



NEW CHALLENGE IN TERM 3: CAN YOU MAKE A PIÑATA?

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

This Term, as part of our Integrated Studies, we are looking at different cultures in the world, their practices and customs and the influences they have had on our own culture, especially Ancient Civilisations like the Incas, the Mayas and the Aztecs.

At the same time, Senior Students are learning Spanish Cultural Traditions in the Spanish class, especially from Mexico, and one of them is the traditional Piñata.

It is said that the Ancient Aztecs worshipped the God of War using an early version of a piñata. Piñatas are mostly considered a Mexican tradition in this day and age, but they have history all over the world! There is no need to go out and buy a piñata for your next party, you can make your own one this term or over the holidays!

THE CHALLENGE

We would like to encourage our students and their families to make a bright and colourful piñata this term or over the holidays. The piñata could then be donated to the school in order to sell it at the GALA and contribute to this wonderful school fundraiser.



The making of the pinata will also sign off another challenge on your child's Home Learning Challenge booklet. We have offered this challenge to the Year 4 to 6 students (this challenge is voluntary), but children from other year groups can also be involved if they wish to. Please bring your finished pinata into school and give to your child's classroom teacher on the first Tuesday after the holidays so they can be displayed for gala.

There are different ways to make a piñata. Research this online and find out the best way for you to make it. The harder it is, the longer it will take to break it, so more fun for everyone!!!

So let your creative juices flow and let's celebrate at gala with a PIÑATA DISPLAY!

Thanks in advance to all the families for your cooperation and time helping your children.

Warm regards,
Ruth Soriano & Donna Frost

If you would like to know more about the History of the Piñata, you can read it on the back of this page.

The History of The Piñata

Piñatas are a fun part of traditional Mexican festivities, like the 5th of May (Public Holiday in Mexico- Independence Day), birthday parties, but also piñatas figure prominently in the celebration of the *posadas* (the 9 days right before Christmas).

It's fun to see these brightly decorated candy-filled creations (and even more fun to take a whack at them) but piñatas actually have a long and fascinating history that spans the globe and different ancient cultures:

Chinese Cheer

Some people say that the idea of the piñata actually originated in China. When Marco Polo, a European explorer, first visited China he noticed that the people celebrated their lunar New Year with figures of cows, oxen and buffaloes decorated with colourful tissue paper. The figures would be filled with seeds and then pelted by revellers with mandarins, so when the seeds rained over the party it symbolised good crops and prosperity. The remains were then burned into ash for good luck.

Latin Crafting

This idea travelled back to Europe with Marco Polo, back to Italy and eventually Spain as well and started appearing in the 14th Century. The word “pignatta” means “fragile pot”. Early piñatas were clay pots similar to ones that carry water, and in the 14th Century it was adopted as a way to celebrate Christian festivities, especially Lent.

In Spain the first day of Lent became “The Dance of the Piñata”, and as part of the festivities the plain clay pots became more and more decorated and colourful, often with ribbons and streamers and fringed paper.

Aztec Allure

In the 16th Century the Spanish brought the custom of piñatas to the new world. They used the piñatas as a way of attracting the Mayan people to Christianity and converting them, using the piñata as an allegory to help them in their efforts to evangelize the native people of the region. The original piñata was shaped like a star with seven points. The points represented the seven deadly sins, and the bright colours of the piñata symbolize temptation.



The blindfold represents faith and the stick is virtue or the will to overcome sin. The candies and other goodies inside the piñata were the riches of the kingdom of heaven. Thus teaching that with faith and virtue one could overcome sin and receive all the rewards of heaven.

The native people of Mexico worshipped The Aztec God of War Huitzilopochtli by decorating a clay pot in vibrant colours, feathers and materials and placing it on a stick outside their temples at the year's end. The Mayans loved public festivities, so they would cover their eyes and try to hit the decorated pot with a stick. The pot was often filled with jewels and treasures! The treasures would then fall outside the temple as an offering to the god of war.