

There is something incredibly special about taking a bowl or plate turned by hand on a lathe and adding your own creative touch. This process blends woodworking and decorative art into a meaningful, lasting piece — especially when done as a family.

Supplies List:

- Wooden bowl or plate (A wider bottom with a flatter edge works best so the napkin lays down smoothly and you can create a clean edge.)
 - Piece prepared on the bottom so it can be remounted on the lathe for finishing
- Decorative napkins (layers separated — use only the top decorative layer)
- Scissors
- Mod Podge GLOSS-LUSTRE-LUSTRE or Scorch Marker Maker's MAGIC Gloss
- White paint (for base coat) *Oil based works better than acrylic
- Sponge paint brushes
- Round sponge dabbers
- 2-part resin
- Mixing cups and stir sticks (for resin)
- Gloves
- Heat Gun
- Lathe and Tools including Inertia Sander
- Ruler
- Pencil

Step-by-Step Process:

1. Prepare the Wooden Surface

- Lightly sand the surface if needed to ensure it is smooth and clean. (220 grit sandpaper)
- Wipe away all dust thoroughly.
- Apply one or two thin coat(s) of white paint and allow it to dry fully before applying the first coat of Mod Podge/Maker's MAGIC.
 - Tip(s):
 - The white paint creates a clean background so that seeing through the napkin does not create a dingy look. (Oil based paint works best)
 - Make sure the bottom is prepared so the piece can be placed back on the lathe after decorating.

2. Prepare the Napkin

- Separate the decorative napkin layers. Most napkins have 2–3 plies. Gently peel away the plain backing layers.
- Use only the thin, top decorative layer.
- Cut the napkin to fit your design.
- If applying inside a curved bowl, make several small slits around the outer edges of the napkin to help it conform to the curve and reduce wrinkles.
 - Tips(s):
 - Be careful not to miss a layer. If you lay down the napkin with more than one layer on accident, it will show in your final product.

3. Apply the Mod Podge/Maker's MAGIC

- Using a sponge brush, apply a thin, even layer of Mod Podge/Maker's MAGIC to the area where the napkin will be placed.
- Work in sections if needed so the glue does not dry too quickly.
- If the Mod Podge/Maker's MAGIC begins to dry before you have laid down the entire napkin, simply apply more.
- It is important that the entire surface is coated so the napkin adheres completely and evenly.
 - Tip(s):
 - The consistencies of Mod Podge (consistency of Elmer's glue) and Maker's MAGIC (consistency of water) are very different. Maker's MAGIC can pool if you are not careful but it is also easier to use to avoid wrinkles.

4. Lay Down the Napkin

- Lightly mark the center of the bowl or plate before placing the napkin.
- Use the natural fold lines in the napkin to align the center of the design with the center mark on the piece.
- Place the napkin starting at the center, pressing down gently in the middle first.
- Work slowly outward toward the edges to avoid trapping air or creating wrinkles.
- If you made slits for curved surfaces, gently guide those sections into place as you smooth outward.
- Apply a thin layer of Mod Podge/Maker's MAGIC over the top using light strokes and allow to dry completely.
 - Tip(s):
 - The consistencies of Mod Podge (consistency of Elmer's glue) and Maker's MAGIC (consistency of water) are very different. This is especially important when applying the top coat. If using Mod Podge, you can apply before the first coat has dried. If using Maker's MAGIC, my experience is that it is easier to allow the first coat to almost completely dry before applying the top coat. This ensures your napkin doesn't rip (like wet paper).

5. First Resin Coat

- Prepare your 2-part resin according to the manufacturer's instructions and mix thoroughly. (*approximately 4 minutes*)
- Slowly pour resin onto the surface.
- Stay with your resin as you work. Brush from the center outward to prevent pooling.
- Remove excess resin from your brush by wiping it back into the mixing cup.
- Use resin sparingly — pooled resin in the bottom does not create an attractive finish.
- Remove bubbles with a heat gun if needed. (Repeat when necessary)
- Continue removing excess resin as it pools until pooling has stopped.
- Allow the resin to cure fully in a dust-free area. (*approximately 24 hours*)

6. Final Turn & Second Resin Coat

- After the first resin coat has fully dried and cured, trim the edges of the napkin with a pair of scissors, and remount the bowl or plate on the lathe.
- Carefully turn the edge again to create a clean, crisp edge.
- Very lightly sand where necessary, being careful not to impact or cut into the design beneath the resin.
- Wipe thoroughly to remove all dust.
- Repeat the resin process for a second coat, brushing from the center outward and preventing pooling.

DECOUPAGING WOODEN BOWLS & PLATES TURNED ON THE LATHE

- This time, also cover and seal the top rim of the bowl.
- Ensure all areas where the napkin meets the edge are fully sealed to prevent lifting.
- Allow the resin to cure completely. (*approximately 24 hours*)
 - Tip(s):
 - Be careful not to allow the resin from the top rim to drip on the outside of the bowl or underneath the platter. If it does, thoroughly wipe it off immediately.
 - A third and final coat of resin may be necessary since this will be the first coat on the bowl top rim/plate edge. It is up to you and how each item looks after the second application.

Lessons Learned:

- Bowls or plates with flatter edges work best for creating a clean napkin break and ensuring a strong resin seal.
- Shallow bowls are easier to work with than deeper bowls and result in fewer wrinkles.
- Applying a thin white base coat before Mod Podge/Maker's MAGIC creates a bright, clean background and prevents the design from looking dingy through the napkin. We did not do this at first and it made a big difference. You can see from our examples.
- Oil base paint creates a whiter finish in the final product than acrylic.
- Lighter wood tones allow the decoration on the napkin to really pop and appear more vibrant.
- Do not return the piece to the lathe after only Mod Podge/Maker's MAGIC has dried — it is not sturdy enough and may cause tearing. Wait until after the first resin coat has cured.
- Use resin sparingly and brush pooled resin from the center outward.
- Be careful using your air compressor to take care of the dust caused by the final turn on the lathe (after the first application of resin). It may just blow the cured resin out.
- You can experiment with more than napkins — solid paint, vintage postage stamps, dried and flattened flowers, and other materials work beautifully.
- Once you start this process, you'll love doing it — have an assembly line of bowls ready! 😊
- Most importantly, **have fun with your family**. The memories will mean even more than the finished piece.