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[Workshops](#)

[City of Stories](#)

[Make a Book](#)

[Make a Mandala](#)

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[Blog](#)

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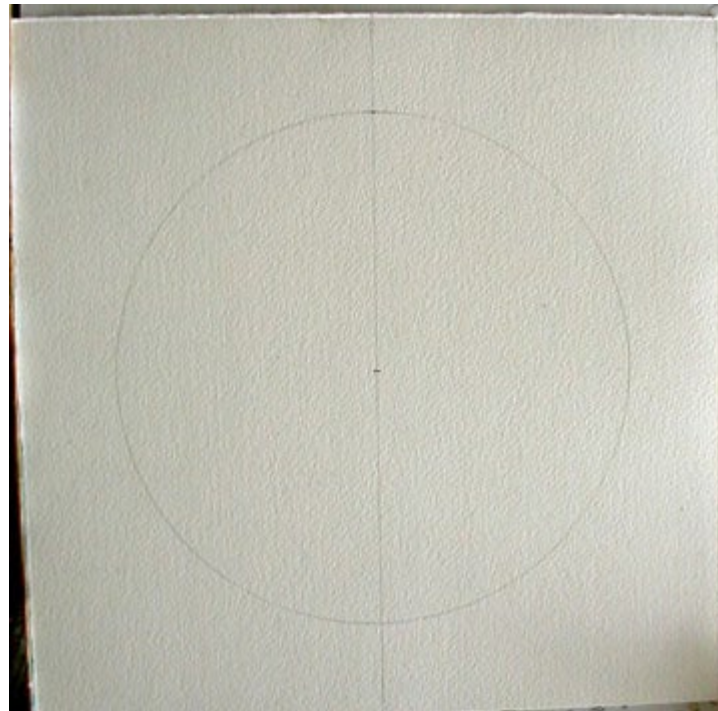
Make a Mandala

Mandala Tutorial

Follow along as I make a nine-pointed mandala. I'm starting with an 11" square of watercolor paper. I also have a ruler, a compass, a protractor, a pencil and an eraser.

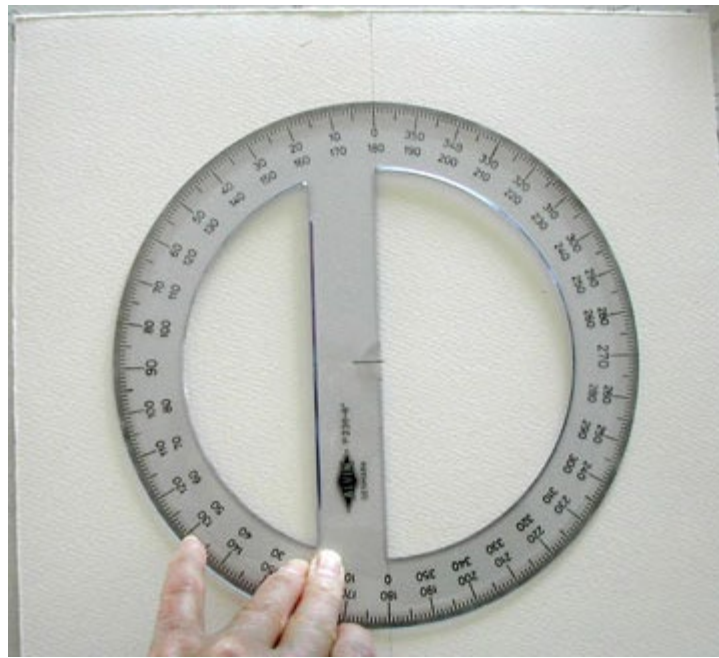
PART ONE: BUILDING A GRID:

First I draw a vertical line at 5.5" and mark the center of my line to find the center of the paper. Then I use the compass to draw an 8" diameter circle ↓

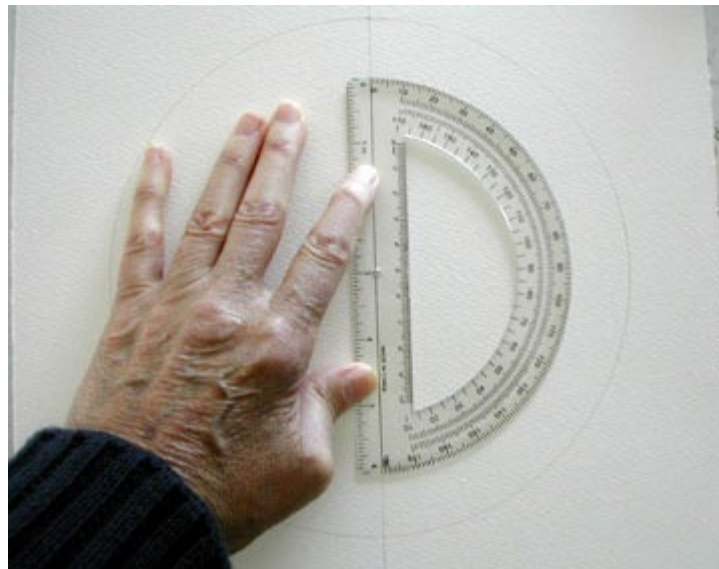


Using a protractor, I will divide the circle into 9 segments of 40° each, starting from my 0 point. Investing in a circular protractor is a great idea...

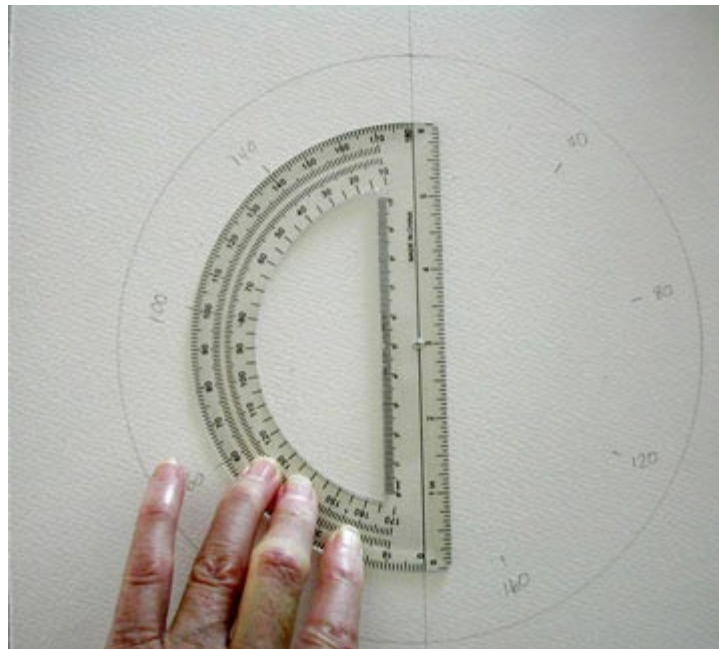
↓



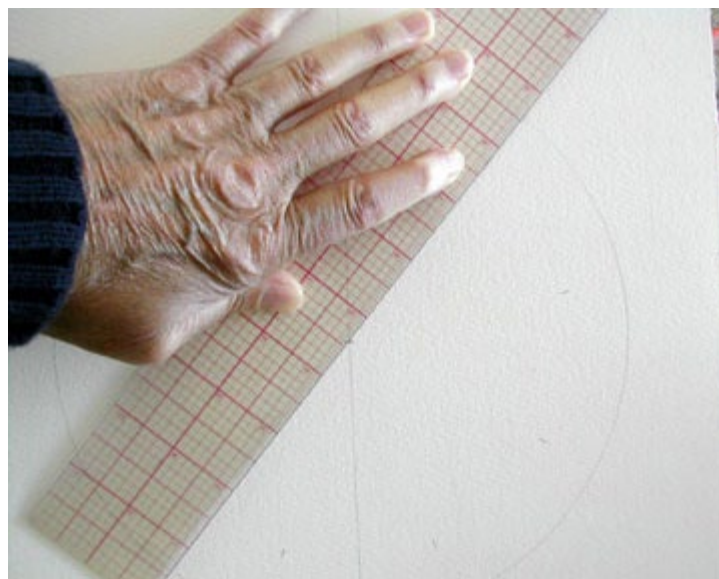
...but a standard 180° protractor works just as well. Use the center line and center point to place the protractor correctly, and then starting from the top 0 point, mark off four segments of 40° each. ↓



Then turn the protractor around and start from the top again, marking 4 more segments on the other side. The ninth segment (at the bottom) will be divided in half by your center line. ↓



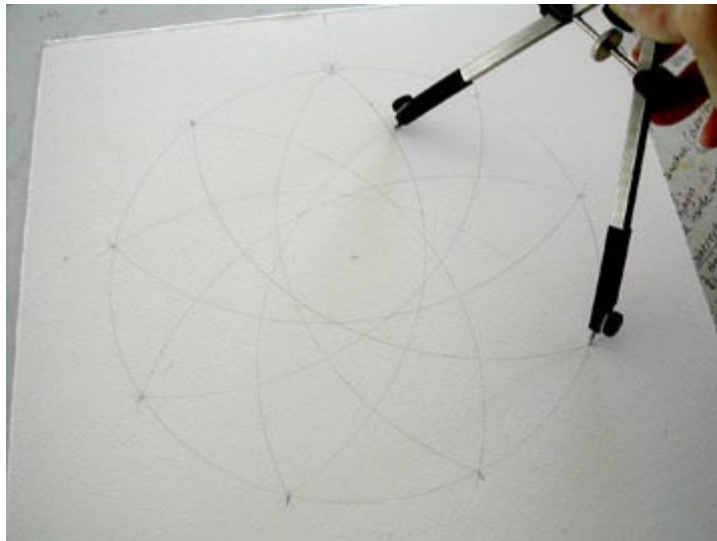
Now use a ruler to extend an imaginary line from the center point through each protractor mark and mark the nine intersection points on the circle. ↓



Now adjust your compass to the distance between two marks on the circle and swing an arc. Here, I am using the marks at 0° and 80° . A different star design will emerge if I set my compass to two adjacent marks (40° between). Experiment... ↓



Continue around the circle, swinging 9 similar arcs from each point on the circle -- until an interlocking star appears.↓

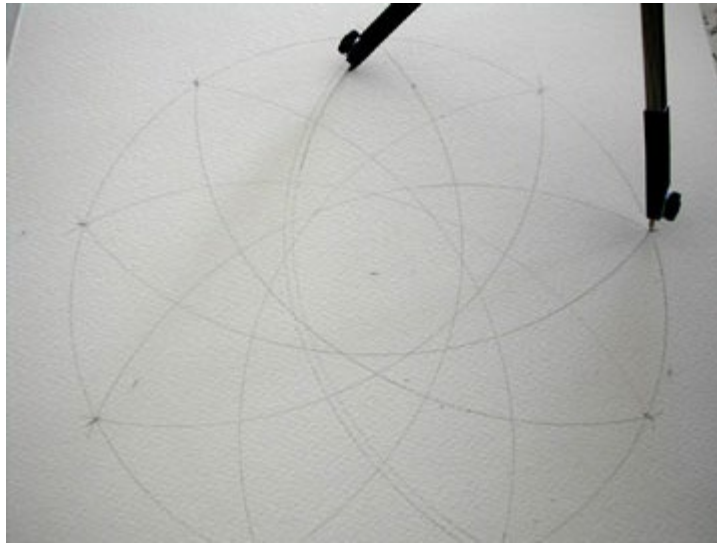


This is your base grid. From here, there are multiple options. Continue to set your compass between any two intersection points and draw a series of nine similar arcs. Or use your ruler to connect points with straight lines. Keep building and erasing sections of your grid to form interesting shapes and spaces, until you feel ready to add color.

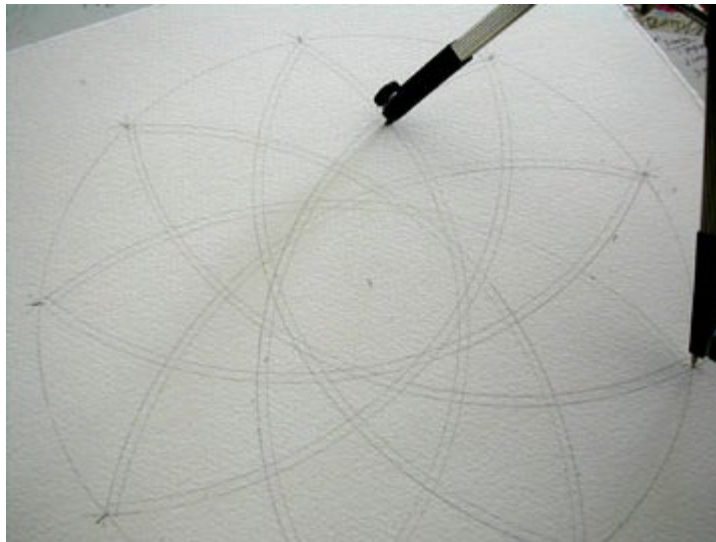
PART TWO: WOVEN KNOT DESIGNS

Some of my mandalas include interwoven bands of color. These photos show one method to make them.

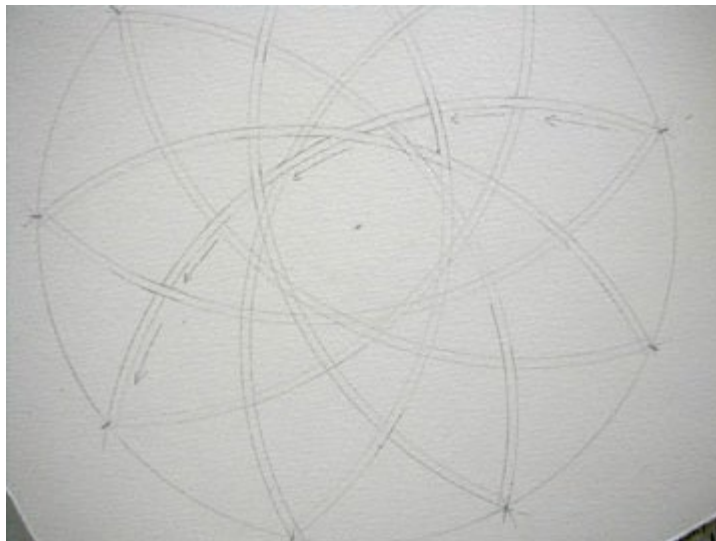
From the base grid star, make parallel lines for some or all of the lines by adjusting the compass slightly (use the same points on the circle). Here, my bands are about 1/8" wide.↓



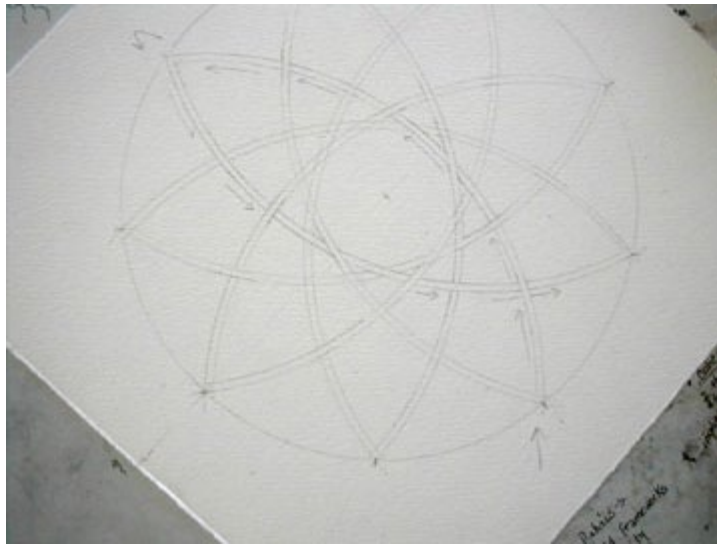
Keep going around the circle. ↓



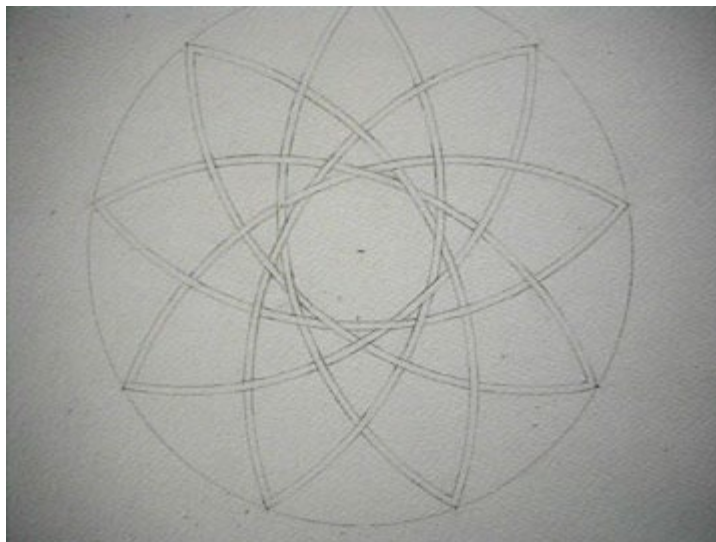
Then use your eraser at the intersection points, to make the bands go under and over other bands in a weaving pattern. ↓



Keep going around the circle, turning the corner at each point of the star. ↓



This will create one continuous woven band, forming a star with nine points.



PART THREE: ADJUSTMENTS

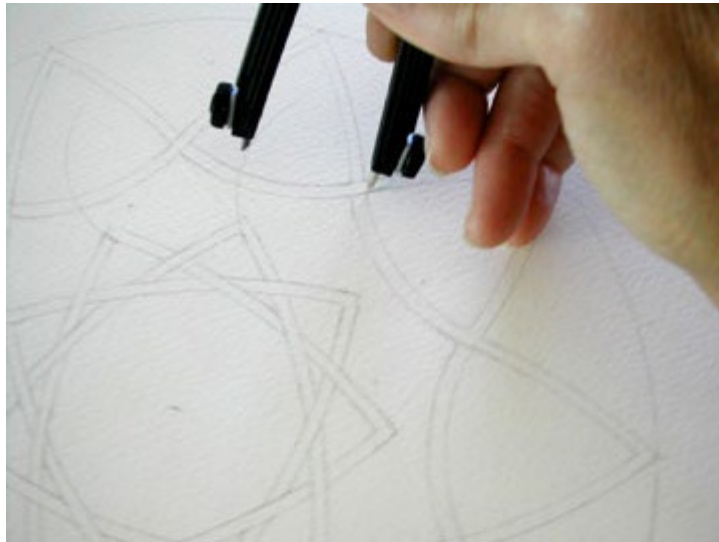
At this point, I decided to disconnect the continuous band and break it into two parts. Using my compass and eraser I began to add a new set of parallel lines from each point on the outer circle. ↓



This left me with an inner star and a woven border design.



Then I decided to extend the points of the inner star up into the border spaces. Placing my compass on an intersection point, I drew more parallel arcs to create a loop at the end of each star-point. ↓





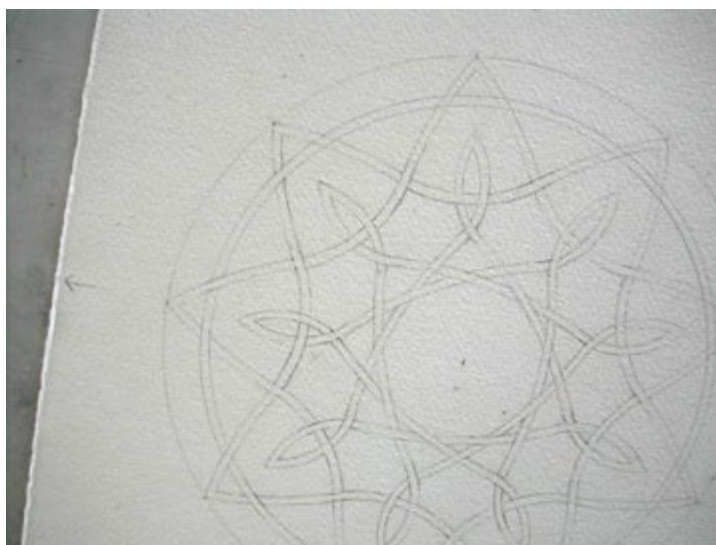
Then more erasing and weaving. Now my border design weaves through the star loops. ↓



Finally, I added a circle band between the loops and the star-points and had it weave under and over. ↓



I also erased the outer circle.

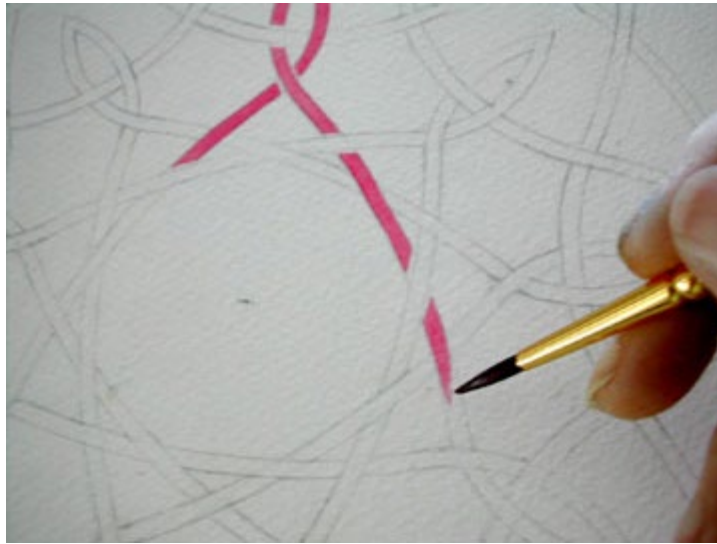


My final step before painting is to press on the pencil design with a soft eraser to pick up excess graphite and just leave a ghost image of the design. ↓

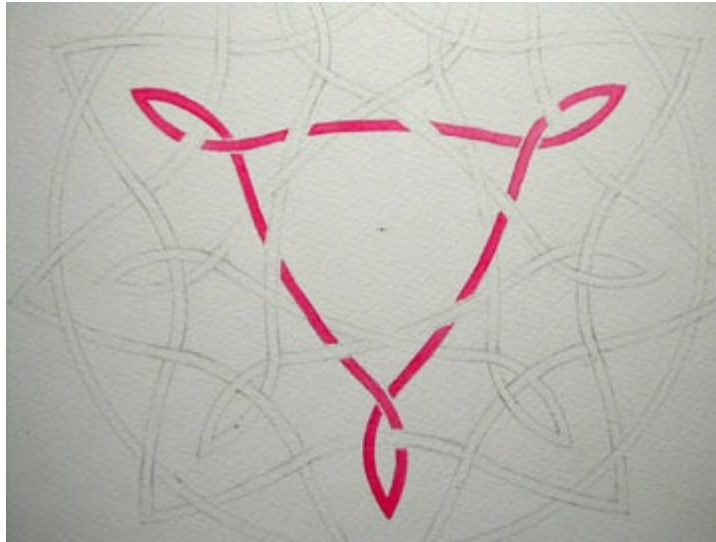


PART FOUR: ADDING COLOR

When I began to add color, I realized that by dividing the continuous design, my inner star design was actually 3 separate pieces--so 3 separate colors... ↓



permanent rose for the first loop ↓



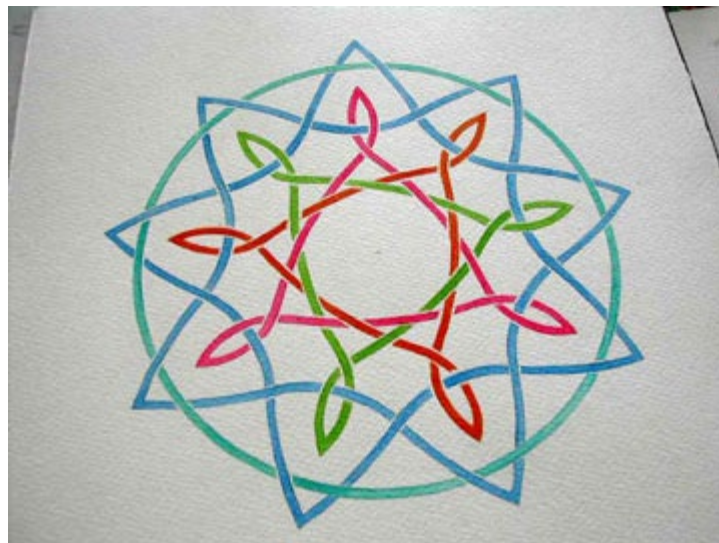
then burnt orange and spring green ↓



cobalt blue for the outer star ↓



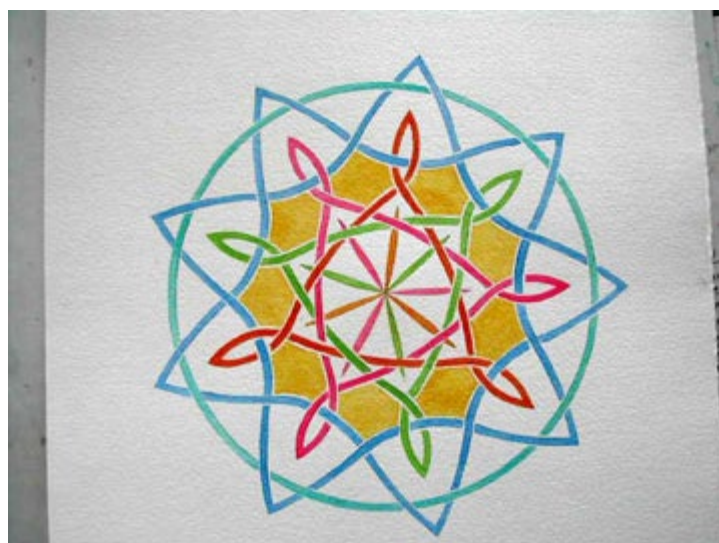
then teal blue for the circle ↓



I drew an inner star, using the colors of the loops, and began to fill in. ↓



now what?



Now it's your turn!

