Calendar Activities

'Dia de les Muertos'



'Dia de los Muertos' or Day of the Dead is a Mexican traditional holiday for remembering and honouring those who have passed away, it is a festive, joyous time of celebration in Mexico. The holiday is a blend of pre-Hispanic indigenous beliefs and Spanish Catholic beliefs and falls on November 1st and 2nd coinciding with Catholic holidays All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day

The imagery of the Mexican 'Dia de los Muertos' sugar skulls have become a lot more common place in other cultures in costumes, masks and make up. Particularly for Halloween the day before the festival starts, however the festival itself has nothing to do with Halloween.

Discussion

Whenever you look to another culture for inspiration it is respectful and also very interesting to understand and recognise the symbolism and meaning behind it's icons and imagery.

https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/travel-and-adventure/top-10-things-know-about-day-dead

Before doing any creative activities on the theme of 'Dia de los Muertos' discuss the importance of this tradition and celebration to the Mexican people.

Ask your residents what traditions and celebrations are important to them and why?

For Further Research

SOMETHING TO INVESTIGATE - In British culture discussing death is often a taboo or a conversation that many of us are uncomfortable about initiating. More recently studies have shown there are many benefits in opening up and discussing the topic of death and dying.

Have a look at http://deathcafe.com and discuss with your management team whether or not a meeting of this sort would be appropriate in your setting, it could be for your staff team, residents or wider community.



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Inspired by Day of The Dead

The design of the day of the dead 'calavera' have been used as inspiration for make up and costumes all over the world. To utilise another cultures traditions for design or decorative effect is called cultural appropriation. This is sometimes controversial. Back in 2018 Strictly Come Dancing received criticism for opening its Halloween show with a 'Dia de les Muertos' inspired dance because the music they were dancing too was not Mexican but Caribbean, and because the festival is not connected to Halloween.



Edible Sugar Skulls

Sugar skulls or 'calaveritas' are a famous Day of the Dead tradition. They are placed on altars as an offering. They are made from a moulded sugar paste called 'alfeñique'

Sugar Skulls - How they are made
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJeDKPA8Tgw



Marigolds decorating a shrine

Mexican Marigold is the traditional flower used to honour the dead. Often referred to as "flowers of the dead" (flor de muerto), it's believed that the scent of these bright orange blooms help attract souls to the altar. They are used in alters and graveyards.

Using brightly coloured orange and yellow tissue paper, you create giant marigolds for your displays.
http://www.instructables.com/id/Tissue-Paper-Flowers/

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Printable for colouring or mask making.



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