



# Craft Daddy

Joel Henriques merges two of his loves—his kids and his art—making toys that **SPARK THE IMAGINATION**.



**THE FAMILY THAT PLAYS TOGETHER** Joel Henriques, author of *Made to Play!*, with his 4½-year-old twins (and frequent collaborators).

## FLAT BLOCK SET

*“My kids often lay their blocks flat and create designs on the floor,” Henriques writes. “I thought it would be fun to have more shapes and colors to use in their compositions.”*

### TOOLS AND MATERIALS

¾-inch plywood

Hand coping or scroll saw

Sandpaper

Paint and paintbrush

Beeswax polish

1. With a pencil, draw a variety of basic shapes on the wood. Henriques’s circular pieces ranged in size from 1 inch to 3 inches in diameter, and the other pieces ranged from about 1½ inches to 5½ inches long.
2. Cut out the shapes with a saw. Don’t worry if your lines aren’t perfect. Your project will look more handmade that way, which is a good thing.
3. Sand the wooden shapes to remove any splinters or rough edges.
4. Paint the shapes as desired, and let dry.
5. Rub on beeswax polish to protect the blocks.

**JOEL HENRIQUES** swears his crafting skills are limited: “But it’s the imperfections that make an object interesting,” says the Portland, Oregon, artist, father of three, and author of *Made to Play! Handmade Toys and Crafts for Growing Imaginations* (Roost, 2011; \$19).

Henriques, a painter, began crafting after becoming a stay-at-home dad to his twins in 2007. “My mom had made drool catchers for them, and they kept ripping them off and playing with them, even though they were surrounded by toys,” says Henriques, who also has a 4-month-old daughter. So he began making his own playthings and blogging about them at [madebyjoel.com](http://madebyjoel.com).

Now Henriques and his kids work on projects together every day (including the one shown here, from his book). And his twins are starting to have more creative input. “They’re really into ‘flying machines,’” he says. “The other day, my son asked me to drill a hole in a stick. I did, he put another stick through the hole, and it totally worked!”



### MAKE AND PLAY

To learn about more of Joel’s projects, visit [thefamilyroom.marthastewart.com/made-by-joel](http://thefamilyroom.marthastewart.com/made-by-joel).