



Kid-Friendly Fish Beads

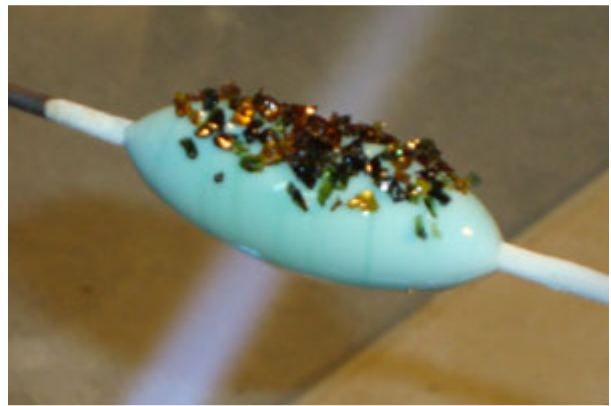
By Diane Woodall

I was asked several months ago to create a fish for a young boy in the Beads of Courage program. He didn't want a frilly, girly fish. So I set out to make him a fish that would appeal to a boy but would also be durable and sturdy enough to endure the "love" boys can inflict upon their possessions. As a result, I came up with a design for a fish that is as childproof as possible, but with the charm and whimsy that will appeal to children of all ages.

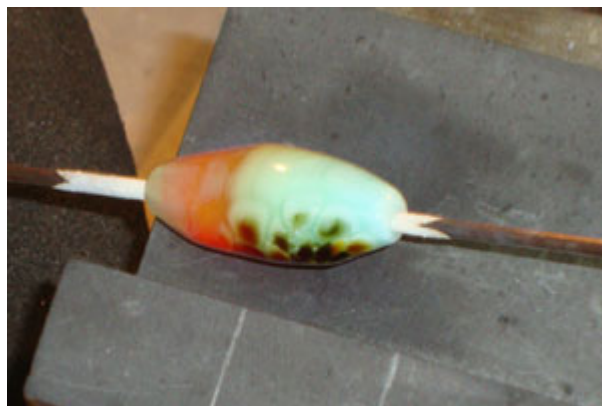
Materials needed: Any type of glass will work for these beads. For the tutorial I used Effetre light sky blue, transparent cobalt, transparent light aquamarine and ivory. You will also need some frit (optional) for making the design on half of the body. **Tools needed:** Razor tool, knife or shaping tool, marver.



#1- Wind on a footprint as wide as your finished bead. If you are using an expensive color like Opal Yellow or a silver glass, you can make the core in clear and case in your more expensive color.



#2- Dip one edge of your bead in frit. This will become the top of the fish. You can also roll the whole bead in frit, but I prefer to decorate the top and bottom of the fish with two different frits, or a combination of frit and stripes or dots.



#3- Melt in the frit and then marver the bead so that the ends are puckered. Here I'm using my torch marver, but you can use a hand-held marver if that is more comfortable for you.



#4- To shape the body of the fish I use a Cattwalk large crunch press, but you can also use parallel mashers.



#5- After your bead is pressed, it's time to make the eyes. For this fish I made the eyes with ivory and aquamarine. Aquamarine over ivory turns green, and this color combo is very effective for fish eyes. Start with a small dot of ivory and melt it flat.



#6- Place a small dot of aquamarine over the ivory and melt that flat. I like to press it with the flat side of my knife. Don't forget to keep the rest of the bead warm.



#7- Spot heat the eye, and using a poking tool, poke the eye like you would if you were making a plunged eye bead.



#8- Place a dot of clear over the eye, trapping a little bubble beneath the glass.



#9- Here is what the finished eye looks like. I have also made fish using murrinis for the eyes, and they work well too.



#10- The next step is to form the tail. Start by winding on a disk at the end of the bead, parallel to the base bead.



#11- Melt the disk until it rounds up a bit.



#12- Gently press the disk onto your marver, flattening both sides. You can also use parallel mashers for this step.



#13- Using the flat side of your knife or shaping tool, gently press the tail toward the mandrel.



#14- This is the shape you want. Remember to keep your bead warm.



#15- Once you have both sides shaped, you are ready to define the tail. Heat the tail near the mandrel, and using a razor tool or rake, gently pull the tail in towards the body.



#16- This is the shape you want – and remember to keep flashing your bead in the flame to keep it warm.



#17- To define the tail, use your razor tool to press grooves into the tail, heating one section at a time.



#18- Now it's time to add the fins. Start by applying a swipe or two of glass on top of the fish to create the dorsal fin and melt gently until it is well adhered.



#19- Using your razor tool, gently press grooves into the fin, being careful not to overheat the fin. Flip the fish and press the grooves on the other side. You may have to go back and adjust the first side.



#20- Add a pelvic fin and anal fin and define the pelvic fin the way you did the dorsal fin. Try to keep all of the fins small and not too thin. Remember, these beads are for children and have to be durable.



#21- Add small cobalt blue dots using a hair-thin stringer and carefully melt them in. Because these dots are so small, they will melt quickly, and this is why I do this step after adding the fins. You can add the dots before the fins and that works fine too.



#22- Now our fish needs some lips. Wind on a disk as you did when you made the tail.



#23- Melt carefully until the lips round out a bit. You can make the lips as large as you want by making the disk larger.



#24- Using a razor tool, nudge the glass toward the bead.



#25- The lips should look like this. Pucker up dahling!



#26- The last step is to add the pectoral fin. To make it simply swipe on a small amount of glass on the side of the fish and, using your razor tool, press grooves into the fin angling up and toward the tail. And your fish is done.

