**SUGAR SKULLS TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS**

Sugar Skulls are a traditional folk art from Southern Mexico used to celebrate Day of the Dead. Families take the flowers and sugar skulls to the cemetery to decorate the tombs on November 2. Sugar skulls are colorfully decorated with icing, pieces of bright foil, colored sugars and usually bear the name of the deceased loved one being honored. They are easy to make by children and adults, and if kept dry, they can last a year.

Sugar skull making is a good activity to do in conjunction with stories or readings about the holiday. Students can compare the Mexican tradition and feelings about their deceased with the American tradition. They can explore the differences between Halloween and Day of the Dead.

The molds can be bought at: [www.mexicansugarskull.com](http://www.mexicansugarskull.com)

The best size for classroom use it the Original Medium and has a flat back $**9.50**

More step by step instructions along with pictures can be found at: <http://www.mexicansugarskull.com/sugar_skulls/instructions.html#teacher>

**SUPPLIES:**

* Sugar skull molds
* Granulated sugar
* Meringue powder (can be purchased at Michaels in cake decorating section)
* Corrugated cardboard squares, (one for each skull made) 3" x 4" for medium
* Large metal bowl
* Measuring spoons and cups
* Disposable Tablecloth and Paper towels
* Bucket for washing hands

*Have students get in groups of 4 prior to making sugar skulls and have them bring the below supplies for their group. These supplies can be purchased at Michaels. Or take a $1 donation from students to cover costs. Send an email and flyer home with details.*

* Decorations: feathers, colored tin foils, paper flowers, sequins, etc.
* Icing in tubes (make sure they have a pointed hole. If they don’t you will need to buy tips and coupler rings to hold the tips onto tubes) NO gel tubes – the gel does NOT dry hard
* Also you could have the students responsible for bringing a bag of sugar so you don’t have to supply that

**Day 1**

* Set up a table with tablecloth and mix in bowl the sugar, meringue powder and water. A 10 lb bag of sugar, ½ cup of meringue powder and 7 Tablespoons of water yields 42 skulls. Mix with hands until every bit of sugar is moistened. Test sugar by squeezing a small amount of sugar in your fist, open slowly, and if your fingerprints remain, sugar is ready to mold.
* Hand each student an index card and have them write their name on the edge.
* This is a good day to have students working on an independent activity (a worksheet packet for example) that keeps them busy the entire period. You call students up by small groups of 4. Students bring their index card up with them.
* Students pack sugar mixture firmly into mold and use a straight edge (I have a few pieces of cardboard available) to scrape the back of the mold perfectly flat. Pack down some more and place the index card over mold and invert. Lift mold off carefully. Students place their skull on a designated table to air dry
* A bucket of water and paper towels serve as a nice hand washing set up if a sink is not available in the classroom. Students return to their seat to continue their independent work.
* Always make a few extra sugar skulls to cover for any accidents that might occur.

**Day 2**

* Today, is decorating day! Students get their skull from table and sit in groups of 4 with sequins, feathers, beads, icing and colored foil at each group. You can have groups of 4 students responsible for purchasing the needed items before sugar skull decorating day to share with their group. You can even have each group responsible for bringing a bag of sugar for you to use on day 1. You can have the students write the name of a loved one who has passed away in icing.
* After students decorate, they place their skull back on the designated table to dry. The following day they should be dry enough that they can take home or include as part of an ofrenda if they made one.