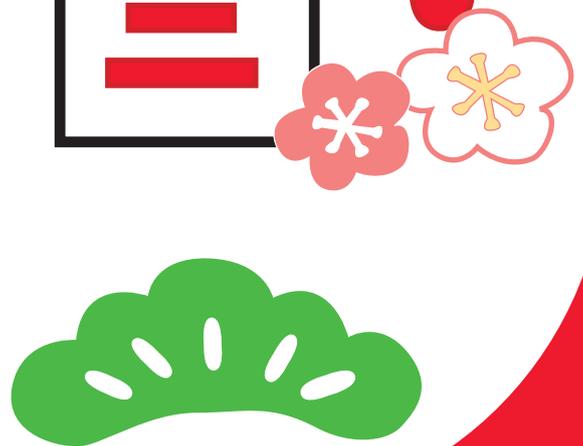
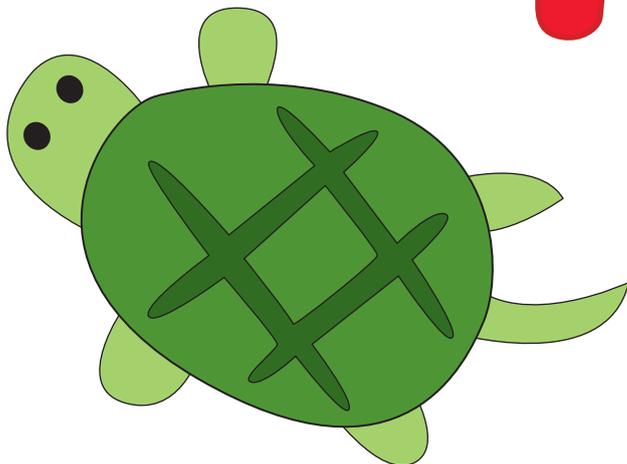
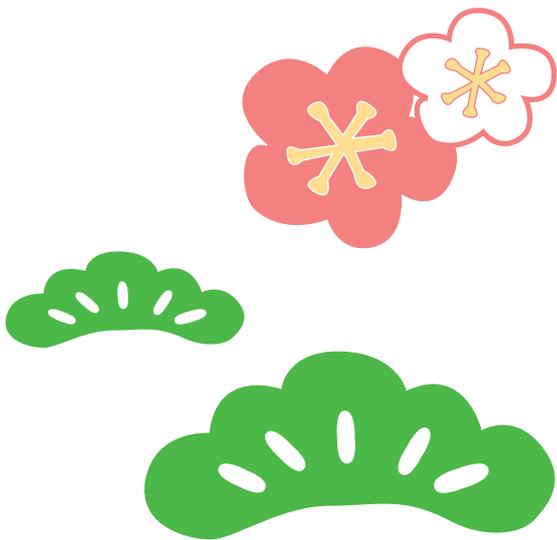
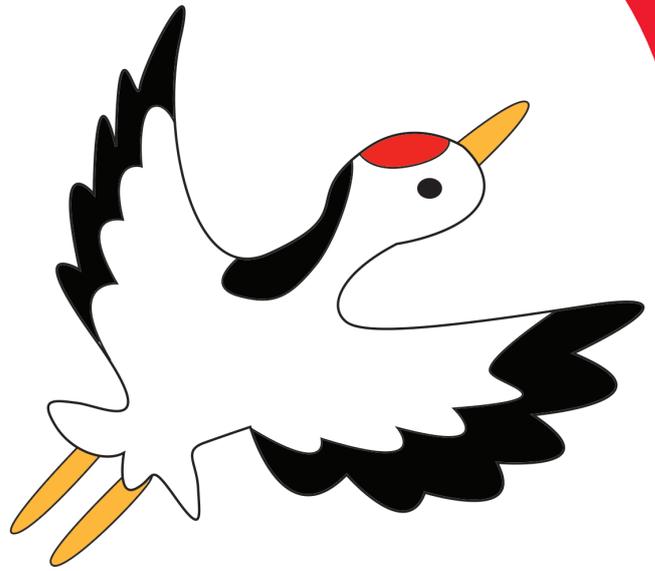




# The 7-5-3 Festival





The **7-5-3 Festival** is an annual celebration held on November 15. The festival is celebrated by families with daughters aged 3 and 7 and sons aged 3 and 5. This is because the ages 3, 5, and 7 were important milestones for children in the past.

Children who are celebrating the festival get dressed in their best clothes and visit a shrine with their family. At the shrine, the family will pray for the future health and happiness of the children and have a priest bless them.

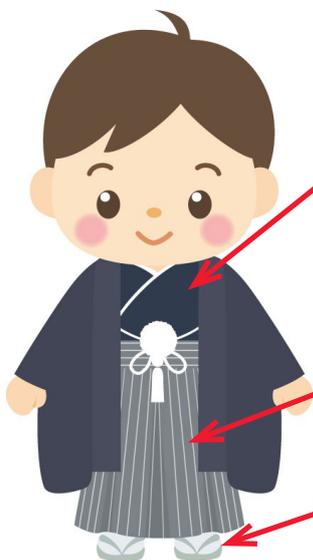


### Festival Clothes

Many children will get dressed up in traditional Japanese clothing for the festival and have their photo taken. Both boys and girls can wear a **kimono**, which looks like a robe, and **zori** sandals on their feet. In the past, boys started wearing **hakama** trousers over their kimono at age 5, and girls started wearing a more traditional **obi** belt at age 7. Nowadays, not everyone will wear Japanese clothing; some children will wear a smart suit or dress instead.

### Question 1: Can you label the items of clothing correctly below?

(Answers can be found on next page).



A.
B.
C.
D.





## Chitose ame 千歳飴

Children receive sweets called chitose ame (*chee-toh-say-ah-may*) during the 7-5-3 festival. The name means “one thousand year sweets” and they are given to children to wish them good fortune, good health and a long and successful life.

The sweets are long and thin sticks which represent the wish for a happy and long life, and are coloured in red and white which represent good fortune in Japanese culture.

The chitose ame are usually sold in long thin bags and you can often see children carrying the bags whilst visiting shrines during the festival. Traditionally the bags are decorated with pictures of turtles, a type of bird called a crane, or other things which have special meanings in Japan.



**Read the descriptions below - can you guess what the meanings of the symbols are?** (Answers are on the next page).



**Cranes (tsuru)** are big birds with a long neck. They can often be found in Japanese myths and stories. It is said that they live for at least 1,000 years.



**Turtles (kame)** can live for many years. In Japan, it is often said that they live for at least 10,000 years! They can be found in many Japanese myths and stories too.



**Pines (matsu)** are evergreen trees, which means they don't shed leaves or turn brown in winter and stay green all year round.





shichi go san



## Kanji Characters

In Japanese the festival is called 'Shichi- go- san' and it is written like this: 七五三  
Can you guess what each character means? It means 7-5-3! Practice writing them below first by following the stroke order to trace the characters, then try on your own.

<i>Shichi means 'seven'</i>	<i>Go means 'five'</i>	<i>San means 'three'</i>	<i>*Sen means 'thousand'</i>

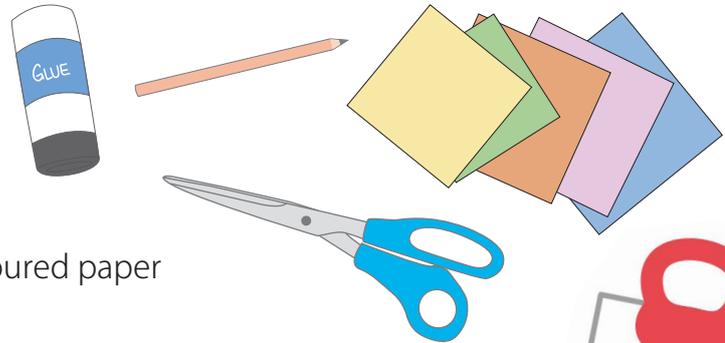
\*千, which means 'thousand', is pronounced 'sen' in Japanese on its own, but can sometimes be pronounced as 'chi' when it is together with other words.



## Activity: Make a Chitose ame Bag!

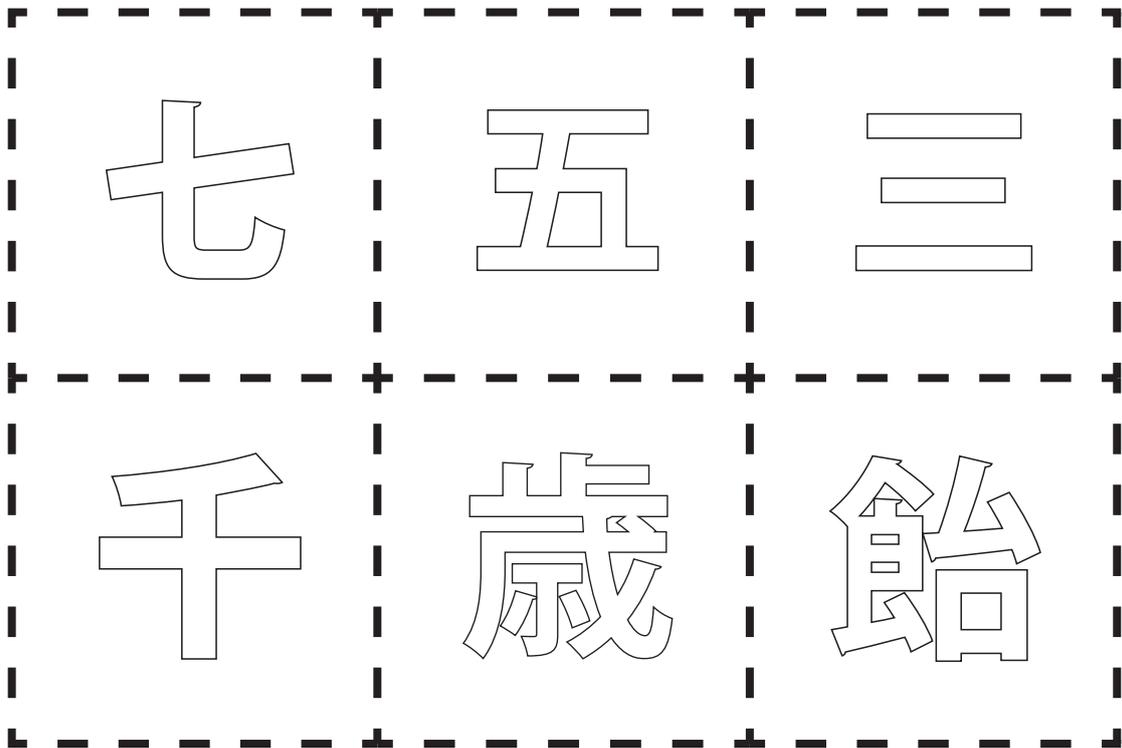
### You will need:

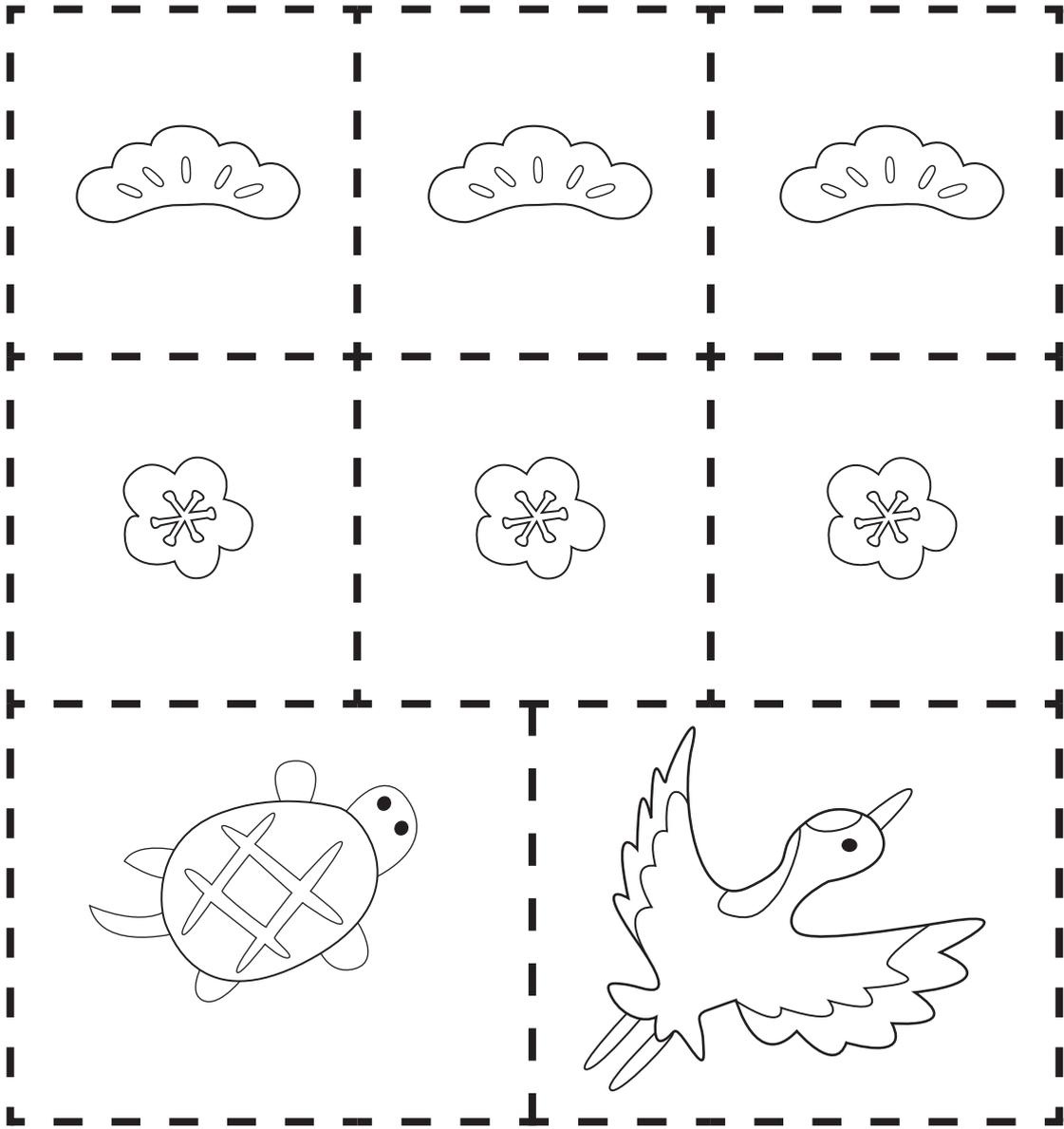
- Scissors
- Colouring pencils or felt tips
- Sellotape or glue
- Optional: stickers, sequins, coloured paper



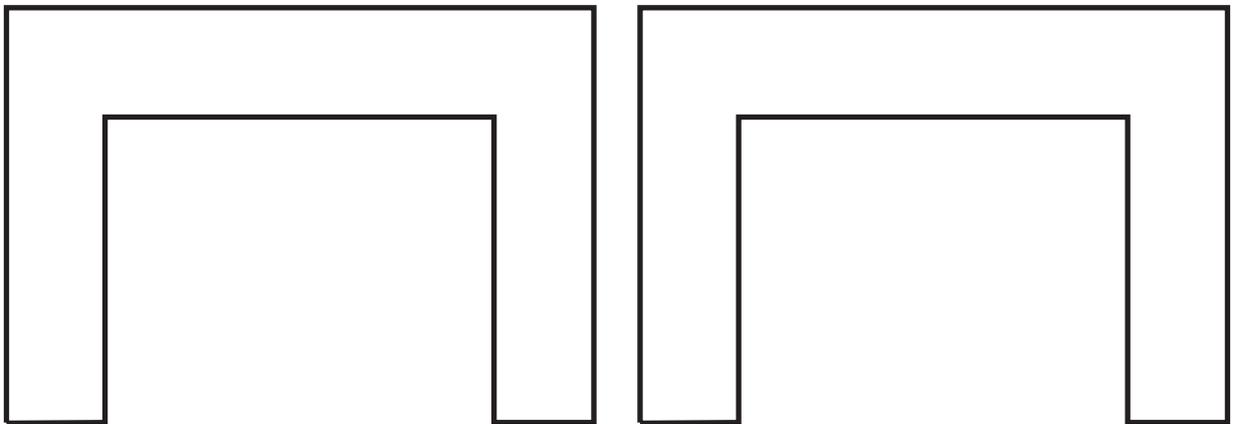
### Instructions:

1. Cut out the template (on the last page) to make your bag.
2. Cut out and colour the handles. Attach the handles with glue or sellotape. (You can also make the handles with coloured paper).
3. Decorate your bag however you like. You can colour the kanji characters and illustrations below and stick them on the bag. Or you can draw your own designs or copy some of the illustrations and write 7, 5 and 3 in Japanese yourself.





## Bag Handles



# Chito-se Ame Bag Template

## Instructions:

1. Cut out bag and handle.
2. Fold flaps ① and ② in and put glue on the back.
3. Fold inside back ③ in along the dotted line and make sure the bottom and side are glued to flaps ① and ②.
4. Glue handles to top of outside front and outside back.

