

Lesson Plan Quick Look

Title of Lesson: La Calabiuza

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Content Area(s): Visual Arts, Language Arts, Social Studies

Grade/Age level: all ages

Duration: 1 class period

Materials/Cost, if any: Page 2

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Although celebrated at the same time of year, La Calabiuza is not El Salvadoran Halloween; it is a time to remember lost loved ones and to honor El Salvadoran history and culture.

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Grade Level/Age: All ages

Duration: 1 class period

Materials Needed/Cost: paper, pencil, various art making materials

Handouts:

Standard Addressed:

[Visual Arts](#): VA:Cr2.1.PKa-VA:Cr2.1.8a

[Language Arts](#): Writing K-12

[Social Studies](#): History K-4 Benchmark I-C-World

Depth of Knowledge/Bloom’s Taxonomy: understanding, analyzing, creating

Background: *La Calabiuza* is an El Salvadoran celebration that takes place every year on November 1st in Tonacatepeque, El Salvador. The celebration is over 100 years old and blends the Catholic holy day of All Saints Day (brought over by the Spaniards in the 1500s) with Indigenous traditions. One of the main attractions of La Calabiuza is the procession of the *carretas chillonas* (shrieking carts) through the main streets of Tonacatepeque. These hand drawn carts symbolize the journey the dead take into the afterlife and are decorated with skulls, torches, and homages to characters from local myths and legends. People of all ages march through the streets dressed as skeletons, demons, and popular characters from mythology chanting “Angeles somos, del cielo venimos pidiendo ayote para nuestro camino, mino, mino.” (“We are angels, come from heaven asking for squash for our journey”). Ayote con miel (squash with honey) is handed out to participants and onlookers as the celebration continues through the night.

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Celebrating La Calabiuza was put on hold during the El Salvadoran civil war (1980-1992) but brought back again in the early 1990s to celebrate El Salvadoran culture and identity and to reinforce ties to tradition. Although celebrated at the same time of year, La Calabiuza is not El Salvadoran Halloween; La Calabiuza is a time to remember lost loved ones and to honor El Salvadoran history and culture.

Skill(s): writing, listening, designing

Essential Question(s):

1. Why do you think people dress up like characters from local legends to celebrate La Calabiuza?
2. Which characteristics did you include in the description of your mythological character and why?
3. Why do you think myths and legends are important to so many cultures around the world? What is their purpose?

Objectives: Students will...

- Learn about the El Salvadoran celebration La Calabiuza
- Learn about the stylistic elements of myths and legends
- Design their own mythological characters

Academic Vocabulary/Word Wall: La Calabiuza, carretas chillonas, ayote con miel, mythology

[NHCC Glossary](#)

Brain Drain or Warm Up Activity: Discussion prompt: Ask students to share their favorite myths/legends. Why is it their favorite myth/legend? What are the character traits that make their myth/legend recognizable? When, where, and from whom did they first learn about the myth/legend?

Basic Lesson Description and Procedure:

1. Have a class discussion about the stylistic elements of a myth/legend (see additional resources)
2. Read examples of El Salvadoran legends (see additional resources)
3. Ask students to create their own mythological characters using the elements of a legend resource as a guide and the El Salvadoran legends as examples. Instruct students to write down a character description of their creations including traits and plot points for

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their character's back story.

4. Ask students to design a costume inspired by their characters like those worn for La Calabiuza. Experiment with different materials when designing your costume. Which medium best captures the essence of your character?

Assessment/Observation Activity: Written or oral response: Write a short story or tell a teacher/caregiver/peer about the origin of your mythological character. Be sure to include specific character traits and the purpose of your character (Does your character help to explain a natural event? Teach a moral lesson? Serve as a warning?).

Look into images representing El Salvadoran myths/legends and myths/legends from other cultures and discuss how they are represented. What similarities are found in myths/legends across cultures? How are they different? What makes each story unique to its culture of origin?

Lesson Conclusion/Potential Practice at Home: Encourage students to share their mythological characters with family and friends and to create additional stories and illustrations about their characters. Suggest that students ask their family and friends to share their own favorite myths/legends with them.

Accommodations & Modifications: If students are unfamiliar with traditional myths/legends use more contemporary examples of character archetypes (ex. superheroes) to illustrate common character traits and story elements.

Culturally Responsive Instruction and Modifications: La Calabiuza visual traditions are rich with imagery representing death including skulls and skeletons; be mindful of your students' beliefs regarding certain images. Encourage students who are not allowed to view images of skulls/skeletons or are uncomfortable with imagery about death to focus on the facet of La Calabiuza that celebrates local legends.

Relevance to families and communities: Ask students to think about their own cultures/communities/families; are there any myth/legends/stories that have been passed down through generations? If so, what are they about? Can they identify the elements of a myth/legend in the stories they have grown up with?

Cross-Curricular Connections: art, world literature, world history

Additional Resources:

El Salvadoran legends (Spanish):

1. [Leyenda de El Cipitío](#)

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2. [Leyenda de la Siguanaba](#)

3. [El Gritón de Media Noche](#)

El Salvadoran legends (English):

1. [Myths & Legends of El Salvador](#)

Elements of a legend:

1. [How to Write a Myth](#)

Extension:

- Ask students to create a comic strip of their mythological characters. They should keep the stylistic elements of a legend in mind as they come up with stories for their characters.
 1. [Comic Strip Templates](#)
 2. [Websites and Apps for Making Comics](#)
- Look up and read popular myths/legends from different cultures. Ask students to write a short essay comparing and contrasting myths/legends from different cultures. What are some common purposes and traits of mythological characters? How are they different? How are they the same? How are they unique to their cultures of origin?

Feedback: [Take this survey to share your feedback on this lesson plan.](#)

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