

Light-up Flowers for Día de Muertos

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Specialized tools and materials used:	Experience level required:
LEDs, Coin (CR 2032) batteries, Pipe Cleaners - green Tissue/crepe paper cut into 5x5 squares	beginner

Grade Level (of this example): middle school (8th Grade Spanish Class)

Topic/Content Standards (for this example): knowledge and understanding of other cultures, using languages other than English within and beyond the school setting.

Summary of Project:

This activity is used in Spanish classes when students are learning about the Latin American holiday, El Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead). During this holiday, people honor and remember their deceased family and friends by creating an ofrenda (altar) and filling it with meaningful objects.



Students start by learning about how Día de los Muertos is celebrated in Mexico and the surrounding region of Central America. They look at photo and video examples of the ofrenda and the cemeteries which are decorated to celebrate the lives of deceased family members. Students are introduced to the important symbols, and the Spanish vocabulary associated with these symbols through discussion and a webquest of a variety of resources from The Smithsonian Education and Google's Arts and Culture websites. In addition, the Disney movie, Coco also provides a source of background knowledge and vocabulary needed to gain understanding of this holiday.

As a class, they build an ofrenda for famous hispanic people from history. The Cempasuchil (Marigold flower) is one of the symbols of Día de los Muertos. These colorful flowers are used to decorate ofrendas and tombs.

Students work independently to create their own flower and hand sew a sugar skull, which was all completed with two-three 45 minute class periods. The Light Up Marigolds are shared by placing them on the ofrenda set up in the classroom. By the end of their unit, the class ofrenda was filled with every students' offerings of a sugar skull, marigold and images of their selected famous historical hispanic person.

This activity has transformed from the previous version of coloring and cutting out preprinted paper skulls to a more engaging experience. The classes come to the Makerspace area to have access to all the needed materials and to also work at collaborative tables which enhance a sense of community and bring the social aspect to sewing and making together. While working at their tables, the Spanish teachers encourage conversations incorporating the targeted vocabulary.

[Example of Tissue Flower with Felt base :](https://twitter.com/techmonstah/status/1055421929249759233)

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Suggested Content resources

- [Here's How to Have a STEM-Themed 'Día de los Muertos' Celebration](#)
- <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/dia-de-los-muertos/>
- [El Libro De La Vida \(The Book Of Life\) - Tráiler 2014 Oficial Español Latino HD](#)
- Disney Movie: [Coco](#)
- [Smithsonian Día de los Muertos 2D and 3D resources and immersive experiences!](#)
- [Latino Center Smithsonian: Day of the Dead Resources](#)
- [Google Arts & Culture: Meaning of the \(Ofrenda\) Altar](#)

Suggested Maker resources:

- Mini Felt Flashlights: <https://www.instructables.com/id/Mini-LED-flashlight/>
- Festive Flashlights <https://www.instructables.com/id/Festive-Flashlights/>
- Create Paper Marigolds <https://movies.disney.com/paper-bloom-pdf>
- How to make LED Flowers <http://www.missesartech.com/learn/how-to-make-paper-circuit-flowers/>