

# THE ALTAR



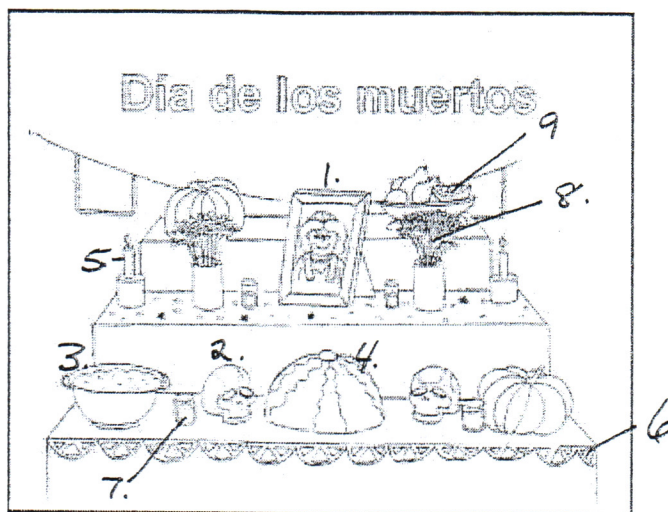
The altar (also called an *ofrenda*) has roots in pre-Hispanic and Spanish Catholic practices. It is central to observing the Day of the Dead and is maintained to ensure good relations between the family on earth and the family in the afterworld. Entire families construct altars as an annual commitment. Adornment varies according to village and regional traditions, the family's earnings, and the importance of the relative or friend being remembered. Preparation of the altar can be expensive, since anything placed there for the visiting soul, including the dishes for food offerings, must be new.

Whatever the deceased enjoyed in life is remembered in preparing the altar. Photographs occupy the center, and names are spelled out with cloves on fruits and with a pen on nuts. Religious images are placed on the altar, in the hope that the saints thus venerated will intercede for the protection of the soul on its journey back to the afterworld. Decorations may also include a Tree of Death, tombstones, lyres, flowers, skulls and skeletons of all sizes and materials, *copal* (a resinous incense) burning in a clay censer, and delicately formed hearts.

Altars are an eight-course, multi-level feast with enough "soul foods" set out to provide the sustenance required by the visiting soul. These include dishes traditionally prepared for the Day of the Dead, such as chicken in red or black *mole* sprinkled with sesame seeds; fruit, beans, *tortillas*, and *tamales* made from fresh, hand-ground corn; soft drinks or *aguardiente* ("white-lightning" liquor); and, as always, a glass of water to refresh the travel-wearied soul. Altars honoring children include a small bowl of milk, special cakes called *mamonas*, *copal*, pieces of chocolate, little apples, miniature candlesticks, and a profusion of toys and sweetmeats.

Once the honored guest has extracted the essence of the refreshments, they are shared with family and friends, who often have traveled long distances to take part in the family's annual reunion.

1. La foto
2. La calavera
3. La comida
4. El pan de muerto
5. La vela
6. El papel picado
7. El agua
8. Las flores
9. La cesta de frutas





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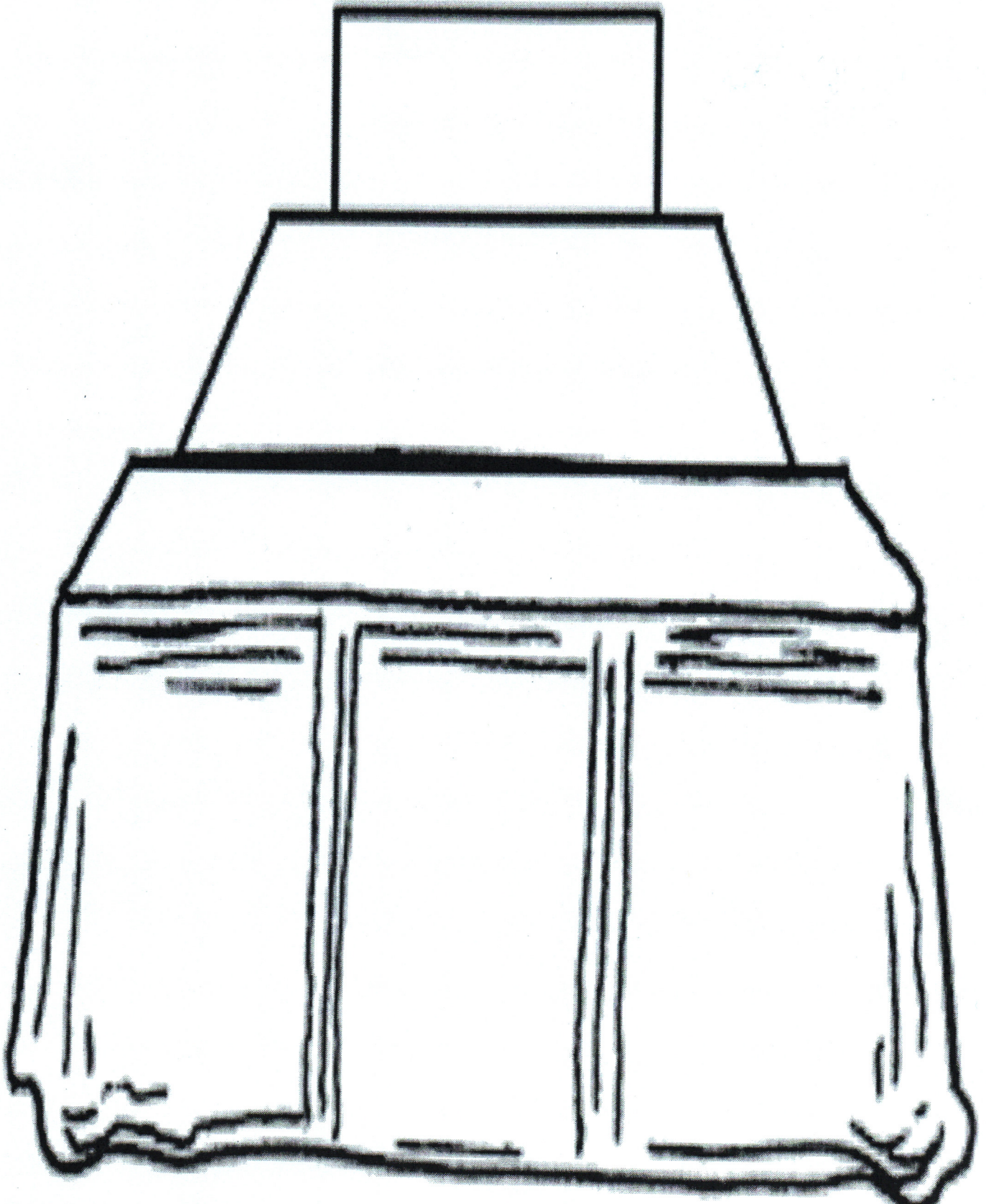
## Altar Offerings

- apples
- *aguardiente*
- altar arch
- *atole*
- bag of bones
- bananas
- bark paper cutouts
- beans
- bread of the dead
- *calaca* finger and thumbprints
- *Calavera Catrina* mask
- *Calavera Zapatista* puzzle
- candles
- *champurrado*
- chicken (stuffed or in *mole*)
- *chile*
- chocolate (Mexican)
- cider
- clay censer
- cocoa beans (used as currency for bribes)
- corn (on the cob or Indian)
- cut paper banners
- dried fish
- embroidered napkins
- glass of water (a must!)
- guavas
- jadeite (used as a bribe)
- *ficamas*
- little priests
- *lotería*
- lyres (miniature)
- *mamones*
- marigolds
- milk
- mock bread of the dead
- *novios*
- nuts
- oranges
- peanuts
- personal mementos
- *petate*
- photos of departed
- *pipian* sauce (made with pumpkin seeds)
- pork (stuffed)
- pork cracklings
- *pozole*
- *punche*
- sand paintings
- skeletons
- soft drinks
- squash
- sugar sculptures
- religious images
- *tamales*
- tin toys
- *tortillas* (corn)
- toy coffins
- Tree of Death
- wild duck
- wreaths (fresh or plastic)

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

# La Ofrenda



# La Ofrenda Project

You are going to design a Day of the Dead altar, using a piece of paper.

On the paper, you need to have the following...

- 1.Una foto (animal or person) – a thumbnail picture of a REAL person who has died or an animal
- 2.Una calavera – a skull, colored
- 3.Un esqueleto – a skeleton
- 4.El Pan de Muerto – bread of the dead, traditional brown color
- 5.Dos velas – two candles, flames colored if shown
- 6.El papel picado –cut paper decorations, each piece colored a different color
- 7.El agua – glass of water
- 8.Las flores – flowers, orange for marigolds
- 9.Otra bebida – a drink other than water, colored appropriately
- 10.Una comida – food, colored appropriately
- 11.Otra comida – another food item, different than #10, colored appropriately
- 12.Una cosa religiosa – a religious item, colored appropriately
- 13.La Catrina – the grim reaper, colored appropriately
- 14.Una actividad o Una cosa– an activity or item that the deceased liked, colored appropriately

You will need to write the number of each item on the front of the paper. No number, no point! I need to know “what” the item is so I can grade it.

This needs to be colorful.

This will be graded on neatness.

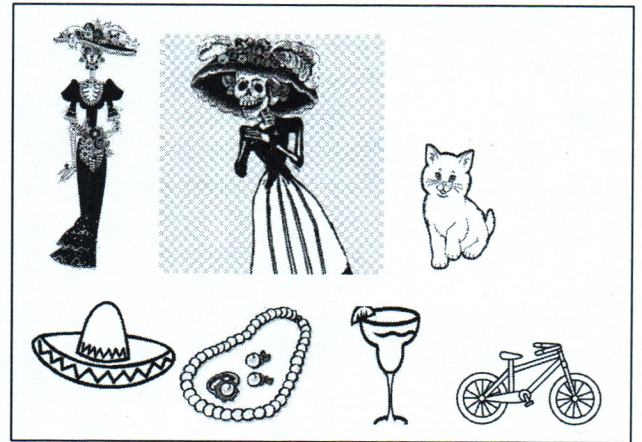
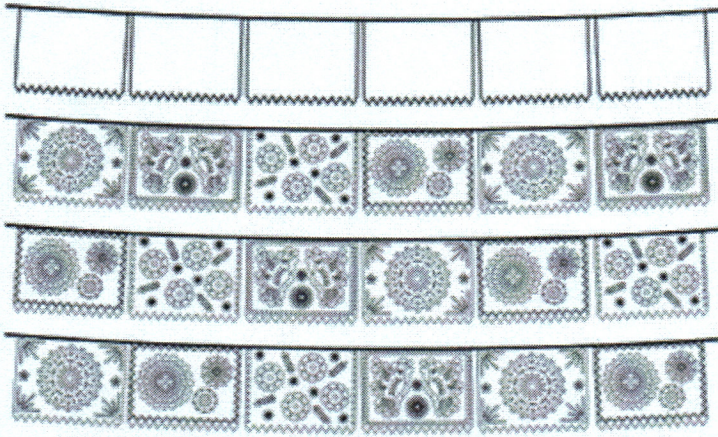
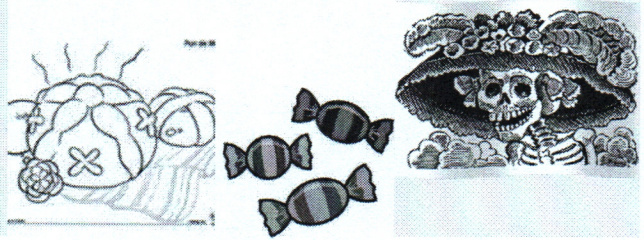
You can either draw your information or use the clip art sheet I am giving you. Your choice! However, if you do draw the item, I need to be able to understand your drawing. Poor drawing skills will not receive a point.

#1 is worth 5 pts.

#2-14 is worth 3 pts each – 1 pt for the item, 1 pt for it being colored, 1 pt for it being numbered.

Fold on the dotted line

Total: 45 pts. as a project grade



StripedElephants

