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In medieval village life, maypole dancing was a ritual to celebrate May Day. This pagan tradition was meant to increase vitality and fertility. May Day is still celebrated in this way in many places in Europe and also in the hills of Western Massachusetts. As the dancers circle the maypole holding colored ribbons, intricate and beautiful patterns are created on the pole. The connections between individual dance moves, the dance pattern for the whole group, and the resulting ribbon patterns are the focus of an Inquiry-Based Learning unit we have designed for students in the Liberal Arts. Working in small groups, students inquire into questions such as these: *Imagine watching a maypole dance with 8 dancers and alternating red and white ribbons. Can you tell what pattern will emerge before the dance even starts? What if both partners in a dance couple have the same color ribbon? Or conversely: somebody shows you a particular maypole pattern found on a maypole. Could you invent a maypole dance that would create that particular pattern? How many dancers would you need? What dance moves would you ask the dancers to perform?*

Come and explore what this might look like in your mathematics for liberal arts classroom. (Received September 17, 2012)