

Spanish Newsletter Week 9

Tuesday, November 1st, Grades 5, 6, 7 & 8
Feliz Día de Muertos



Information

Señora (Heather) Ragen. I only teach on Tuesdays at St. Paul School, so please contact me on my cell phone (414-881-9586) or via e-mail at hragen@stpaulgenesee.net if you have any questions.

Class Activities

All levels took Quarter 1 tests during shortened afternoon classes today. Oral Home Participation Trackers for the 1st quarter were collected along with Tarea #8 and Extra Credit. 5th and 6th grade students should have also returned the quizzes we took on October 18th with parent signatures. There is no written/oral homework this week for Spanish.

Notas Culturales

After our tests this week we compared and contrasted the Mexican Day of the Dead tradition with Halloween (as time allowed). "Día de Muertos" or Day of the Dead is celebrated on November 1st/2nd in many rural areas of México, Guatemala and Belize.

I like to think of Día de Muertos as a cross between Halloween and Memorial Day. This ancient celebration began as a ritual to honor the dead in the pre-Columbian cultures of the Maya, Aztec and Toltec. Spanish Catholic influence moved the celebration from August to November (All Saints/Souls Days) to make the tradition more Christian.

On the first day, relatives put flowers (marigolds) on graveyards or in vases with cards. They create an altar somewhere in the house. These altars are not for worship. They serve the same purpose as a scrapbook or photo album. Pictures of the departed, favorite loved objects and other mementos are placed on the altar along with candles, crosses, and a glass of water to refresh the tired soul. A big part of the tradition includes making the favorite food(s) of the person the family to honor his/her memory.

On the second day, families have big celebrations at their homes. They eat the food they made the day before. Friends stop by and people dance and sing. It is a very joyful holiday. Smiling skeletons can be seen mocking death. Mexican culture tends to be much less fearful of death when compared to other cultures, including the United States.

On the third day, the holiday expands to the town. There may be parades and floats with masked or costumed characters. Coffins are carried that have people in them dressed in skeleton outfits. Children eat fruit, bread and candy shaped like skulls or skeletons.

Many superstitions have been added over the years, but for the most part, this ancient holiday is a time of remembrance and love.