

BITE RECIPE – PAPEL PICADO

“Papel picado” is Spanish for “pierced paper”. Sheets of tissue are cut in intricate designs and used as decorations for festivals, especially the “Day of the Dead”. This fun craft activity replicates the idea (but not the detailed method) at a very simple level, producing very rapid results. Let people use their imagination in how to fold and how to cut the paper. A small group can rapidly produce enough papel picado to decorate a large room effectively for parties, Christmas etc.

Ingredients:

- Wide variety of papers including coloured tissue, silver, gold, cellophane etc (use your scrap store of course), all cut to something between A4 and A3 size – the bigger the variety the better the outcomes and the more exciting the activity.
- String or similar (for hanging up). Left over knitting yarn is good too.
- Clothes pegs are an easy, safe way of hanging up the work, so that its owners can take it away at the end of the session. If you are decorating a hall, then stapling is cheaper, and very quick..
- Enough scissors for everyone – include left-handed and child-friendly ones.



- GLADE's Mexico Collection (www.glade.org) includes some commercial plastic papel picado which will attract attention to your stall or table.

Method: length of time: 5 mins – 20 mins

Age

range: 4yrs upwards

Practise beforehand, which will also create samples to show – make sure some are very simple, others more complex and sophisticated.

- Fold piece of paper in half, in half again, in half again
- Cut as in paper doily cutting (demonstrate first if necessary) – take care not to overcut on the folds so that whole thing falls apart.
- Unfold and admire, and hang up (they can collect on the way home)

Encourage imaginative experimentation, including folding paper in different ways.

Global issues raised: depends entirely on background materials. Diversity and culture: festivals, treatment of death, migration; specific Mexican/Central American culture; understanding how diaspora societies value their cultures; how cultures transfer to new contexts.



Additional resources: *GLADE's Mexico Collection includes not only commercial papel picado (see above) but also books (including Florence Temko's “Traditional Crafts from Mexico and Central America” 1996), artefacts & photos, about many aspects of Mexican life.*

Where to use this global bite: Fêtes, fairs, holiday schemes, club sessions, get togethers before major events which need decorations (Christmas, festivals etc).

Watchpoint: You will have to work hard on your background reading to bring out the global issues. Choose your background pictures etc according to the global issue.