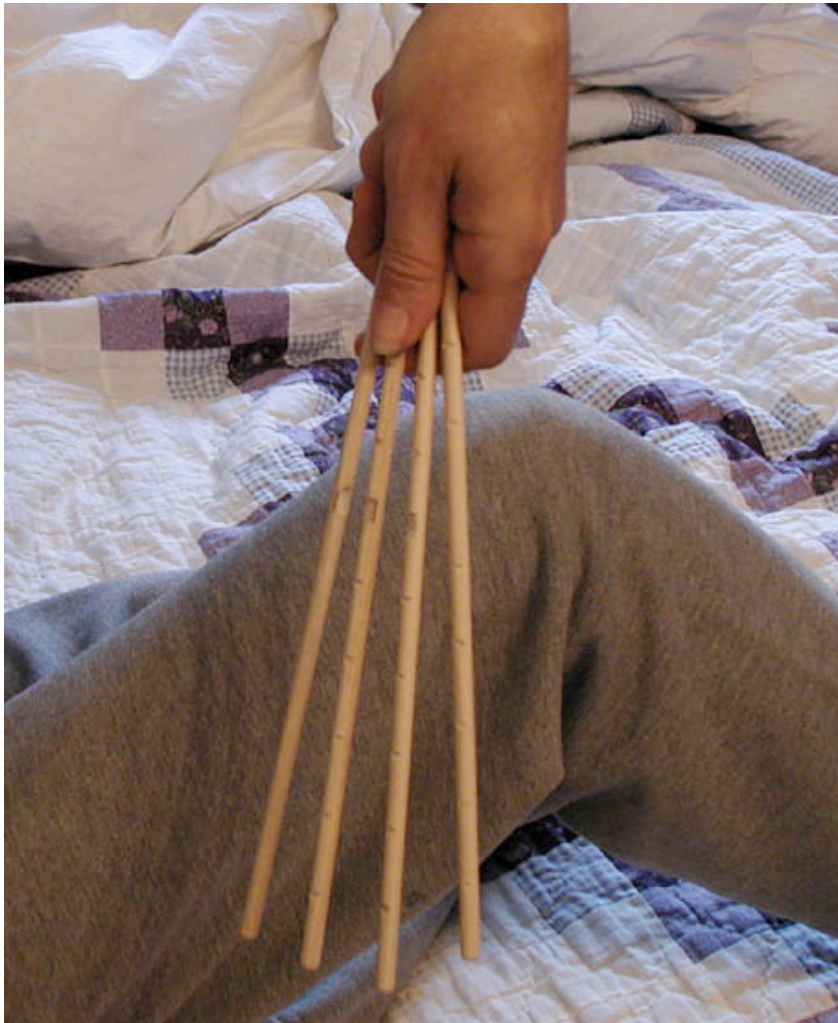
My techniques for weaving Ojos de Dios are almost totally self-taught over long periods of experimentation. However, I was part of the 1970's New Mexico and Arizona period when Ojos de Dios were very popular, and so got to see many examples of varied creations in person. I sold many hundreds of my own ojos during this time. When popularity waned at the end of the 70's, I virtually quit weaving my ojos for many years, but took up the art again in the late 1990's, and have ever increased my productivity and enthusiasm for the craft since then. For more about how I came to be a weaver of Ojos de Dios, see [My Ojo Story](#), as published on my website, [Ojos-de-Dios.com](#). I take great pleasure in spreading knowledge about, and abilities to weave, these creations as much as I am able to. Presenting my art on facebook and on etsy.com has been a

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I am now offering more detailed instructions on my [etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/jayfroggy) online shop, which includes links to videos, tips for making a 12-sided ojo, and an appendix on where I buy my yarns. Kits are also available, and everyone who buys a kit also receives the instructions; and everyone who buys the instructions gets a coupon code for free shipping when buying a kit.

Jay Mohler
[jayfroggy.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/jayfroggy)

For doweling, I use, 1/4" for up to 16", 5/16" for up to 22", and 3/8" for up to 32", and 7/16" for up to 40".



For a eight-sided ojo, consider the overall pattern to be two four-sided ojos joined together. Each set of sticks for these two parts are notched in the middle, about 1/4 the thickness of the sticks, so the two sticks fit and stack closely together.

Keeping yarn tight is a problem, so I make a notch with a file and or pocket knife every inch (closer on a smaller than 12 inch ojo) all along the doweling. Also the notches act as guides for keeping the pattern even.

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Myself, I tend to stick with colors from the American Southwest. I recommend finding color combinations that you find especially beautiful in nature. There are also color wheel sites online that might be useful in matching up harmonious colors, although I've always gone by intuition and schemes from nature myself, and drawn inspiration from other artists.

Start with the two sticks that will be the top two of the eventual 8-sided pattern. The way of making the central diamond is exactly the same from the very start, and the pattern that makes that central diamond also holds the first two sticks together

Holding your first two sticks as illustrated here, cross over the central joining of the sticks, wrap around one stick two times, bringing your yarn to a new starting place, then cross over again, wrap around the next stick, and so on, to build up your central diamond pattern.



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From the very beginning, watch to keep the pattern even, both the space between strands of yarn, and the amount the diamond pattern has expanded along each stick. If you're not satisfied, start over. Errors are easy enough to correct when caught early.

Now.. To add new colors, cut the old color to where about one extra inch, a **tail**, is left, and simply twist the new color to the old, leaving the tails running along the stick. After a couple wraps have securely held the new color in place, you can snip the tails shorter, so they won't get in the way later.



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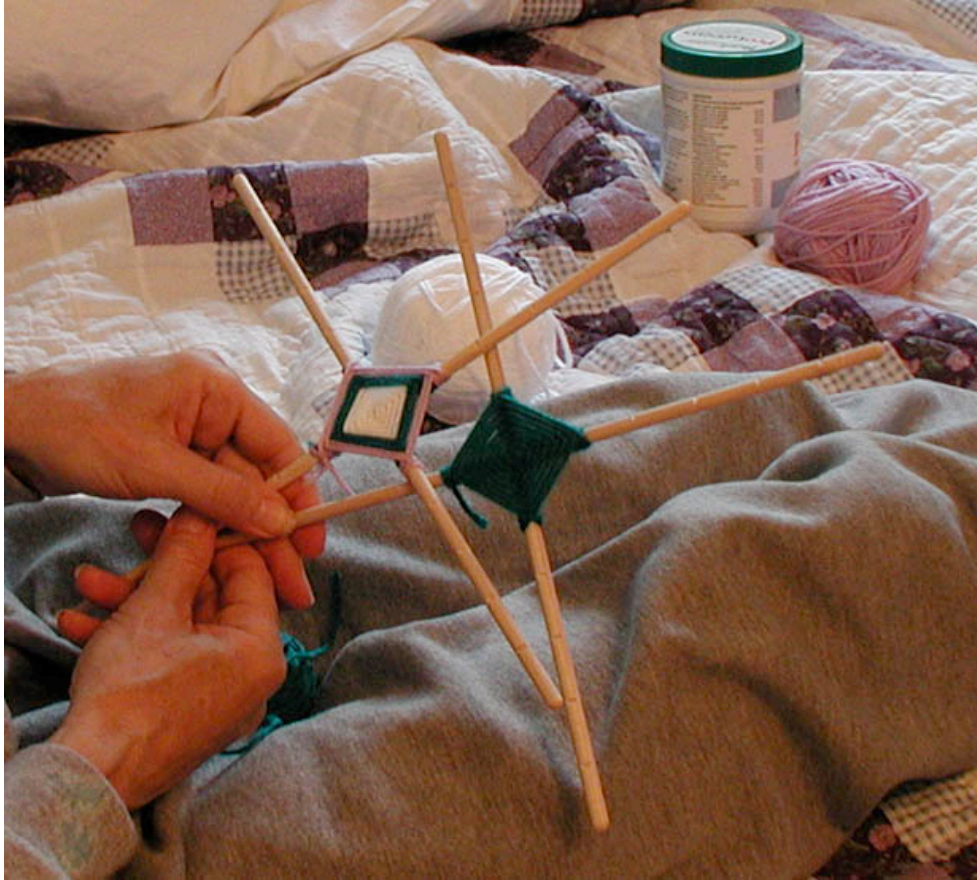
Here I'm adding, again by the twist method, the third and final color to the central diamond pattern.



When you are finished with your central diamond, cut the color yarn you are working with, leaving enough tail to tuck under itself to hold it temporarily in place. Prepare your second set of sticks in the same manner. I usually make the second diamond or pattern one or two wraps of the yarns larger, to make sure it shows up well from behind the original diamond pattern.

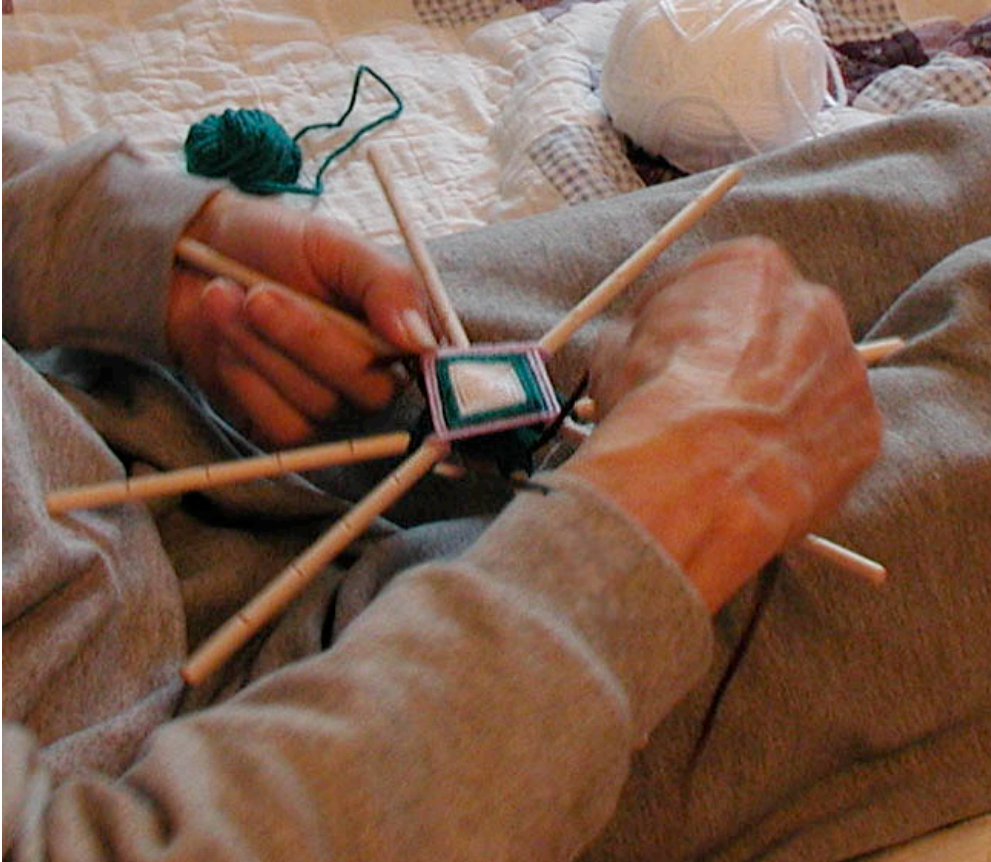
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In the same manner I prepare a second set of sticks, making this diamond slightly larger than the first.



Now comes the trickiest part. Most commonly I use a *dagger* pattern at this point to hold the two sets of sticks together. Choosing my next color yarn, I start the new color by securing it over the tails of the last color one twist under itself, leaving a tail running down beside the earlier color. Now, holding the sets of sticks together with thumb and forefinger, I use my other hand to bring the yarn underneath both sets, and up again to wrap twice around the opposite side of the finished diamond from where I started, as illustrated on the next page.

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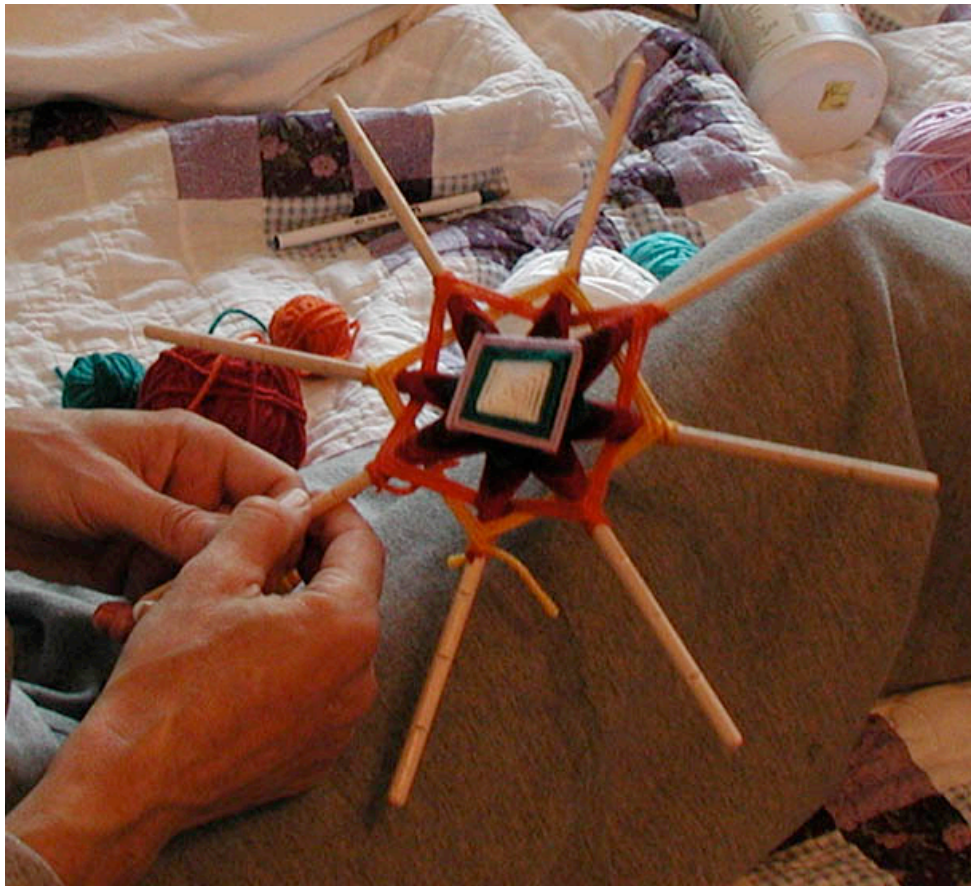


Surprisingly, with just one strand of yarn running underneath, and wrapped twice around the opposite end of your starting stick, your ojo is already sturdy enough you can now twirl the ojo to continue wrapping. In this case I went back and forth four times, then did the same temporary tie as when ending the diamond, by tucking the cut end underneath itself once, leaving a tail long enough to start a new color later. Be careful to keep things centered, and remember, although the ojo at this point may seem horribly wobbly and unwieldy, it will now grow stronger with every wrap of yarn that strings underneath the two sets, holding it all together with more and more strands of yarn as the pattern grows.

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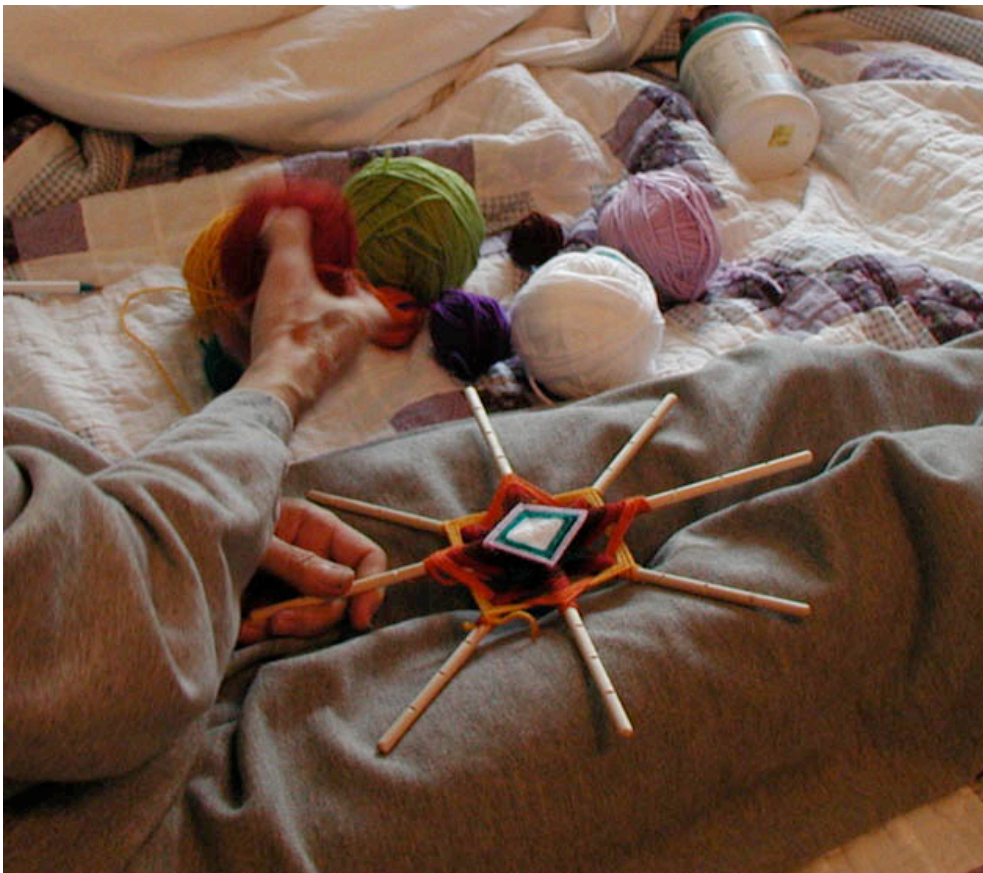
Be sure to keep adjusting the sticks to be evenly distanced from each other, as well as evenly balanced on top of each other. With practice, making all these little, but necessary, adjustments, will become automatic.

With this ojo in the illustrations, I've decided to do what I call a *kaleidoscope* pattern, where I switch colors frequently, alternating between the two original sets of sticks with interwoven diamonds. First I did the orange, then the gold added with the yarn, in the way I almost invariably add onto a pattern, running *underneath* the earlier color. These beginning diamonds have three rows of yarn each, wrapping twice around each stick, unless I adjust how far along the stick the pattern is growing, by either wrapping once, or perhaps even three times. Occasionally I'll use my thumbnail to gently push a pattern into a more agreeable looking place.



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A challenge for me with this type of ojo, is to try and avoid any part of the pattern looking like a boring square, or box, sitting flat. We see all too much of that kind of shape in our lives: walls, buildings, TV's, and so much more! Circles and interlocking diamonds are so much more agreeable to the eye in an ojo! The other main challenge is to use colors in a harmonious and pleasing way. Be sure there is enough contrast between adjoining colors, so that they don't blend too easily into each other and create a kind of uneasy blurring of the line between them. Also, though, try hard not to have two adjoining colors clash sharply. It's important, besides following the well known guides of the color wheel (search for online help if needed) to be aware of how color types fit together: primary colors; pastel colors, jewel tones, and earth toned colors. Some people would say not to mix these different types. I say, mix carefully, and be aware of the effect that the different types have. I often mix in a couple jewel tones with a mainly earth toned ojo, using the jewel tones for highlights. I like that kind of effect a lot. Pastel tones can also be used for highlights against a background of earth tones.



Here I'm making my final decision about what colors I want in this ojo.

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It's generally a good idea, once you have used a certain color, to repeat it again later in your design, rather than have any one color stand alone. Also, it's often best to pick out one or two colors to be your dominant color theme, and let all other colors play lesser roles. However, any and all generalities about color I've made here, I've broken many times in my own creations, so never feel bound by rules, but rather try to let intuition lead you to the highest of artistic creativity, if at all possible!

After a bit of contemplation, I definitely decide to add a bold, simple pattern, to balance out the quick changes I've woven so far.

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I add 4 rows of green to each of the two sets of sticks, and a single row of bronze. I continue the pattern with more green, and snip short one tail, planning on next weaving a pattern that goes to all the sticks.

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Here, I weave to every third stick, and wrapping around the sticks twice on average, I make an eight pointed star pattern.

With this pattern, the angle to and from each stick is very sharp, and you can easily wrap three times around each stick without your yarn bunching up at all. Also, its a good time to really even up your pattern, as there is more flexibility than at other places to wrap more times, or less times around each stick, and still not show too much of either separation between the strands of yarn, or to have the yarn bunch up too closely together.

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Finally I add the border, wrapping on average once per stick. On the last time around, I might give some extra wraps to the stick ends; the last chance to make the pattern come out even. When I get back to the starting stick for the last time, I cut a tail two or three inches long, and wrap three or four times around the stick, tucking the end of the yarn underneath itself once on each turn around the stick. The tail left at the very end I cut to about one inch in length, and tuck it in between the wrapped stick and ojo border, on the back side.

The ojo could be declared finished right here, but I usually add some embroidery to the border.

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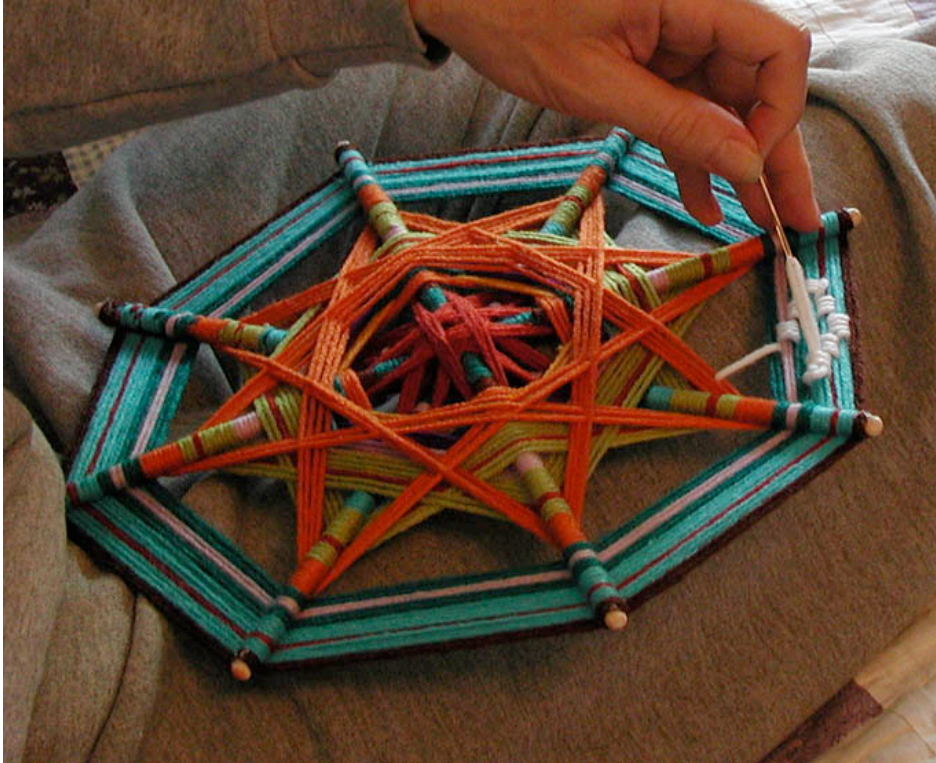


Needlework in the border.

Having a yarn needle, which is a large needle with an *eye* large enough for yarn to fit through it, and a blunt end where other needles are sharp, are needed for this stage of the work.

In this ojo I've chosen to embroider a fairly complex circular design. When I curve back at the two ends of such a design, I find it's best to run the yarn underneath the back strands of that section of the design, to hold the last stitch properly in place. I skipped doing this at the other end of this design however, and am not worried about it. There is one other thing unique about the two end

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elements of this design. Each passes over four strands of yarn, where all the other elements are stitched over three strands. This helps assure enough background showing up in the design interior.

Experiment a bit as you make this type of design, and I think you'll agree.



I use a square knot to tie the two ends together, and snip the yarn ends short.

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**The finished
Ojo de Dios
from the front**



**And from the
back**

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Jay Mohler

jayfroggy.etsy.com

jayfroggy@yahoo.com