Professor: S. Rodriguez

Activity Plan

Level: Grade 3

Title: Que Milagro! How Miraculous!

Brief History and Background of Artist and Artwork:

The following passage was taken from an informational card associated with the purchase of a Milagro in a Philadelphia Art Gallery.

“Milagros or miracles, found in many areas of Latin America, are used by the people to petition saints for help or protection. In many of the churches one can see wooden statues of various saints, the Virgin Mary, or of Christ. On these figures the people often pin small metal images of arms, legs, animals, praying figures or other symbols of their prayers. These Milagros serve to remind the saint of the person’s prayers or to thank the saint for prayers that have been answered. Horse or sheep figures may be left to ask for help in healing a sick animal or for fertility. Students may leave an open book asking for divine intervention in their grades. Hearts are often left to thank the saint for answering the prayers of the lovelorn. Each Milagro is specially made for a unique purpose so the variety is enormous.” Tesoros

In addition, Milagos can be anything from nearly flat to three dimensional and can be constructed from a variety of materials such as gold, silver, tin, lead, wood, bone or wax. Each shape can be a symbol for whatever the user wishes it to be. They are used for healing, protection, good luck, and can be part of jewelry as well as wall art.

Goal: The students will become familiar with a religious custom that is part of the Hispanic culture and used in Mexico, Southern United States, Latin America, and the Iberian Peninsula.

Objectives:
1. The students will find Mexico on the map and note its borderline location to the United States.
2. The students will read Anthony Reynoso: Born to Rope to see how border countries like Mexico and immigration influence customs and culture in the United States.
3. The students will make a list of Mexican influences from the story.
4. The students will also make a list of the elements (language, food, clothing, architecture, literature, art, music, dance and religion) of culture and match them to the Mexican customs from the story.

5. The teacher will introduce the students to the Hispanic religious custom of Milagros using the background information and/or resources.

6. The students will choose and draw a Milagro shape to create and use for healing, protection, or good luck.

7. The students will create their Milagro with clay-dough, paint and mount for display.

8. The students will orally explain the purpose of making their shape.

Materials:

- Book, Anthony Reynoso: Born to Rope
- World Map
- Paper and Pencils
- Plaster of Paris
- Aluminum Foil
- Paper Cups, 12 oz.
- Plastic Spoons
- Water
- Flour
- Salt
- Vegetable oil
- Cream of tartar
- Metallic paint
- Paint Brushes
- Hot glue and gun
- Yarn

Directions:

1. Discuss the previously learned terms, customs and culture, and their definitions.
2. Locate Mexico on the World Map and note its connection to the United States.
3. Read the story Anthony Reynoso: Born to Rope and have the students note its setting in Guadalupe, Arizona, close to the Mexican border.
4. List the Hispanic cultural elements from the story and connect them to the basic elements of a culture.
5. While touching the cultural element of religion, teach the students about Milagros using the attached information and photos.
6. Have the students decide what kind of Milagro would be useful for them, and ask them to draw what it would look like.
7. While the students are drawing, have small groups make a Plaster of Paris base for the clay Milagro they will make using a small oval tray of aluminum foil. Mix a cup of plaster with a half-cup of water and pour it into the aluminum foil tray to dry.
8. Have enough clay dough for each student to use about a half-cup of clay.
Basic Modeling Clay

2 cups flour 4 tsp. vegetable oil
1 1/3 cups salt 2 cups boiling water
4 tsp. cream of tartar

Combine dry ingredients in a mixing bowl. Add vegetable oil and boiling water. Stir until well blended. Dough should not stick to the sides of the bowl and should be cool enough to handle. Dough will keep several months in an air-tight container. Projects will dry overnight.

9. Students will create their Milagro from the clay. Allow them to dry overnight on aluminum foil.
10. When dry, the students will paint them with metallic paint.
11. When the Plaster of Paris is dry, attach each Milagro with hot glue.
12. Hot glue a yarn hanger onto the back of the Plaster of Paris frame and hang for display.
13. Have each student report on what they hope the Milagro will do for them.

Bibliography/References:


