

# SHAKING UP SHAKER CHAIRS

#NBMAAatHome

Inspired by the Summer 2019 exhibition, *Chairway to Heaven: A Celebration of Shaker Seating Furniture*, construct and design a chair that expresses your unique style. When your chair is finished, grab family members to play an exciting game of Musical Chairs!

## 1. Look at the Shaker Chair above with a family member and ask each other these questions:

- What features, or different parts, does the chair have? How would you describe each part?
- The parts of furniture are often given names similar to human body parts. Where are the arms of the chair? The legs? The back? The seat? And the ears?
- How would you describe the chair's style? Is it simple or fancy? Why do you think that?
- What functions might the chair have? What do you think it was used for?
- Does this chair look like pieces of furniture in your home? What are some similarities and differences you notice between the chair and your home furniture?



*Mount Lebanon Shakers, #6  
Rocking Chair, n.d., Maple with  
wool tapes, ebony stain, and  
Upholstered Stool, 1920-40,  
maple, cotton, velvet, and silk,  
Loan from the collection of M.  
Stephen Miller and Miriam R. Miller*

Shakers are a religious group founded in England in 1747 that later traveled to the United States in the 1780s. Their religious beliefs led them to live modest and hardworking lives and the group's home furnishings reflect this lifestyle. Shaker furniture was not ornate and lavish, but rather simple and practical. At first, Shakers only made furnishings to use within their groups; however, by the mid-1800s, some Shaker villages began to manufacture and sell furniture to outside communities in exchange for food and goods. While only one Shaker village remains in the U.S. today, and the manufacturing of traditional Shaker furniture has stopped, the principles of Shaker design continue to inspire modern and contemporary designers.

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## 2. Collect your materials

\*This is a suggested list only, you can use whichever objects and materials you have available to you for this project!

- Pencil and paper for sketching
- Paper chair template (included)
- Pieces of cardboard (from paper towel rolls, toilet paper rolls, boxes)
- Construction paper
- Bubble wrap
- Scrap foam
- Paper straws
- Cotton balls
- Aluminum foil
- Yarn, ribbon, or string
- Pipe cleaners
- Glue sticks
- Tape
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors

## 3. Ask yourself these questions as you start to sketch your chair design:

- What will my chair look like?
- Who will sit in my chair?
- What will my chair be used for?
- What features will my chair have?
- What will my chair be able to do?

## 4. Start building!

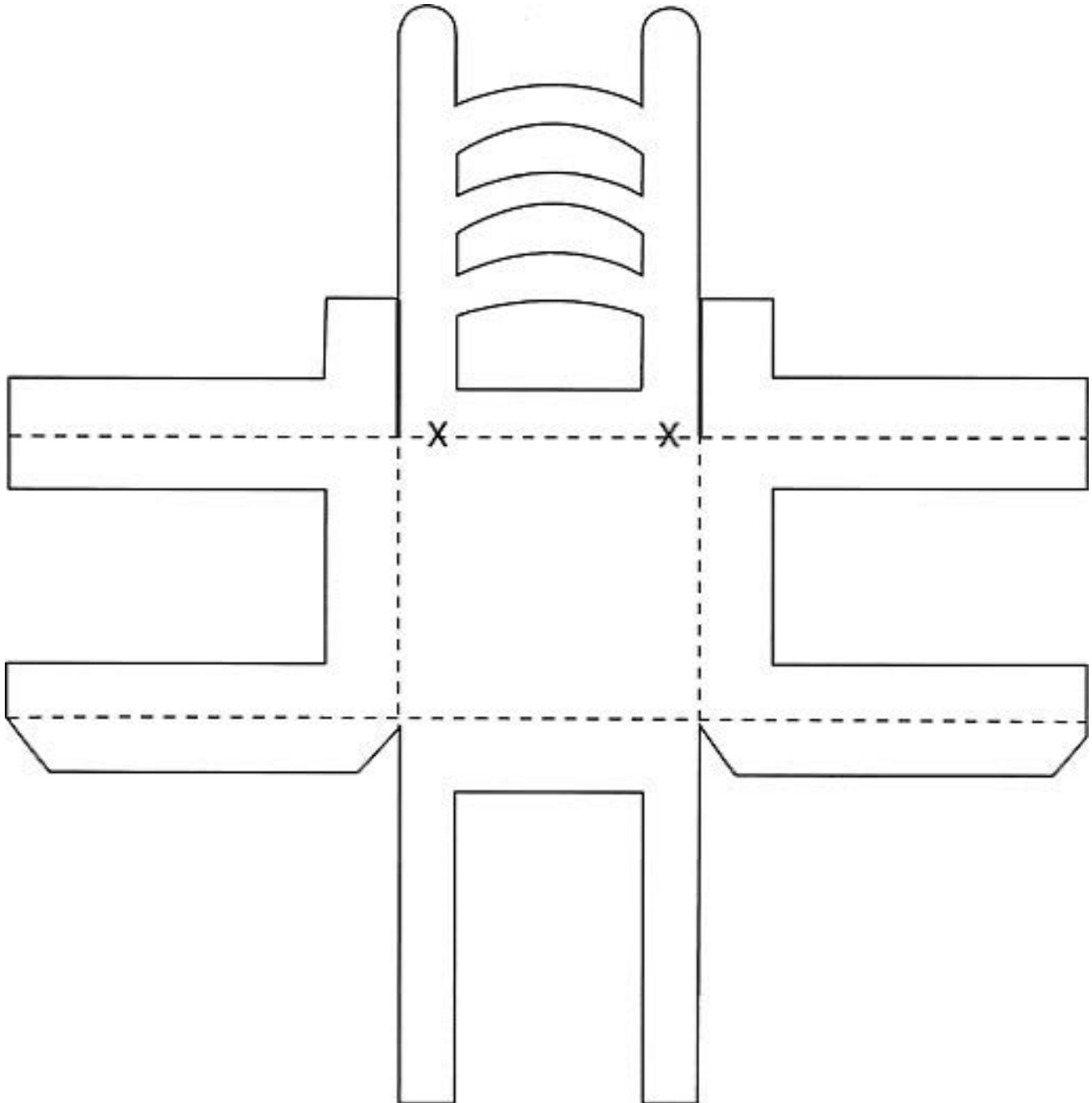
Experiment with different materials to achieve your desired design. It's okay if your design changes as you start constructing. Use the chair template provided on the next page if you need help getting started!

## 5. Take a picture of your creation and share it with the Museum using #NBMAAatHome



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## MUSICAL CHAIRS

Requires 3 or more players

Before the game starts, set up chairs back to back, with one fewer chair than the number of people playing. Then, choose a person to start and stop the music throughout the game. When the music starts playing, players will walk around the chairs in a clockwise circle. As soon as the music stops, players must quickly find a chair to sit in. The player who does not find a chair, is out. Remove a chair from the center, start the music, and begin again. The player to sit in the final chair remaining wins the game.



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