

“Every time I paint it serves a purpose—to bring about pride in our Mexican American culture.”

Carmen Lomas Garza



Baile En El Jardín-Dance at El Jardín
Cover Illustration
Carmen Lomas Garza

In My Family/En mi familia

Carmen Lomas Garza
Children's Book Press 1996

Grade Levels

K-3

Curriculum Areas

Language Arts • Art

National Language Arts Standards

NL-ENG.K-12.7 EVALUATING DATA

Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems.

They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources [e.g., print and non-print texts, and artifacts].

NL-ENG.K-12.8

DEVELOPING RESEARCH SKILLS

Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

National Art Education Standards

NA-VA.4 UNDERSTAND THE VISUAL ARTS IN RELATION TO HISTORY AND CULTURES Grades K–4

Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationship to various cultures.

Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places.

Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art.

Objectives

Students may draw upon the ethnic, popular and folk symbols and myths of their cultural heritage for their work.

To introduce to students that celebrations draw upon the influences of other cultures.

Author's Background

Carmen Lomas Garza was born in Kingsville, Texas in 1948. Her family emigrated to the U.S. in order to escape the tribulations of the Mexican Revolution early in this century. She is the second child of five children. At a very early age she wanted to pursue her dream of becoming an artist. Her family supported her endeavors. Her mother, who inspired Lomas Garza, was also an artist. Lomas Garza received her M.A. from San Francisco State University. Much of her work focuses on the traditions and daily activities in Mexican-American culture.

"I was thirteen years old when I decided to become an artist. I taught myself to draw by practicing every day. I drew whatever was in front of me--books, cats, my left hand, my sisters and brothers, chairs, chillies, paper bags, flowers--anything or anybody that would stay still for a few minutes . . . I have three

college degrees. When I was in high school I could hardly wait to graduate so I could go to college and study art." [Carmen Lomas Garza. 1996]

Summary

In this bilingual picture book celebrating Mexican American culture, Lomas Garza shares memories of growing up in her hometown of Kingsville, Texas, near the Mexican border. Her paintings of children and adults playing and working together as they prepare food, celebrate life events, and mend ills enable readers to understand constancy and change among family and friends. The author's narratives are told as first person reflections that often add dialogue or other layerings to the story being conveyed in her paintings. Truly for all ages, this companion to *Family Pictures* will be an important addition to any study of family, community, personal storytelling, or narrative painting.

Activity

The San Jose Museum of Art offers an online *Carmen Lomas Garza Teacher Resource Book*, with wonderful activities about

- Celebrations
- The Piñata
- Papel Picado
- Foods

See:

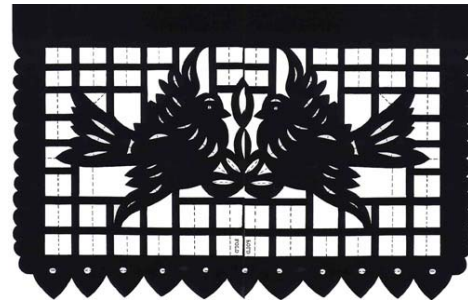
http://www.sjmusart.org/dynamic_content/teacherPDFs/carmenLomasGarza_book.pdf



History of the Piñata
Mexico Connect
Maria Elena 1999

Activity

Create a papel picado. Examples of Mexican Papercutting and techniques can be found in the book, *Mexican Paper-cutting: Simple Techniques for Creating Colorful Cut-Paper Projects* by Kathleen Trenchard.



Papel Picado

Kathleen Trenchard
Mexican Papercutting: Simple Techniques for Creating Colorful Cut-Paper Projects.
New York: Sterling Publishing. 2000

LOOKING EXERCISE #1:
Cleaning Nopalitos
Carmen Lomas Garza
Illustration and Text Pages 6-7



This is my grandfather, Antonio Lomas. He's shaving off the thorns from freshly cut cactus pads, called nopalitos. Nopalitos are called "the food of last resort."

Research how nopalitos are used today in menus.

Activity

People have argued for 400 years about the truth of the story of La Virgen de Guadalupe. But still there is no doubts millions of Mexicans love her and believe in her. December 12, El Dia de la Virgen de Guadalupe, has become a national holiday in Mexico since 1859. Read more about the Virgin of Guadalupe in *Pinatas and Smiling Skeletons: Celebrating Mexican Festivals* by Zoe Harris.

LOOKING EXERCISE #2:
Virgin of Guadalupe
Carmen Lomas Garza
Illustration and Text Page 25



The Virgin of Guadalupe appeared to the Indian, Juan Diego, outside of Mexico City in 1531.

What is going on in this picture? Read more about the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Resources

Carmichael, Elizabeth and Chloe Sayer. *The Skeleton at the Feast: The Day of the Dead in Mexico*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1992.

Cisneros, Sandra. *Hairs/Pelitos*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1994.

Garza, Carmen Lomas. *In my Family/ En mi Familia*. San Francisco, California: Children's Book Press, 2000.

Garza, Carmen Lomas. *Magic Windows/Ventanas Magicas*. San Francisco, California: Children's Book Press. 1999.

Garza, Carmen Lomas. *Making Magic Windows: Creating Cut Paper Projects with Carmen Lomas Garza*. San Francisco, California: Children's Book Press. 1999.

Harris, Zoe and Suxanne Williams. *Pinatas and Smiling Skeletons: Celebrating Mexican Festivals*. Berkeley, California: Pacific View Press. 1998.

Jablonski, Ramona. *The Paper Cut-Out Design Book*. Owing Mills, Maryland: Stemmer House Publishers. 1976.

Romero, Regina. *Flora's Kitchen: Recipes from a New Mexico Family/ La Cocina de Flora: Recetas de una Familia de Nuevo Mexico*. Tucson, Arizona: Treasure Chest Publications. 1998.

Soto, Gary and Ed Martinez. *Too Many Tamales*. Paper Star. 1996.

Trenchard, Kathleen. *Mexican Paper cutting: Simple Techniques for Creating Colorful Cut-Paper Projects*. Ashville, North Carolina: Lark Books. 2000.

Internet Websites

Carmen Lomas Garza Teacher Resource Book
http://www.sjmusart.org/dynamic_content/teacherPDFs/carmenLomasGarza_book.pdf

Carmen Lomas Garza's Webpage
<http://www.carmenlomasgarza.com/>

Chicana and Chicano Space, Hispanic Research Center at Arizona State University
http://mati.eas.asu.edu:8421/ChicanArte/html_pages/garza17.html

Questions and Answers about Cascarones
http://mati.eas.asu.edu:8421/ChicanArte/html_pages/CarmenIssOutl.html

Children's Book Press Online Teaching Resources
<http://www.childrensbookpress.org/links.html>

Introducing Illustrators-Carmen Lomas Garza
<http://www.rif.org/art/illustrators/garza.msp>

Kemper Art Museum:
<http://www.kemperart.org/exhibits/PastExhibits/CarmenLomasGarza.asp>

North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts-Papel Picado-The Art of Mexican Cut Paper
http://www.art.unt.edu/ntieva/news/vol_7/issue3/96falp11.htm

Smith College Museum of Art
<http://www.smith.edu/artmuseum/exhibitions/spectrum/edgarzafull.htm>

Tamalada-Making Tamales image on-line
<http://www.esperanto.com/Legacy/CLGarza.html>