



2019 **DIA DE LOS MUERTOS**

2019 EDUCATOR PACKET



Exhibition:
Sept. 25th to Nov. 10th

mola ■ ■
MUSEUM OF LATIN AMERICAN ART

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OBJECTIVE

This packet will provide you with tools and resources to effectively and independently teach your students about *Día de los muertos*. It contains historical information, additional resources, handouts and activities, and complete lesson plans related to *Día de los muertos*. The lessons, activities, and templates in this packet are organized in three main themes: 1) Day of the Dead Altars & their Elements, 2) Calaveras!, and 3) Traditions. Please feel free to distribute this packet to colleagues, parents, and aspiring educators!

DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is an ancient celebration observed throughout Mexico, as well as in Central American, South American and European regions. During the holiday, people remember and honor **ancestors** and deceased loved ones. Indigenous observance of the days of the dead in the Americas pre-dates the arrival of the Spanish. In order to absorb indigenous communities and traditions into Catholicism, the Spanish blended indigenous observances, such as the festival honoring Mictecacihuatl (lady of the dead), with the Catholic holidays of All Saints and All Souls Day. Today, this important holiday is observed annually on November first and second.

Families often set up offerings or altars called **ofrendas**, either at home or at the cemetery. The altars include images of the deceased person as well as their favorite objects, foods, and treats. Some **ofrendas** are also decorated with marigolds and **calaveras** made of papier-mâché. Families come together to feast on traditional foods such as **pan de muerto**, **mole**, or **pozole**, and friends exchange sugar **calaveras**. Families and friends play or sing songs, exchange memories, and pass on familial history to younger generations. Many people believe that the spirits of the dead return to the home during **Día de los muertos** and vigils are often held late into the night in order to welcome the spirits.

Although it falls at the same time as Halloween, **Día de los muertos** does not include **symbols** such as witches, black cats, or pumpkins. Both holidays share common symbolism with the presence of skeleton imagery, meant to remind us of our mortality. However, due to the indigenous legacy of **Día de los muertos**, specifically those of the Aztecs, the skull **symbol** takes on more of a cultural or ancestral meaning. While Halloween is associated with dressing up and trick-or-treating, **Día de los muertos** is meant to memorialize loved ones.

THIS YEAR'S THEME: DE GENERACIÓN A GENERACIÓN

This year's **ofrenda** and exhibition theme, *De generación a generación (From Generation to Generation)* addresses the aspect of Day of the Dead that revolves around legacies and the passing

on of stories, rituals, and traditions. The *ofrendas* and art objects on view highlight the familial, cultural, and community connections that we forge on earth and celebrate the ways that our spirits or presence lives on through the memories of those we leave behind when we pass. This year's altars are highlight or honor familial ancestors, the domestic and artistic traditions that are passed on from one generation to the next, as well as the technological means by which we forge or maintain connections with others. The artwork in the exhibition is created by local artists of diverse backgrounds and celebrate legacies of labor, migration, education, and language, among other things. They also memorialize communities connected by a common region, age, and even violence.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

The activities and lessons included in this packet address the following standards through classroom discussions, the analyzation of visual images, and the creation of art projects:

College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading and Speaking & Listening

Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Key Ideas and Details

Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college- and career-readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Draw evidence from literary and/or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

KEY TERMS

The following terms are often used in reference to the holiday and appear throughout the packet. Key terms appear in **bold** in lesson plans and handouts:

| | |
|--|---|
| Ancestor | A person (usually more distant than a grandparent) from whom one is descended. <i>Día de los muertos</i> is observed in honor of deceased ancestors . It is a time to remember them. |
| Calavera / Calaca | Spanish for a skeleton or skull. Calaveras are important symbols to Day of the Dead. They are usually depicted in humorous ways, engaging in everyday actions like eating, drinking and dancing, or playing music. |
| La Calavera Catrina | La Calavera Catrina is an elegant female skeleton made famous in the early 20 th century etchings by Mexican printmaker and illustrator José Guadalupe Posada. La Catrina dresses in European style dress with a hat befitting the upper classes of her time. Her male counterpart is known as a “Catrín”. The terms ‘catrín’ and ‘catrina’ are used to describe dapper or fashionable individuals. |
| Cempazuchitl (sem-pa-soo-cheel) | The Nahuatl word for marigolds, a type of chrysanthemum, which means “flower of twenty petals”. Marigolds are also known as the “flower of the dead” in Mexico, due to their use in death ceremonies from the time of the Mexika . |
| Collage | “To paste,” a technique where the artist glues paper or fabric pieces onto a backing to create a picture or design. |
| Culture | The customs, beliefs, traditions, values, practices, rituals, attitudes, and traits of an ethnic, religious, or social group. |
| Día de los muertos/ Day of the Dead | Day of the Dead is a traditional Latin American holiday with especially strong ties to indigenous Mexican culture. Originally observed by the Mexika as a festival of the dead, the holiday was moved to November 1st and 2nd after the Spanish invasion. Using religious syncretism , it is the result of blending indigenous rituals with the Catholic holidays of All Saints Day and All Souls Day. It is not only an expression of respect; it also joyfully welcomes back the souls of loved ones and deceased ancestors who have passed away through food, music, religious and spiritual rituals . |
| José Guadalupe Posada | A Mexican print artist, known for his popularization of the Catrina , a popular character in the form of an elegant female skeleton. |
| Lineage | Ancestry, the method of tracing a social group from an ancestor or ancestors |
| Literary Calavera | A humorous poem that describes the obituary of a person or an element of popular culture. |
| Mexika (meh-shee-kuh) | The native Mesoamerican civilization more commonly known as “Aztecs,” the Mexika dominated the Valley of Mexico prior to the Spanish invasion. Many rituals and symbols used for <i>Día de los muertos</i> come from ancient Mexika beliefs and customs. |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Museum | A place where objects of artistic, historical, or scientific importance and value are kept, studied, and put on display for the public to enjoy. |
| Nahuatl (na-wat) | The language spoken by the <i>Mexika</i> and still used by indigenous groups in Central Mexico. Many common names are derived from Nahuatl , including Coyote, Jicama, and Mesquite. |
| Nicho | A mini-shrine; 'Shadow Box' style frames that are often featured on Day of the Dead ofrendas or hanging in the home. |
| Ofrenda | "Offering"; An ofrenda is the traditional word for the multi-level structure built during Día de los muertos in memory of the dead, also known as an altar. During Día de los muertos , family and friends place the favorite foods and objects of the person who has passed away on the altar. They decorate it with flowers (cempazuchitl) and papel picado . |
| Pan de Muerto | "Bread of the Dead," a sweet roll prepared especially for Día de los muertos , decorated with symbols in the shapes of bones criss-crossed on top. |
| Papel Picado | "Cut paper" decorations made by cutting designs into tissue paper for use as banners during celebrations. Papel picado is often used on ofrendas . |
| Printmaking | An art process that involves the creation of a master plate (made from wood, linoleum, stone, metal, or fabric mesh) from which multiple images are generated. Printmaking can be used for commercial as well as fine art purposes. Common printmaking processes include stamping, woodcuts, engravings, lithographs, and screen prints. The process and materials used in the various techniques influence the appearance of the final print. |
| Religious Syncretism | The process of combining religious beliefs and rituals from more than one religion or culture. Día de los muertos is the result of combining sacred traditions from indigenous civilizations of the Americas and Catholicism imported to the Americas from Europe. |
| Ritual | A pattern or system of actions performed by individuals or a group of people, usually connected to religious or cultural beliefs. |
| Subject | A topic, something that is being discussed or examined. The focus of an activity. |
| Symbol | A simplified image representing an idea, concept, person, or object. For example, a ♥ can represent the idea or emotion of love. |
| Satire | The use of humor and exaggeration to make fun of a person, idea, or institution or to expose and/or criticize a negative or silly aspect of society. |
| Zine (zeen) | A handmade magazine dedicated to a specific topic. |
| Tradición | "Tradition"; beliefs, customs or rituals that are passed down generation to generation. |
| Tzompantli (som-pant-lee) | Nahuatl for "skull rack," a device used to display the skulls of sacrificed captives and warriors captured by the <i>Mexika</i> in Pre-Columbian and early colonial times. |

2019 **DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS**

THEME I: The Ofrenda

The *ofrenda* (offering) is the central site where families and communities gather to remember the dead. It can be built at home or in public spaces like graveyards. The *ofrenda* usually contains images of the honored spirit, their favorite things, marigold flowers, *papel picado*, and candles. Sitting around the *ofrenda*, families and friends invite the spirit to join them on earth. They share food and stories and keep the spirit's memory alive.



LESSON: MINI OFRENDA COLLAGE

Grades: 3rd-12th



Total time needed for the lesson: 45-60 minutes for the collage, 60-90 minutes for the assemblage (excluding warm-up/ intro)

Objectives:

1. Students will learn about *Día de los muertos* as an expression of Mexican culture.
2. Students will create their own mini *ofrenda* in the form of a collage or a 3-dimensional mixed media arrangement (assemblage).

Key terms: *Calavera, Día de los Muertos, Ofrenda, Symbol, Religious Syncretism, papel picado, cempazuchitl*

Themes to explore: Cultural symbols, remembering those who have passed, honoring ancestors

Collage materials

| Per student |
|-------------------------|
| 1 Altar Template |
| 1 pair of scissors |
| 1 glue stick (optional) |

| Per table (3-6 students per table) |
|---|
| 2-3 bottles of glue (or one glue stick per student) |
| Assorted construction paper and magazines or stickers (food, drinks, fun objects) |
| Coloring tools (markers or crayons) |

Assemblage materials

| Per Student |
|--|
| 1 shoe box, small cardboard box, or nicho template |
| 1 pair of scissors |
| 1 bottle of glue or 1 glue stick, clear tape |

| Per Table (3-6 students per table) |
|--|
| Assorted construction paper and magazines |
| Coloring tools (markers or crayons) |
| Collage materials: ribbon, feathers, beads, sequins, or stickers (food, drinks, fun objects) |

Before the lesson: Present the *Día de los muertos PowerPoint* and discuss its importance with students. If you have time, you may also elect to have students complete the *Ofrenda Handout* (page 17). The handout can serve as a “sketch” for their final collage/assemblage. If you are short on time you may opt to complete just the *Ofrenda Handout*.

Lesson : Collage

Introduction (10 minutes) (Skip if presenting the *Día de los muertos PowerPoint*)

- Students will make their own *ofrendas* by creating a collage. You may also select to just complete the *Ofrenda Handout* (page 17) with students.
- **Optional brainstorm:** To whom will students dedicate their *ofrenda*? It can be a member of the family, a friend, a hero or role model, a pet, or a favorite fictional character.

Lesson: Collage (Cont...)

Demonstration (5-15 minutes)

- If necessary, show students how to build the *nicho* template or cut closely around images taken from magazines for their collage.
- You may also choose to create a sample *ofrenda* ahead of time so that students can better visualize the final product.
- If using the **Ofrenda Handout** as a “sketch”, you may walk students step-by –step through the process.

Creative Expression (20-30 minutes)

- Allow students to work in groups if possible to share materials.
- Circulate the classroom and answer any questions the students have about the activity and provide assistance as needed. While circulating ask students what is inspiring their mini-*ofrenda*.

Reflection (5-10 minutes)

- Have students display their finished work on the table, or display them on a wall.
- Have students do a gallery walk around the room to see what their classmates have created.
- Select a few to discuss or ask for a few volunteers.
- Discuss who their *ofrenda* is dedicated to and their favorite parts about making it.

Lesson : Assemblage**Introduction (10 minutes) (Skip if presenting the Día de los muertos PowerPoint)**

- Students will make their own *ofrendas* by creating a 3D assemblage.
- **Optional brainstorm:** To whom will students dedicate their *ofrenda*? It can be a member of the family, a friend, a hero or role model, a pet, or a favorite fictional character.

Demonstration (5-15 minutes)

- You may choose to create a sample *ofrenda* ahead of time so that students can better visualize the final product.
- If using the **Ofrenda Handout** as a “sketch”, you may walk students step-by –step through the process.
- Demonstrate how to cover the box with construction paper to serve as the base or how to build the *nicho*.

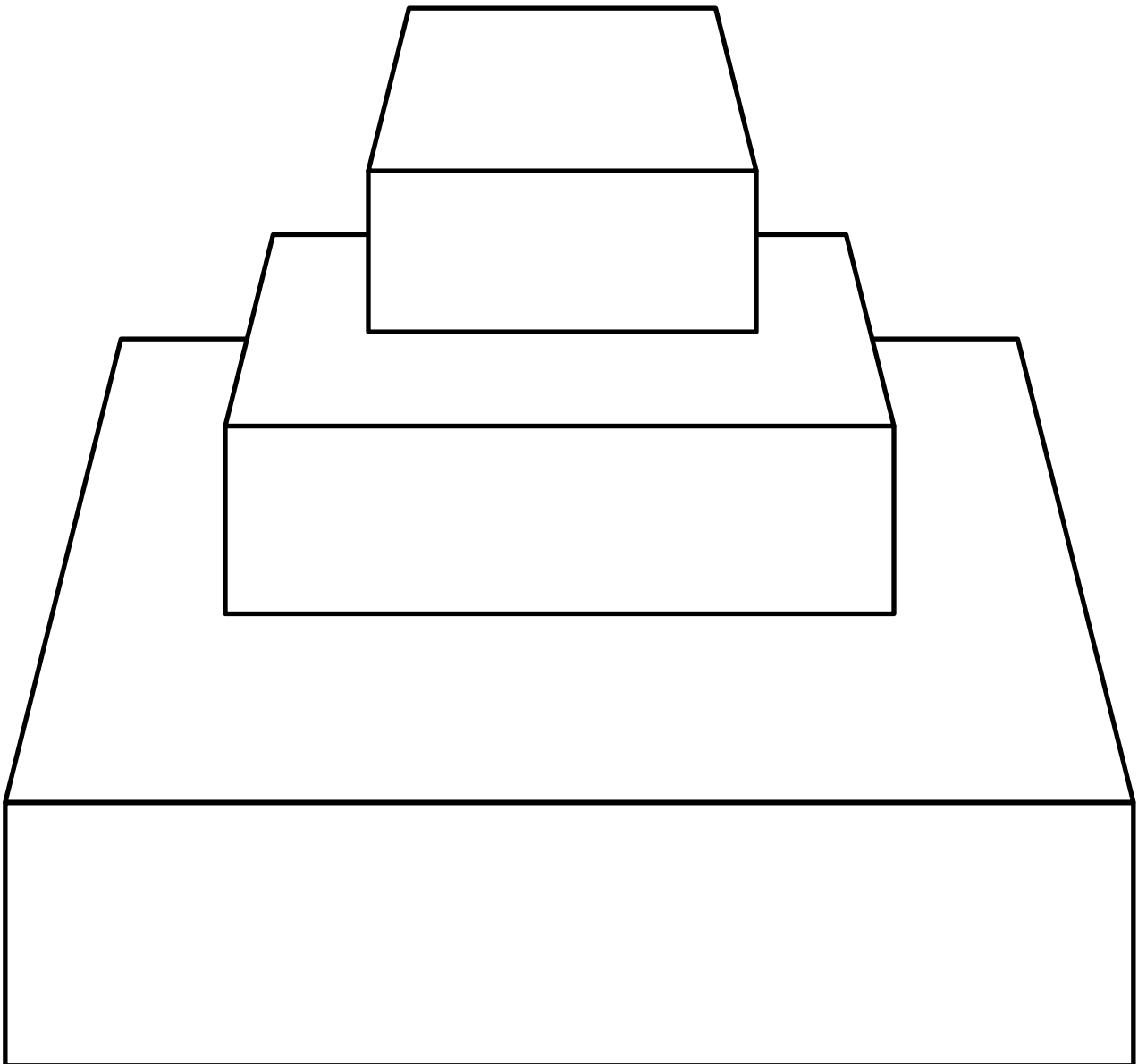
Creative Expression (30-45 minutes)

- Allow students to work in groups if possible to share materials.
- Circulate the classroom and answer any questions the students have about the activity and provided assistance as needed. While circulating ask students what is inspiring their mini-*ofrenda*.

Reflection (5-10 minutes)

- Have students display their finished work on the table.
- Have students do a gallery walk around the room to see what their classmates have created.
- Select a few to discuss or ask for a few volunteers.
- Discuss who their *ofrenda* is dedicated to and their favorite parts about making it.

Ofrenda Template



Name: _____

Día de los muertos Altars

(Front)

Día de los muertos (Dead of the Dead) is a holiday celebrated in Latin America. It is a day to come together to remember and honor the dead. They welcome the return of spirits with food, music, and their favorite things.

Day of the Dead was first celebrated thousands of years ago by indigenous Mexicans. Today the focal point of **Día de los muertos** are the **ofrendas** (altars). The purpose of an **ofrenda** is to honor your loved one. **Ofrendas** are made up of favorite foods and drinks, candles, keepsakes, photographs and fresh flowers.

Ofrendas

(Altars with offerings)

Things you find on an *ofrenda* and what they mean:



WATER

For thirsty souls



SALT

Continuing life



BREAD

Represents the dead



CANDLES

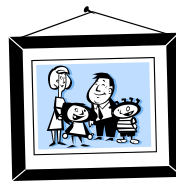
Are lit to welcome the spirits back

Most altars also have:



Flowers

Represent death and the scent guides back the souls



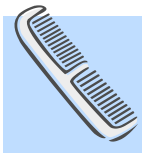
Photos

Who the altar is for



Favorite foods/drinks

For hungry souls



Personal Items

Owned by the departed



Symbols

Role models and faith



Skulls

Death and afterlife
Also a *Día de los muertos* gift

Día de los muertos Altar Activity

(Back)

Using one of the altars and what you have learned about the altar offerings and meanings, finish the altar below. To help get you started, answer the questions below.

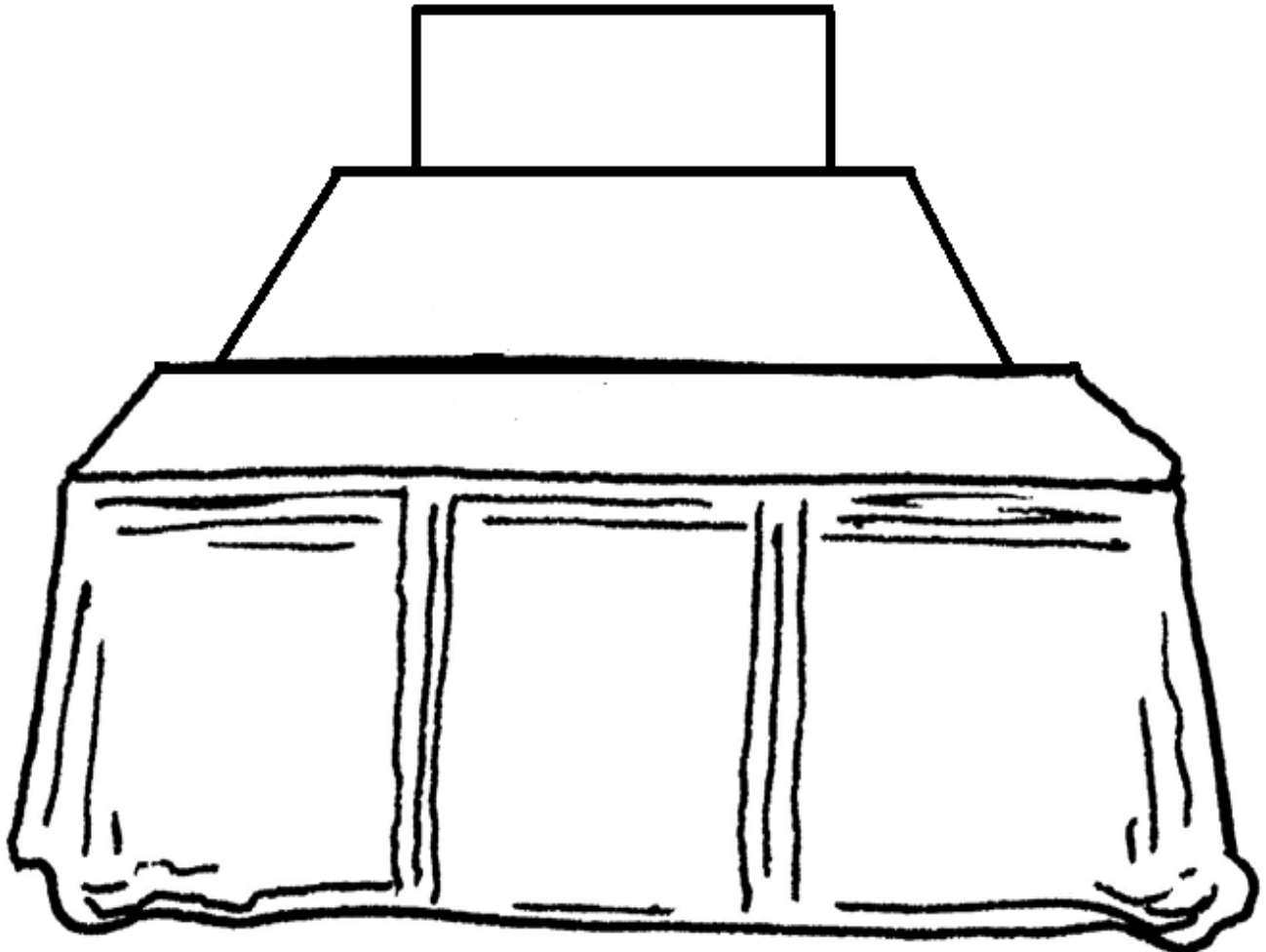
Next, think about what offerings you would place on the altar. Then finish the altar by drawing in your offerings, don't forget to add some personal touches of your own.

Who is this for? _____

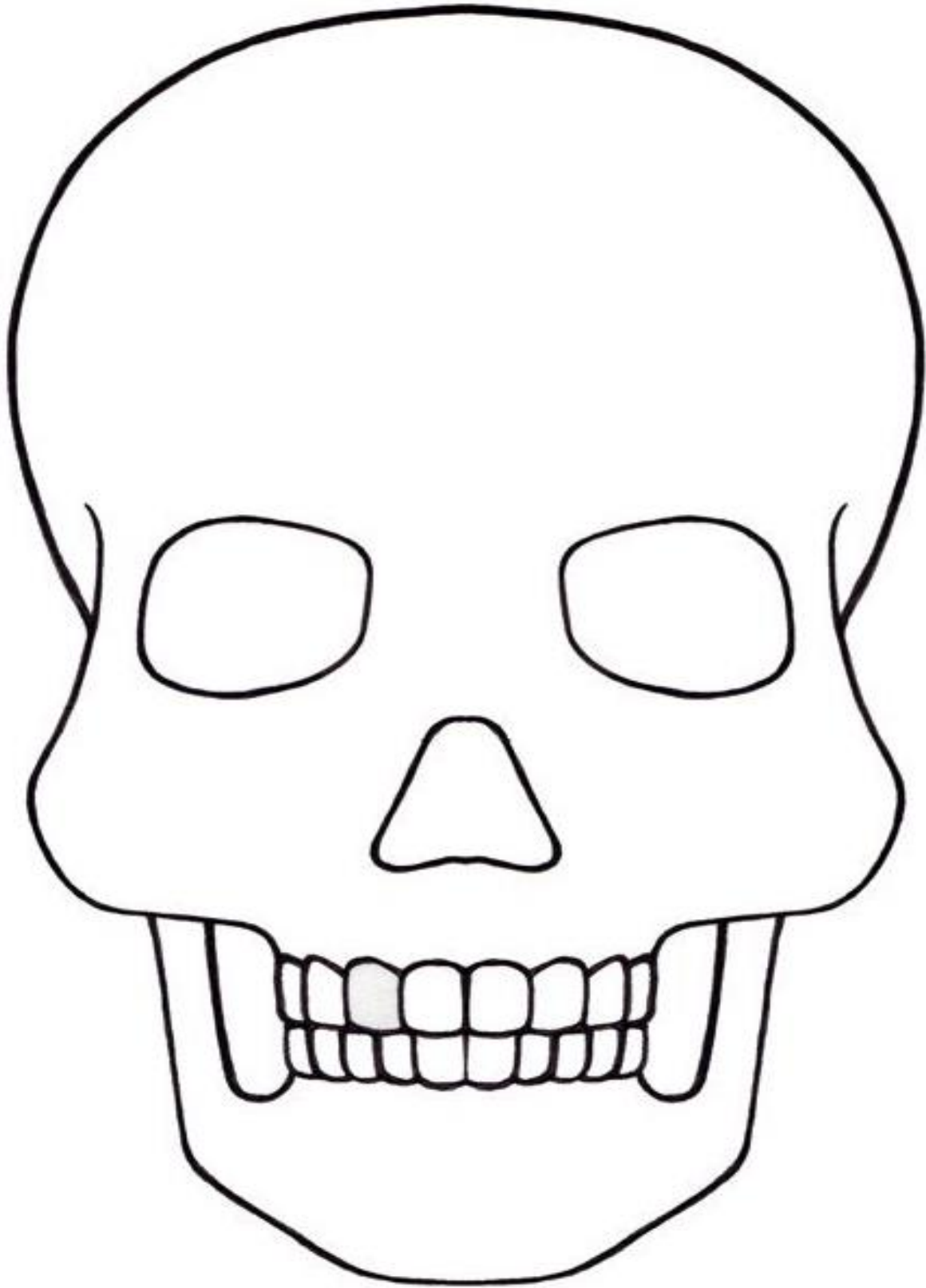
(It can be a family member, friend, or even a pet)

List at least 5 of their favorite things:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

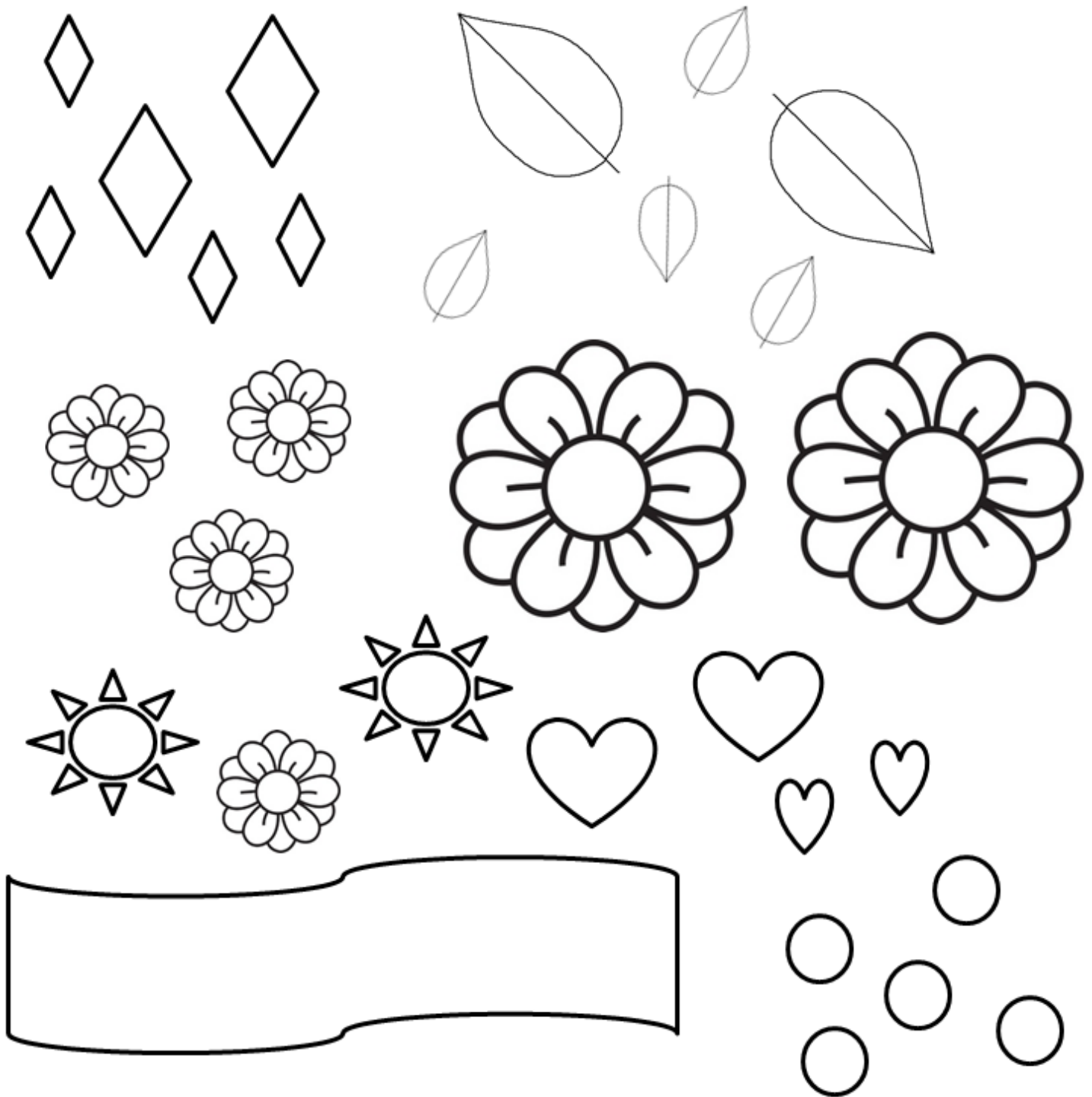


Design Your Own Sugar Skull



Design Your Own Sugar Skull

Use the symbols below to decorate your skull. Remember to dedicate it to someone special!



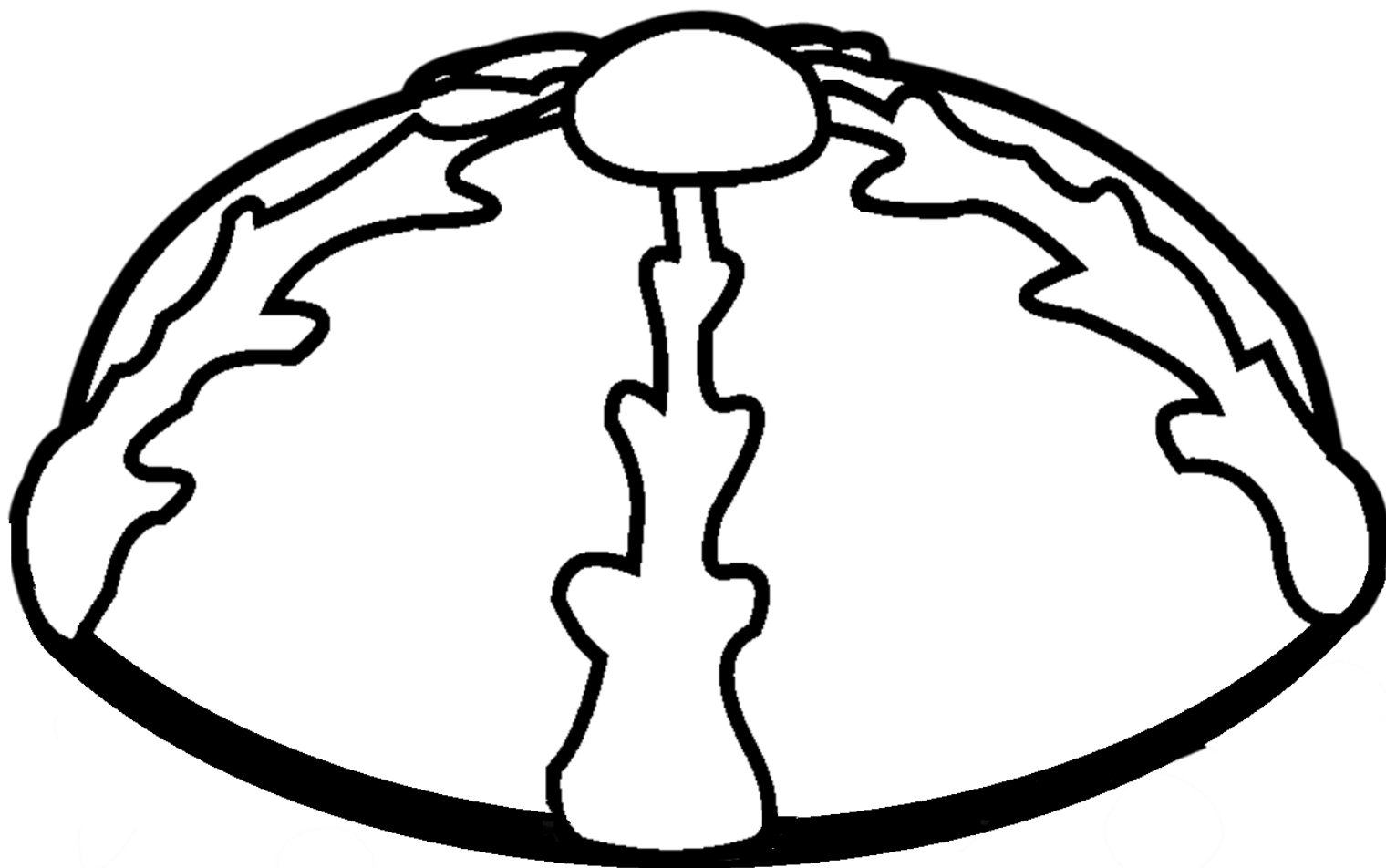
Pan de muerto

Pan de muerto (bread of the dead) is a type of sweet bread that is traditionally baked all over Mexico leading up to and during *Día de los muertos* (November 1st - 2nd). People usually enjoy eating *pan de muerto* with a cup of warm Mexican hot chocolate! Learn about the **symbolism** behind this delicious dessert:

Round shape: The circle of life and death.

Top ball: The head of the deceased.

Anise flavor: To honor the deceased.



Long cones: The bones and tears for those who have left. There are usually 4 in the shape of a cross indicating the 4 pathways of the universe, as well as the 4 cardinal points dedicated to the **Mexika** creator gods *Quetzacóatl*, *Xipe Totec*, *Tlaloc* and *Tezcatlipoca*.

Day of the Dead Nicho (mini shrine) Template

Nichos are 'shadow box' style frames that are often featured on Day of the Dead *ofrendas* or hanging in the home. They are traditionally made of tin or wood and decorated with sequins, glitter and beads. Usually featuring a key object or central figure for whose honor or memory the *nicho* has been created. This *nicho* craft activity is an introduction to some of the crafts used in the Mexican Day of the Dead.



Step 1

Print the templates onto a light card stock, color in the frames with bright colors and the central image (or stick another image of your choice) then cut out the outer outline of the shadow box.

Step 2

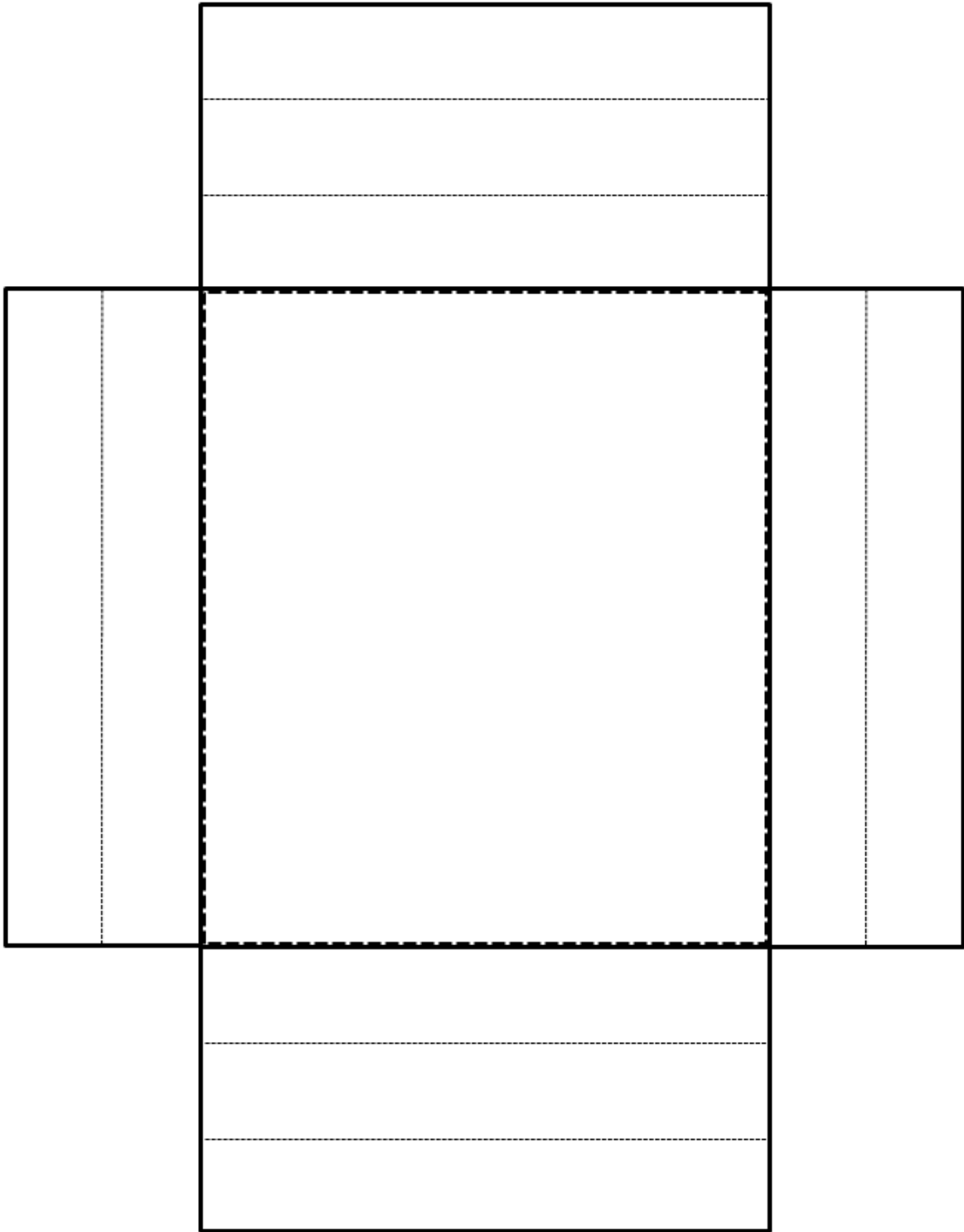
Fold all the dotted lines, glue the box frame

Step 3

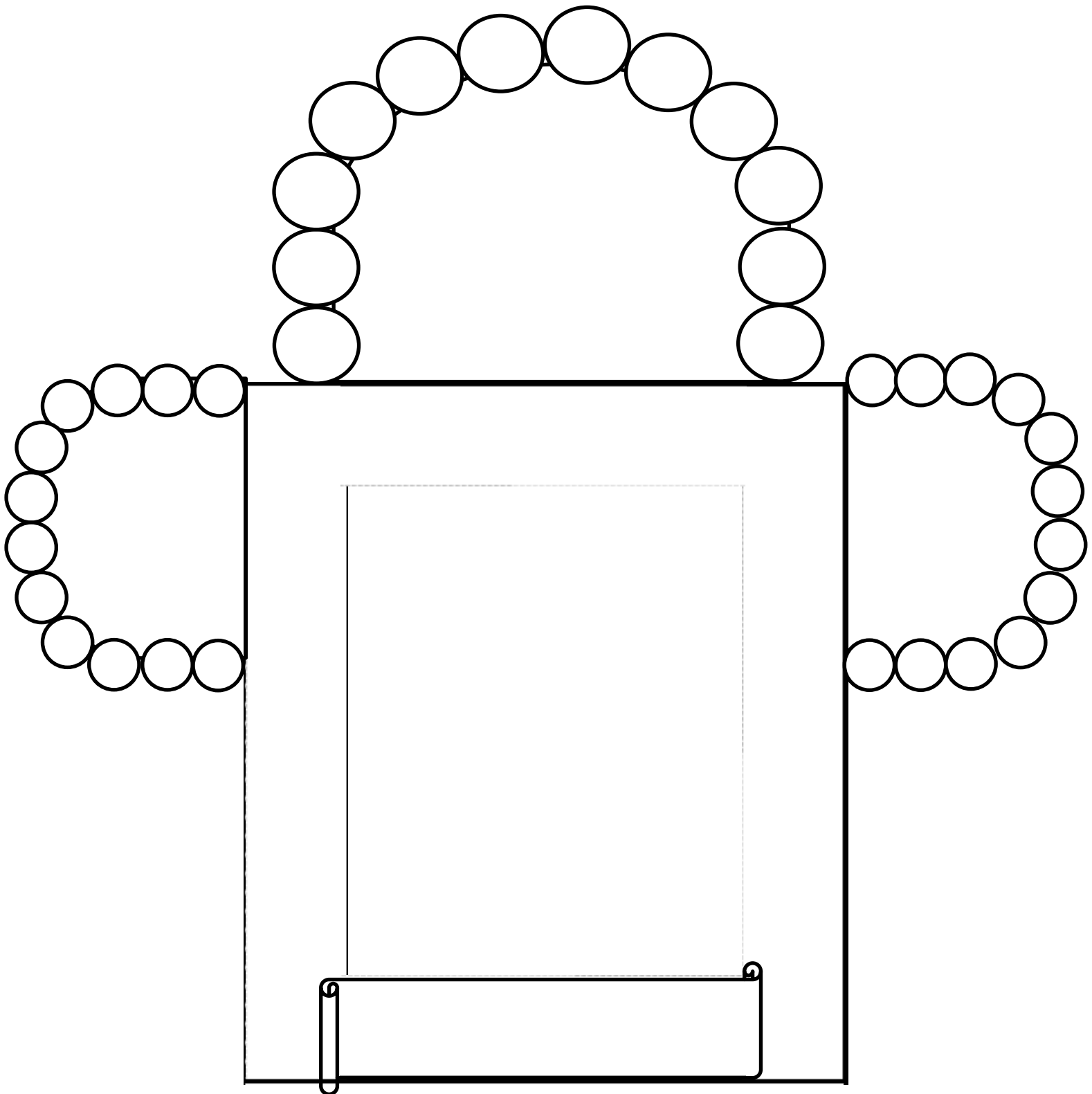
Continue decorating your *nicho*! You can add sequins, gems, and also add 3D objects like paper or plastic flowers, mini figures or trinkets.



Day of the Dead Nicho (mini shrine) Template



Day of the Dead Nicho (mini shrine) Template



Day of the Dead Lineage Armband Template

Día de los muertos is full of symbolism. Create an armband that talks about a familial legacy or community tradition that is important to you! You may incorporate some *Día de los muertos* symbols and add personal or cultural symbols.



Incense: made of copal, which is pine resin, and used to communicate with the spirit world.

Marigold flowers: orange color and penetrating aroma lure heavenly souls to Earth. Petals are sprinkled on the floor leading to the altar to guide the souls to it.

Pan de muerto: bread for the dead; a sweet treat for the spirits. Design on top is meant to look like skull and crossbones.

Candles: represent the element fire and attract the spirits to the altar

Papel picado: intricate paper cutouts represent the wind and fragility, and are used as decorations for festive occasions throughout the year. Includes images of skulls for Day of the Dead.

Calavera: in the form of puppets, toys, candy made of sugar or little figurines acting out scenes of daily lives (working, marrying, singing), skull art is a reminder of life's brevity and the inevitability of death.

Catrina: a female skeleton wearing a wide-brimmed hat and dress common for upper class Mexican women in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This style **satirized** those who think that money will save them from mortality.

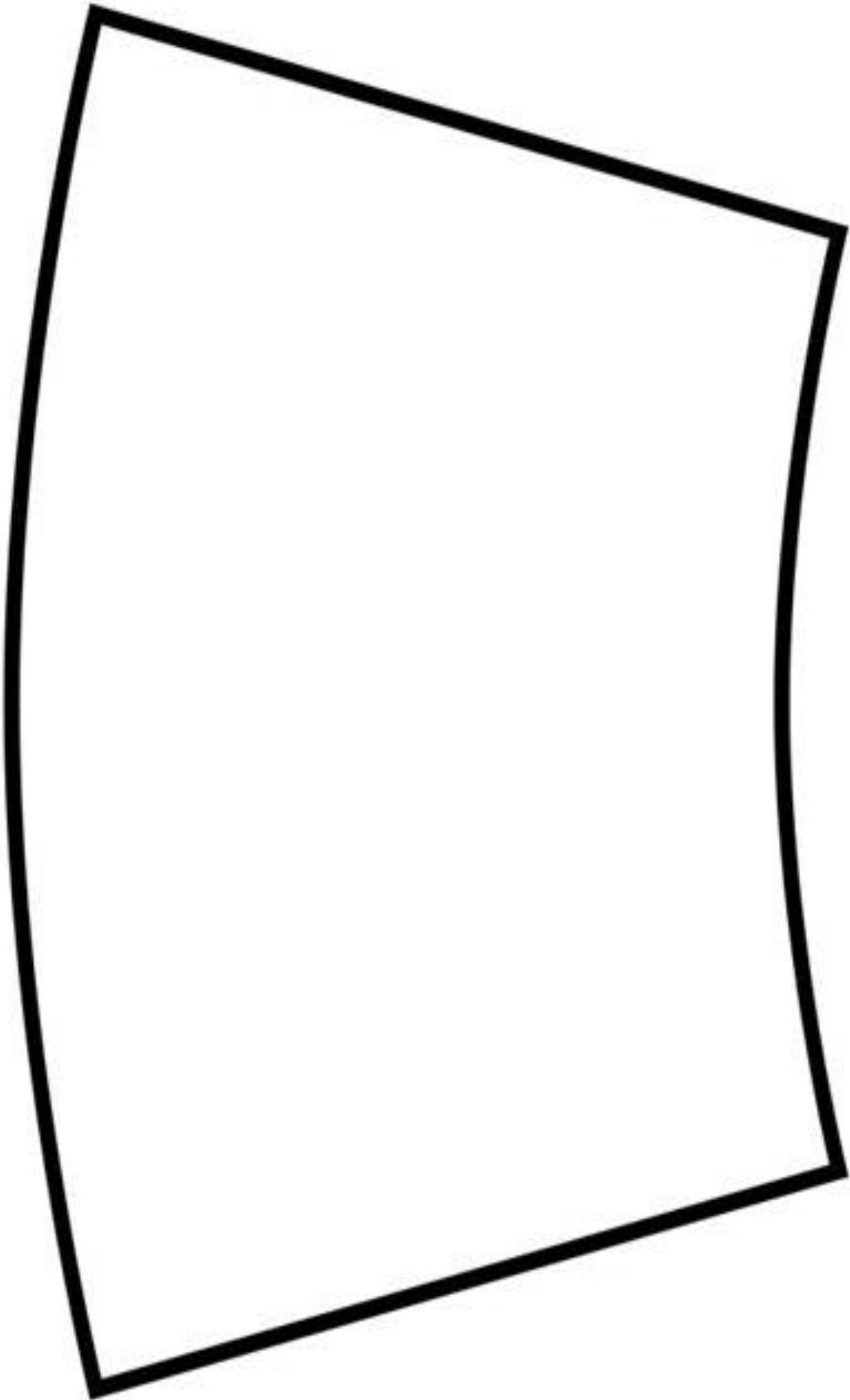
Supplies per participant:

- Armband template
- Washable markers and/or magazines + glue sticks
- Scissors
- Tape

Instructions:

- Look at all of the **Día de los muertos** symbols and what they mean.
- Individualize your armband by drawing or collaging **symbols** important to you.
- Cut the armband out along the lines.
- Wrap the armband around your wrist / arm and tape it closed.
- Wear proudly!

Day of the Dead Armband Template



2019 DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

THEME 2: CALAVERAS!

The *calavera* (skeleton) or *calaca* is the most recognizable symbol of *Día de los muertos*. Not only does it act as a reminder of our mortality but connects the holiday directly with its indigenous roots. The Mexica (Aztecs) built huge racks to display the heads of their conquered enemies as symbols of spiritual devotion and military strength. These racks, called *Tzompantli*, are eerily similar to the rows and rows of sugar skulls we see at the store today! The *Calavera Catrina*, an icon of *Día de los muertos* was first popularized by Mexican artist José Guadalupe Posada, who made her the protagonist of the illustrations he designed for daily tabloids that sold on street corners for a penny a piece!



LESSON: CALAVERA PUPPET

Grades: K-8th



Total time needed for the lesson: 45-60 minutes
(excluding warm-up/introduction)

Objectives:

1. Students will learn about *La Calavera Catrina*, the symbolism behind this image, its connection to artist **José Guadalupe Posada**, and its importance to *Día de los muertos*.
2. Students will create and personalize their own *Catrina* puppet using **symbols** that are important to them.

Key terms: Ofrenda, Calavera, La Calavera Catrina, José Guadalupe Posada, Symbol

Themes to explore: Cultural symbols, remembering those who have passed

Materials/Resources

| Per Student |
|-----------------------------------|
| Skeleton Template (page x) |
| 8 round head fasteners (optional) |
| 1 pair of scissors |
| 1 piece of string (6"-8" long) |

| Per Table (3-6 students per table) |
|---|
| 2-3 bottles of glue (or one glue stick per student) |
| 1 hole punch to share (min) |
| Assorted colorful paper |
| Coloring tools (markers or crayons) |

Optional warm-up activities:

Present the *Día de los muertos Powerpoint* or read *Funny Bones* to students.

Before the lesson: Use the warm-up activities listed above. They can be presented the day before the lesson or immediately before students begin the project.

Lesson

Introduction (5-10 minutes)

- Distribute materials.
- Explain that students will make Skeleton puppets based on the *Día de los Muertos* holiday and its most famous characters: *Calaveras*!
- The most famous *calavera* is *La Calavera Catrina* and her male counterpart *El Catrín*. *Catrin*s/*Catrín*s are elegant skeletons or "dandies". They appear everywhere during the holiday in altars, artwork, candied sweets, as parade masks, and as dolls. *La Catrina* and *el Catrín* are almost always portrayed as enjoying life, dressed in fancy clothes and involved in entertaining situations. The students' puppets are going to be based on these elegant skeletons and include the **symbols** that students identify as showing how they enjoy life.
- **Optional brainstorm:** Posada's *Catrin*s/ *Catrín*s were shown 'living the good life': wearing fancy clothes and hats, singing or dancing, and enjoying delicious food and beverages. What objects or symbols would students use to depict how they enjoy life?

Skeleton Puppet Lesson (Cont...)

Demonstration (5-10 minutes)

Explain or demonstrate how to build the skeleton puppet using the following instructions:

- Color the skeleton's body and head (optional)
- Cut out all the pieces
- Punch small holes where indicated on the template (arms, legs) if using round head fasteners.
- Attach the different body pieces using small brass round head fasteners or use glue to join the body together.
- Punch a hole in the top of the head to hang up your skeleton with yarn.
- Cut out clothes and symbols and dress up your *Catrina/Catrín* add personal touches to give your *calavera* personality!

Creative expression (30-45 minutes)

- Students begin making their own skeletons.
- Circulate the classroom and answer any questions the students have about the activity and provided assistance as needed.
- As students finish, the teacher may need to assist with punching the holes and attaching the head to the body with the brad.

Reflection (5-10 minutes)

Hang up all the puppets and students compare/contrast their *interpretations*.

Discussion questions:

- How did you choose your puppet's outfit?
- What symbols did you use to show how you enjoy life?
- What did you learn about *Día de los muertos*?

Additional suggestions:

Skeleton Town: For more *calavera* fun, create a festive background for your final *calacas*! Students can create individual scenes on a large piece of construction paper or use a bulletin board covered in butcher paper and create a town, school, or fantasy world.

What would your *Calaca* say? Have students create word or thought bubbles and have their write their *calavera*'s thoughts. They can sing songs, recite poems, or give advice!

LESSON: CALAVERA FOAM PRINT

Grades: 4th-12th



Total time needed for the lesson: 60 minutes (excluding warm-up)

Objectives:

1. Students will learn about **symbols** used during *Día de los muertos*
2. Students will learn about Calaveras and their importance to *Día de los muertos* and the *calaveras* that José Guadalupe Posada designed, like *La Catrina*.
3. Students will design and execute a foam print

Topics: Calaveras, Día de los muertos, Ofrendas, and Symbols

Foam Print Materials

| Per Student |
|----------------------------------|
| 1 sheet of paper for sketching |
| 1 piece of styrofoam |
| 1 dull pencil |
| 3-5 pieces of paper for printing |

| Per Printing Station |
|---|
| Craft paper /newspapers to protect the table |
| 1 bottle of printmaking ink or tempera paint |
| 1 rubber brayer (roller), minimum |
| 1 piece of Plexiglas or a plastic/Styrofoam tray to roll up paint/ink |
| 1-2 large wooden spoons for printing (optional) |

About Printmaking: The wonderful thing about **printmaking** is that once you create the matrix or key plate, you can print multiple sets of images from the key plate. After you have burnished the image onto the paper, reapply ink to the plate and make more prints!

Where to buy printmaking materials: You can find **printmaking** materials at most art or craft stores. For the Styrofoam, you can recycle used to-go containers or order Inovart Presto Foam. For inks, we recommend using Speedball relief water-based block printing ink. A brayer or roller makes for even application of the ink or paint. We recommend Speedball Soft Rubber Brayer. All of the above supplies can be found at www.amazon.com or www.dickblick.com.

Before the lesson: To refresh yourself on the Styrofoam printing process, watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TXuppRISWw>. Present the **José Guadalupe Posada Powerpoint**.

Prep the printing area before you begin. Set up one or more inking and printing station in the classroom. Each station should include: one sheet of Plexiglas/plastic or Styrofoam tray for inking, a tub or tube of ink or tempera paint, and at least one rubber brayer. Cover all tables with craft paper or newspapers and have paper towels, sponges, and spray bottles handy, if possible. Encourage students to wear old t-shirts or aprons on the day of the project.

Lesson: Foam Print**Introduction (5-10 minutes)**

- Review *Día de los muertos* and its main characters: *Calacas* and *calaveras* (skulls and skeletons). They appear everywhere during the holiday in candied sweets, as parade masks, and as dolls. *Calacas* and *calaveras* are almost always portrayed as enjoying life, often in fancy clothes and entertaining situations.
- Students will create their own *calavera* character in the form of a foam print.

Demonstration 1: Creating Your Design (5 Minutes)

- Demonstrate how to draw a simple *calavera*. You may use the **Calavera Template** as a guide.
- Demonstrate how to create a foam print for students:
- Using a dull pencil, they can trace their design onto the piece of foam. Once they have marked the foam, it is permanent
- **NOTE:** Remind students that all images and text will be printed in reverse (backwards). If they select to use text, they should practice writing it backwards and in block lettering.

Creative Expression Part 1: Making the design (5-10 minutes)

- Allow students up to five minutes to create their design. They may draw directly on the foam with a dull pencil or trace a design from another sheet of paper. You may distribute the **Calavera Template** to help them.

Demonstration 2: Inking and Printing the Plate (10 minutes)

- Squeeze or spread a smallish dollop of ink or paint onto your inking surface (Plexi or tray)
- Using the rubber brayer, spread the ink or paint evenly over the inking surface. Apply additional ink, little by little, if necessary. The brayer should make a soft “swishing” sound and have the appearance of a tangerine rind.
- Place the foam with the drawing on it face up and (over a piece of scrap paper) roll the brayer with ink over the surface. Cover the entire surface. The indents from the drawing should still appear “white”
- Once the plate is inked sufficiently, place the final piece of paper over the plate and, using the palm of your hand or the back of a large wooden spoon, rub gently to transfer the image onto the paper
- Gently peel the paper away from the plate and admire your print!

Creative Expression Part 2: Printing (20 minutes)

- Have students follow the instructions above to complete their prints.
- Remind them to be patient and work cooperatively at the printing stations.
- Make sure the students sign their work and write a short title that creatively describes what they designed.

Reflection (5-10 minutes)

- Display the prints on a table or wall, discuss how the prints are similar and/or different. Have students explain what their favorite part about making their prints!

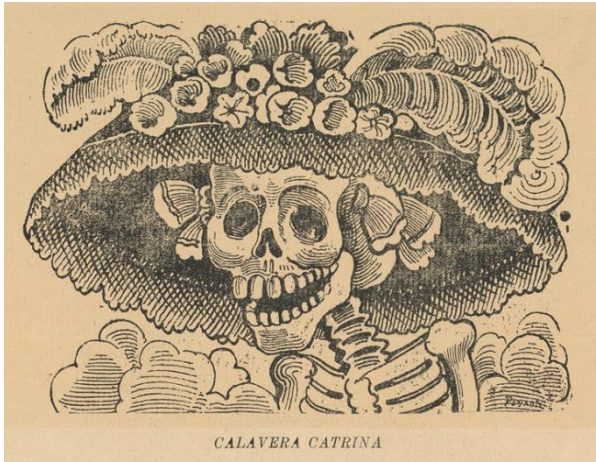
Additional Suggestions:

Greeting Cards: Print the *calacas* on greeting cards and have students write messages to loved ones!

Frame it! Mount dried prints onto colorful construction paper to create a ‘frame’. Decorate frames with stickers, stencils, or additional drawings.

JOSÉ GUADALUPE POSADA

The “Father” of Mexican Printmaking



José Guadalupe Posada
(Mexico, 1852-1913)
*La Calavera Catrina/
Dapper Skeleton, Elegant Skull*
1910-1913

José Guadalupe Posada (Mexico, 1852-1913) remains the indisputable voice of pre-Revolution Mexico. He used urban Mexican popular symbols distributed on cheap paper tabloids to illustrate everything from

politicians to magic spells, thus ushering in the era of Modern Art in Mexico. A direct influence of the muralists as well as the surrealists, his iconographic contributions continue to be identified with what is quintessentially ‘Mexican’.

Born in Aguascalientes, Posada began his career as a commercial lithographer. He eventually moved to the capital, working with the city’s most productive publisher: Antonio Vanegas Arroyo. Posada was a prolific artist, churning out engravings and etchings for the *prensa al centavo* (“penny press” or tabloids) that featured scandals, gossip, song and recipe books, and popular sayings. Vanegas Arroyo employed a number of artists over the years but Posada is one of the first to sign his prints, thus making a name for himself in Mexican popular culture.

José Guadalupe Posada worked as an illustrator for various newspapers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He is best known for creating humorous *calavera* representations of people rich and poor, common and infamous, young and old. Much of his artwork uses satire, combining clever images and text that poked fun at or criticized aspects of society. In his zinc etching *La Calavera Catrina* (The Dapper Skeleton or Elegant Skull), Posada depicts a female skeleton dressed in a hat worn by the fashionable and wealthy ladies of the time. *La Calavera Catrina* refers to rich people, but Posada also points out the transcendent nature of death: regardless of age, physical beauty, education, power, or wealth—death is the great equalizer.

The *Calavera Catrina* makes one of her first post-Revolution appearances as a central character in Diego Rivera’s mural, *Dream of an Afternoon in Alameda Park*, holding Rivera’s hand on one side, her hand gently resting on Posada’s hand on the other, connecting the two artists for eternity. Today, *la Catrina* is easily identified as the definitive symbol of *Día de los muertos*, her face appearing on t-shirts, tote bags, jewelry and in art.

Calaveras: Death Poems

Calaveras are not just skeletons. A literary *calavera* is a satirical obituary in the form of a funny poem. In Mexico, literary *calaveras* are published in newspapers during Día de los muertos. They are often used to poke fun at those in positions of authority, such as politicians and celebrities.

Read the *calavera*, dedicated to the hit song *Despacito*, below:

“Despacito”

La melodía del verano por fin terminó
pues la Calaca de escucharla estaba harta.

“Esta canción al mundo contaminó,
Es preciso que nadie más la comparta!”

El récord del video más visto se ganó,

Pero pasito a pasito llegó al panteón.

Pobre Luis Fonsi, su éxito tronó.

La Muerte no aprecia el buen reggaetón.

The song of the Summer has finally ended
since the *Calaca* was sick of hearing it.

“This song has the world’s ears infected,
which is exactly why no one should
share it!”

The record for most shared video
it crushed,

But the grave soon loomed before it.

Poor Luis Fonsi, his viral hit has perished.

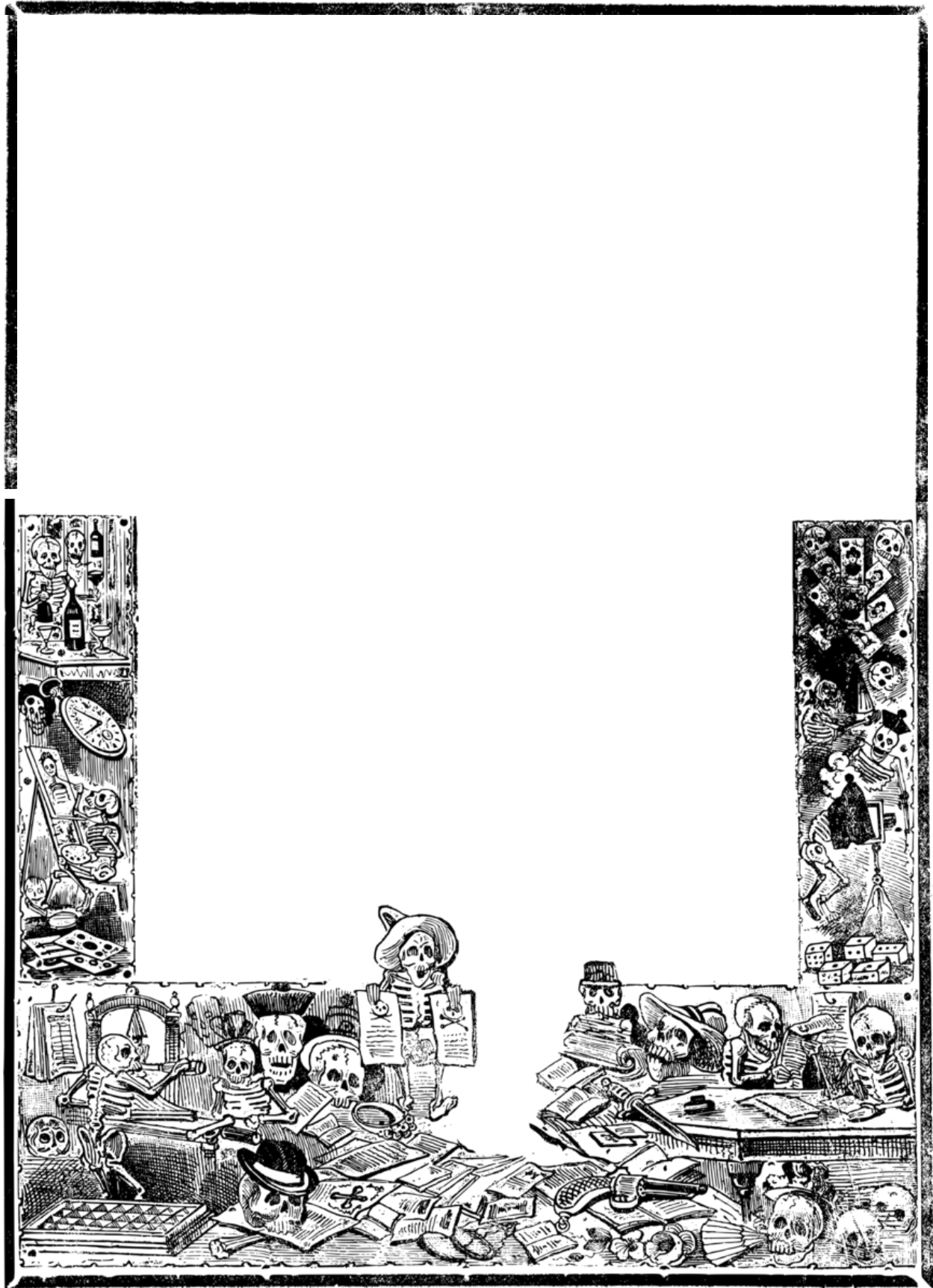
In the underworld reggaetón is not
cherished.

Questions:

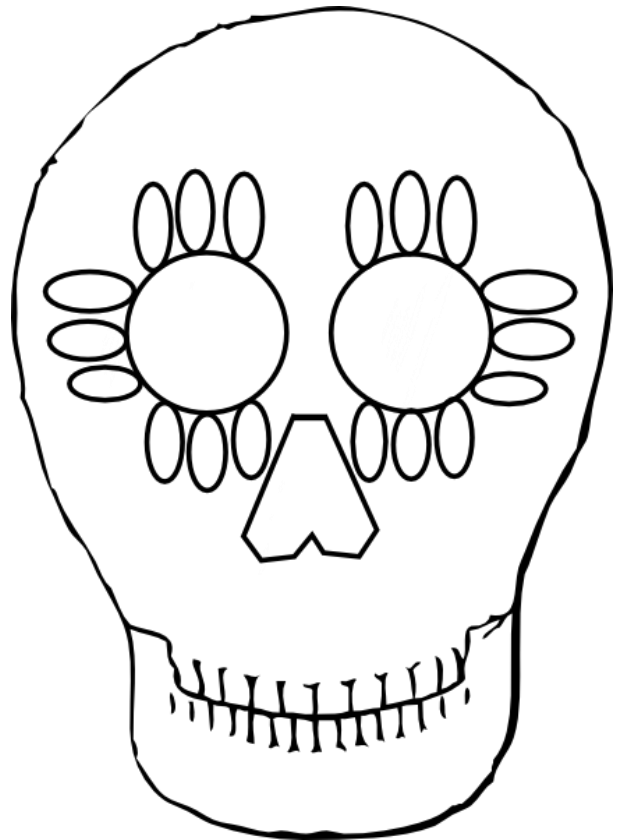
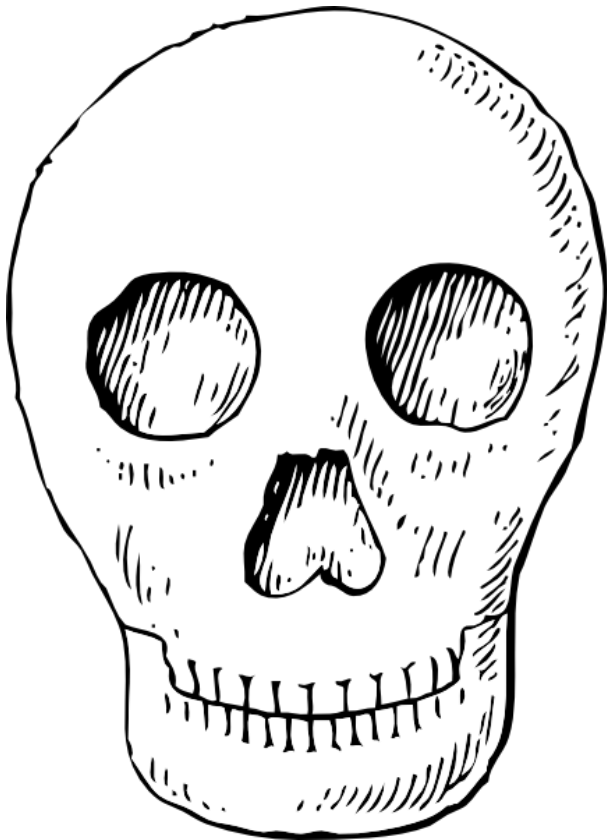
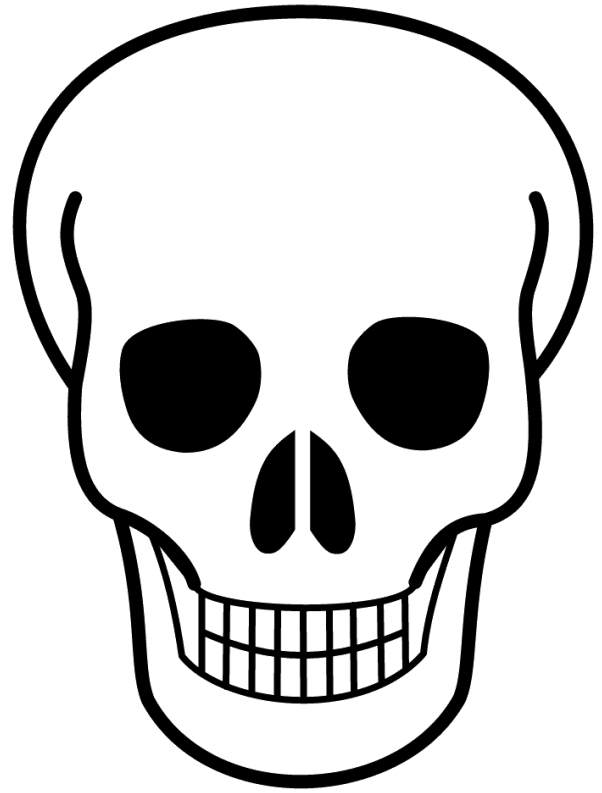
What has died in this poem? Is it serious?

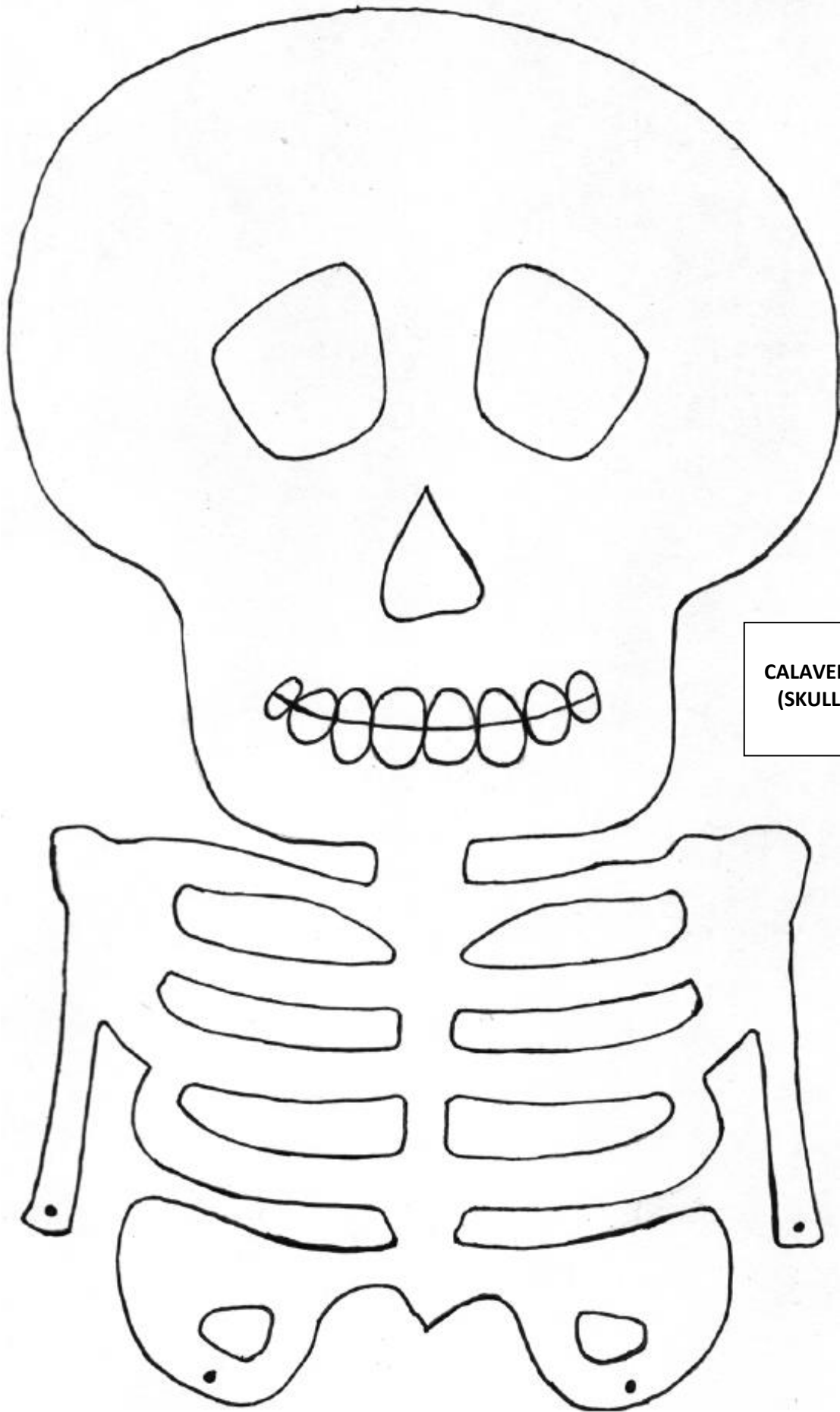
Who is the audience for this poem? Will they understand it?

Your turn! Write a *calavera* dedicated to a person, a phenomenon, or a fad!

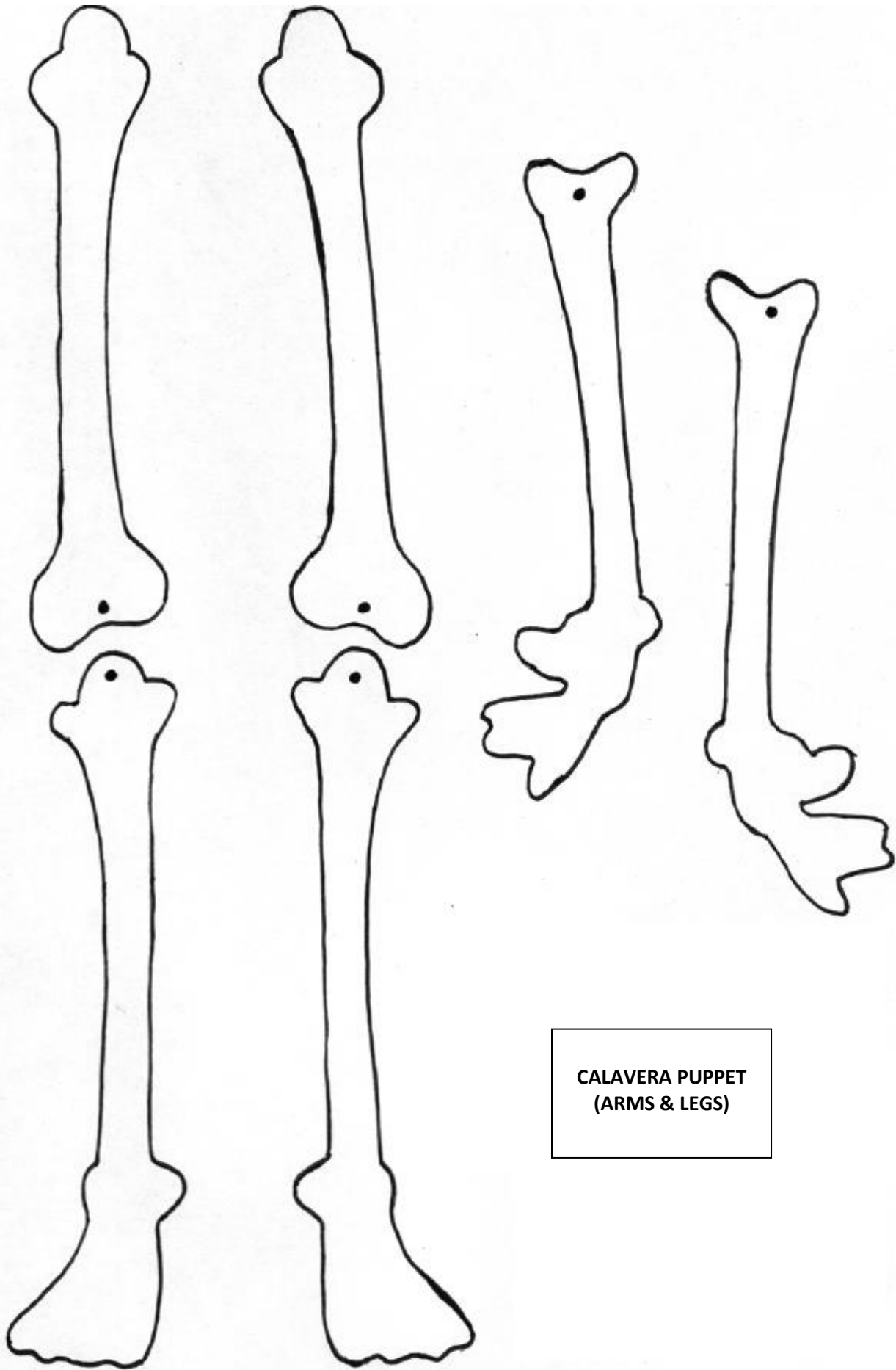


Calavera Templates





**CALavera PUPPET
(SKULL & BODY)**



**CALAVERA PUPPET
(ARMS & LEGS)**

2019 **DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS**

THEME 3: TRADITIONS

Traditions are at the heart of observing *Día de los muertos*. When talking to students about traditions, don't just limit the conversation to holiday rituals but include everyday activities like cooking or eating, interactions with loved ones, or the daily habits that are often passed on at home, in the classroom, or between friends! Ask students to share special recipes that have been handed down or taught to them, nuggets of wisdom, stories or fables, or even rituals around sports activities, school clubs, digital forums, and activism.



Name: _____

Tradiciones

Grade: K-5th

Día de los muertos (Day of the Dead) is a Mexican holiday that honors those who have passed away. Families make *ofrendas* (altars) for the spirits of their loved ones and decorate them with photos, offerings of food, candles, and marigolds. *Día de los muertos* unites the dead with the living for a few days each year.

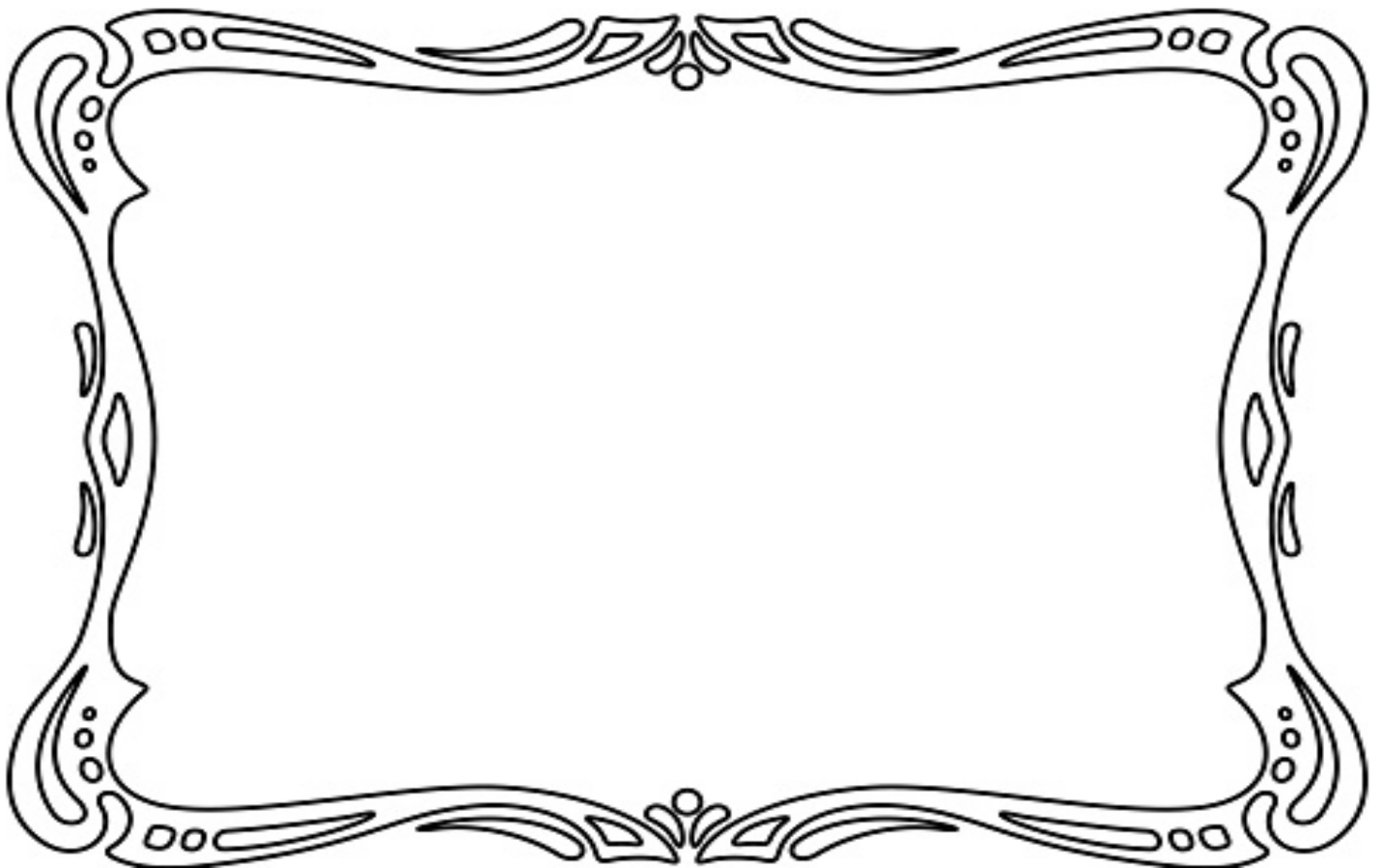
Now it's your turn! Draw a picture of you and your loved ones celebrating a holiday.

What is a holiday or **tradition** that you celebrate with your family and friends?

Why does your family choose to honor this **tradition**?

Do you make any special foods? If so, which ones?

Do you decorate your home and/or do you dress in a special way? If so, draw it out!



TRADICION LINE (Front)

What is a Zine?

A zine is a hand-made mini magazine. Zines can be about a specific topic such as music, they can tell a story, or just contain cool pictures. Zines can be about whatever you want them to be!

For this project, create a zine based on a tradition, recipe, or saying that is important to your family or friends. You can create a zine based on nice memory, a happy or funny story related to the topic, or create a guide to teach others about the subject you selected. It can be a recipe book or a how-to pamphlet.

Follow the directions below to learn how to cut and fold your zine.

Step 1: Get a blank piece of paper & scissors. The paper can be any color you want.



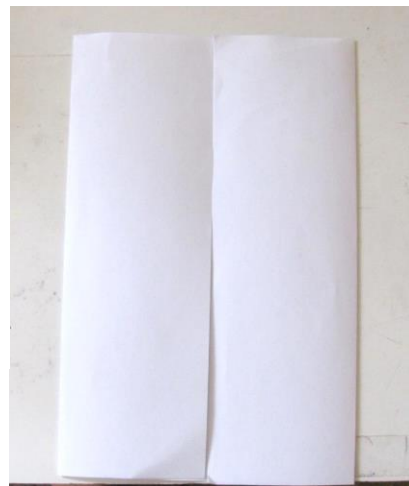
Step 2: Fold your paper in half the long way.



Step 3: Unfold the paper. The sheet is now split into halves. Fold one side of your paper into the middle to meet the crease

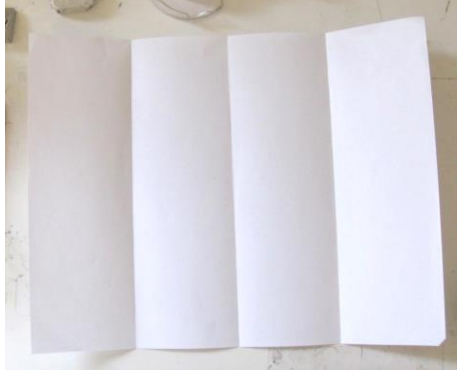


Step 4: Repeat step 3 for the other side of the paper

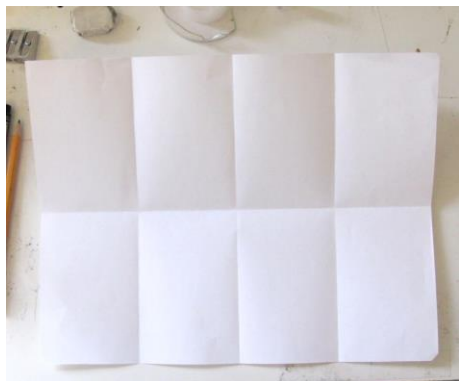
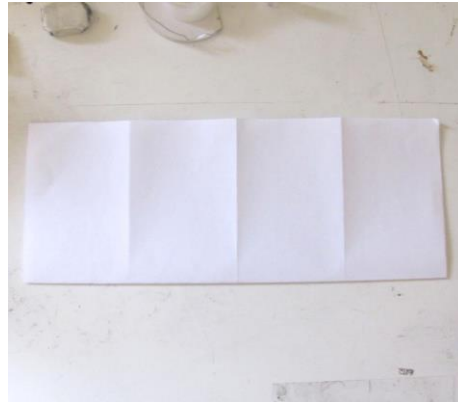


Tradición Zine (Back)

Step 5: If you unfold your paper you should have four equal sized vertical columns

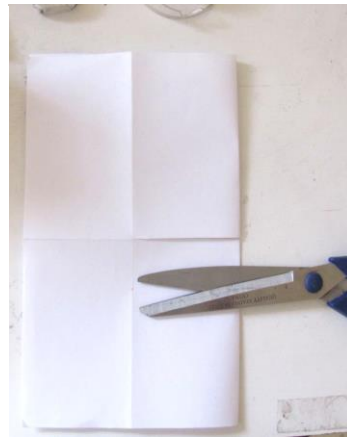


Step 6: Fold your paper in half again the long way.



Step 7: Unfold your paper. It should look like this.

Step 8: Fold your paper back in half like above. Now cut halfway in at your crease, this cut will create an opening in the middle of your paper.



Step 9: you should have a sheet with 8 sections and a slit in the middle. Open up your paper, fold in half like above. Then simply push the ends of the paper in and fold like a small book or pamphlet. Your zine should contain a front cover, six inside pages, and a back cover.



Now start creating your *tradición zine*!

Name: _____

Life & Death Around the World

What can be learned from festivals dedicated to the dead around the world and across many different cultures?

MEXICO: *Día de los muertos*

Día de los muertos is one of Mexico's favorite holidays, and a blending of the European traditions and the Aztec and Mayan peoples. The living create an altar to invite the dead to return home for a visit.

This ritual is important for families to honor and celebrate the lives of those who have been lost, and for coming to terms with the death of someone loved and missed.

INDONESIA: *Torajan Ma'nene'*

In the highlands of the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, the Torajan people live with their deceased loved one for weeks, months, or even years, after their death. They take their time in mourning, inviting family members from far and wide to participate in week-long celebrations that take place only once everyone arrives. Once every few years, they bring their loved ones back from their crypt, clean their tombs, dress their bodies, bring them offerings and tend to them at home.

CAMBODIA: *P'chum Ben at the Pagoda*

Cambodian Buddhists celebrate the *Pak Ben*, 14 days of waking up before dawn each morning to prepare offerings of food and other gifts to the monks living in the local pagoda and to their ancestors.

These offerings are meant to be for their relatives who have passed on and each plate of decorated sweets and fruits are offered with a prayer that they will reach their loved ones.

VENEZUELA: *Devil Dances*

On Corpus Christi Day in Venezuela villagers combine African and South American ritual elements through "devil dances". The male villagers dress up as devils, or *egunguns*, that represent their departed ancestors. They wear colorful gowns and masks.

These dances are important rituals to the villagers and are considered solemn obligations to their ancestors. They provide the village with good luck and chase away evil.

TRY THIS!

Acrostic Poem for a loved one:

An acrostic poem that uses the letters of a keyword (in this case the name of your loved one) to begin each line. All lines of the poem should relate to or describe your loved one.

Example:

Ana was my grandmother.

A: At all times cheerful

N: Never a dull moment with her

A: Always singing while she cooked

Name: _____

Haiku about life and death:

A Haiku is a Japanese poem which can also be known as a Hokku. It has 3 lines and 17 syllables, and it does not need to rhyme. Each line has a set number of syllables: **Line 1** – 5 syllables, **Line 2** – 7 syllables, **Line 3** – 5 syllables. For your topic, reflect on life and death.

Example:

Nothing ever ends

Life transforms as energy

Memory endures

Storytelling: Essay Prompts

Analyze the similarities and differences between the varying forms of storytelling between different cultures.

- Day of the Dead rituals and offerings
- The Griot storytellers of West Africa
- Cambodian theater
- Chinese calligraphy

How have the ways humans commemorate their death changed throughout the course of history? Use examples spanning from the ancient Egyptian or Inca societies to today.

- Make sure to look into the ways we physically and mentally preserve our dead
- Consider the role that technology plays in the ways humans commemorate their dead

With the advent of new technology, what context would oral storytelling fit into in our rapidly changing society?

- Has it become archaic? Is oral storytelling now a relic of a bygone era?
- Think about our current social and cultural climates – could oral storytelling merely transmuted itself into storytelling within a virtual framework?
- How have podcasts changed the nature of storytelling? What strategies do successful podcasts use to get listeners hooked?

Analyze the various factors into humans' inclination to preserve and immortalize their death.

- Codified through storytelling
- Preservation methods
- Certain traditions and customs (like *Día de los muertos*)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- To learn more about Jose Guadalupe Posada and his work of Calaveras, go to <http://www.papiermache.co.uk/tutorials/day-of-the-dead-skull/1/> and <http://bkids.typepad.com/bookhoucraftprojects/2011/10/halloween-suncatchers-craftkids.html>
- Create your own **ofrenda** in the classroom. You can do this for your students on your own or as a class. If you choose to surprise your students with the ofrenda, turn it into a lesson! You will need the **ofrenda** that you put together, the **Día de los muertos** handout, pencils, and 3x5 inches cards. Students may work individually or in small groups. Have students decode the objects and **symbols** on the **ofrenda** using the handout. Students can then create a story or obituary about the deceased on the 3x5 inches card, which will be guided by what they could learn about the deceased from the items on the **ofrenda**. You may also choose to have your students build the **ofrenda**. They will need to brainstorm who to dedicate the altar to and then work together as a team to build it.
- For more information regarding **Día de los muertos** visit: <http://latino.si.edu/dayofthedead/> and <http://teacherlink.ed.usu.edu/tlresources/units/byrnes-celebrations/day.html>
- For more activities related to **Día de los muertos** and **Calaveras** visit: <http://www.papiermache.co.uk/tutorials/day-of-the-dead-skull/1/> and <http://bkids.typepad.com/bookhoucraftprojects/2011/10/halloween-suncatchers-craftkids.html>
- Anatomy of a Day of the Dead altar: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-day-of-the-dead-altar-diagram-spanish-english-20151029-htmllstory.html>
- National Geographic and National Geographic Kids have more resources relating to Dia de los Muertos: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/dia-de-los-muertos/> and <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/celebrations/day-of-the-dead/>
- Food and **Dia de los muertos** <https://www.alimentarium.org/en/knowledge/day-dead-bridge-between-two-worlds>

BOOKS

- *Rosita y Conchita*, Eric Gonzalez and Erich Haeger
- *The Day of the Dead/El Día de Los Muertos*, Bob Barner
- *Clatter Bash! A Day of the Dead Celebration*, Richard Keep
- *I Remember Abuelito: A Day of the Dead Story*, Janice Levy
- *The Spirit of Tio Fernando: A Day of the Dead Story*, Janice Levy
- *Pablo Remembers*, George Ancona
- *The Dead Family Díaz*, P.J. Bracegirdle

FILMS

Elementary School:

- *The Book of Life* (2014) – accessible through various streaming platforms

- Coco (2017) – accessible through various streaming platforms
- CGI Student Academy Award Gold Medal Winner Short Film HD: "Día De Los Muertos" from Whoo Kazoo (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCQnUuq-TEE>)
- Que es El Día De Los Muertos? What is the Day of the Dead? (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJ5Qo4Cubxl>)
- The Day of the Dead (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsbr_Tkn08w)
- The Coolest Stuff on the Planet- What's the deal with the Day of the Dead? (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUIHhSOd1GI>)
- Día de Los Muertos (Lesson) Educational Video for Students (Halloween Cartoons for Children) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmUf7ix_bag)
- Los Thornberrys: "Día de los muertos" (1ra parte) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TyAuzVG45wg>)
- Día de Los Muertos: A Brief Overview (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzaZidVrebA>)
- Day of the Dead in Mexico or Día de los Muertos – YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RRJZ9B3eC0>)
- Colette Hicks' Day of the Dead Digital Story (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pB2563GJF0U>)
- Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24CWzxfIno>)

Middle School and Up:

- Feasts - Mexico 2 of 3 - BBC Culture Documentary - Día de los muertos (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFt8-WdstQA>)
- Feasts - Mexico 3 of 3 - BBC Culture Documentary - Día de los muertos (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jI25Uf9RpdA>)

POEMS

"Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep" by Mary Elizabeth Frye

Do not stand at my grave and weep.
 I am not there. I do not sleep.
 I am a thousand winds that blow.
 I am the Diamond glints on snow.
 I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
 I am the gentle autumn rain.
 When you awaken in the morning's hush
 I am the swift uplifting rush
 Of quiet birds in circled flight.
 I am the soft stars that shine at night.
 Do not stand at my grave and cry;
 I am not there. I did not die.

"Through the Eyes of the Soul, Day of the Dead in Mexico" By Mary Andrade

Unique Life
 Be as happy as you can, oh king Tecayehyatzin

You who appreciates the jewels that flourish!
Will we live again?

Your heart knows this:
We only live once!
Vida única
¡Alégrate en extremo, oh rey Tecayehuatzin,
valuador de joyas florecientes!

¿Acaso una vez más vendremos a vivir?
Tu corazón lo sabe así:
¡Sólo una vez venimos a la vida!

SONG

Los Esqueletos <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYyRibaMQoA&feature=youtu.be>