



Día De los Muertos

Day of the Dead – November 1 & 2

Activity: Making *Cempasúchil* (All Ages)

Cempasúchil, or marigolds, are essential for making an *ofrenda* (altar) for departed friends and family. They are placed on the altar alongside the loved one's favorite food and drink, candles, photos, and mementos. Marigolds, originally from Mexico, grow in warm or semi-warm and dry climates. This ancient plant species is widely used for medicinal and decorative purposes throughout Mexico.

The following lesson introduces students to making *cempasúchil* out of tissue paper. Traditional marigolds are shades of orange, gold, and yellow, but any colors may be used for this activity.

National Visual Arts Standards Addressed:

- VA: Pr4.1.1a – Explain why some objects, artifacts and artworks are valued over others.
- VA: Cn11.1.1a - Understand that people from different places and times have made art for a variety of reasons
- VA: Cn10.1.4a – Create works of art that reflect community cultural traditions.
- VA: Cr3. 1.1a- Use art vocabulary to describe choices while creating art.
- VA: Cr2.2.5a – Demonstrate quality craftsmanship through care for and use of materials, tools and equipment.

Materials:

- 4-5 sheets tissue paper per flower
- 1 green pipe cleaner per flower
- Scissors

Directions:

1. Take 4-5 sheets of tissue paper and stack them.
2. Cut into roughly 8" squares.
3. Keeping the sheets layered, take one set of squares and fold them lengthwise like an accordion.
4. At the center of the rectangle, cut a V-shaped notch on the top and bottom sides.
5. Take a pipe cleaner and twist it around the notch. With the stem pointing straight down, gently pull up the top sheet of tissue paper into the center.
6. Pull up the remaining layers, one by one. Repeat for the other side of the flower. Once all the layers are pulled up, fluff to make them appear more natural. Repeat for all other sets of squares and make more flowers!

Tips & Variations:

For sturdier stems, wrap two pipe cleaners together. Cut smaller or larger squares for different sizes of marigolds. Add more layers for thicker flowers. For a shiny effect, dip the top edges in glue and then loose glitter; shake off excess. Glue a pin on the back for a fluffy lapel decoration. Make many flowers and string them together to make a garland.