

A Study of Mexico

Grade Level: First Grade
Presented by: Cheryl Sikler, The O'Neal School, Southern Pines, NC
Length of Unit: 2-3 Weeks

I. ABSTRACT

Using readings, art, activities, games and Spanish vocabulary, the unit will cover the modern civilization and culture of Mexico.

II. OVERVIEW

- A. The areas covered in this unit on Mexico include the geography of Mexico, its Indian and Spanish heritage, an introduction to the Spanish language, Mexican food and traditions and Mexico City.
- B. Enrichment activities will be used to encourage students to learn about the people, culture and Mexican way of life. These activities will result in a culminating presentation.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. Allen, Carole. *Mexico Past, Present, and Future*. Good Apple, 1995. ISBN 0-86653-854-2
- B. Ganeri, Anita. *Country Topics for Craft Projects Mexico*. Franklin Watts, 1995. ISBN 0-531-15278-2
- C. Kalman, Bobbie. *Mexico the Culture*. Crabtree Publishing Co., 1993. ISBN 0-86505-296-4

IV. RESOURCES

- Allen, Carole. *Mexico Past, Present, and Future*. Good Apple, 1995. ISBN 0-86653-854-2
- Charles, Donald. *Cuenta con Gato Galano*. Children's Press, 1984. ISBN 0-516-53479-3
- Children of the World Mexico*. Gareth Stevens Publishing 1987. ISBN 1-55532-186-0
- Ets, Marie Hall. *Nine Days to Christmas* Viking Press 1959. ISBN 0-670-51350-4
- Ganeri, Anita. *Country Topics for Craft Projects Mexico*. Franklin Watts, 1995. ISBN 0-531-15278-2
- Grossman, Patricia. *Saturday Market*. Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard Books, 1994.
- Kalman, Bobbie. *Mexico the Culture*. Crabtree Publishing Co., 1993. ISBN 0-86505-296-4
- Kindersley, Barnabas. *Children Just Like Me*. Dorling Kindersley, 1995. ISBN 0-7894-0201-7
- Maher, Jan. *Mexican Americans*. Turman Publishing, 1991. ISBN 0-89872-353-1
- Riehecky, Janet. *Cinco de Mayo*. Children's Press, 1993. ISBN 0-516-00681-9
- Schuman, Jo Miles. *Art from Many Hands*. Davis Publications, Inc., 1981. ISBN 0-87192-150-2
- Sullivan, Diana. *Discovering Mexico*. Hayes School Publishing, 1995. ISBN 1-55767-246-6
- Viva el Español*. National Textbook Co., 1994.
- Winter, Jonah *Diego*. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1991.

V. LESSONS

- A. Lesson One: Geography of Mexico
 1. Objective/Goal:
 - a. To be able to locate Mexico on a world map
 - b. To be able to locate Central America, the Gulf of Mexico, Pacific Ocean, Rio Grande, Sierra Madre and Yucatan Peninsula and Mexico City

2. **Materials**
 - a. World map
 - b. A map of Mexico for each student (Appendix A)
 - c. Pencil and crayons
3. **Prior Knowledge for Students**
 - a. Can locate North America, Mexico, Pacific Ocean
 - b. Knows directions: east, west, north, south
 - c. Has knowledge of map keys or legends
4. **Key Vocabulary**
 - a. peninsula - a strip of land surrounded by water on three sides
 - b. continent - a large landmass
 - c. country - a nation
 - d. mountain range - group of mountains
 - e. map key or legend
 - f. capital - city that is the seat of government
5. **Procedures/Activities**
 - a. On world map, review the continent, North America, and locate three countries, Canada, United States and Mexico
 - b. On map of Mexico, locate and label Pacific Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. Shade water blue.
 - c. Locate Rio Grande - use blue crayon
 - d. Locate Sierra Madres - color brown
 - e. Locate Mexico City - small black circle
 - f. Locate Yucaton Peninsula - make step pyramid
 - g. Create a key or legend to explain the map
6. **Evaluation/Assessment:** Children will recall geographical features of Mexico and its relationship to the people as unit is presented.

B. Lesson Two: Indian and Spanish Heritage

1. **Objective/Goal:**
 - a. To understand Mexico, the history can be divided into two periods: before and after the arrival of the Spanish conquerors in 1521.
 - b. To learn how the Indian and Spanish cultures have influenced Mexico: language, religion, art, architecture, music, etc.
2. **Materials**
 - a. Each student needs a rectangular sheet of brown wrapping paper or a brown paper bag
 - b. black marking pens and pencils
 - c. tempera paints in bright colors
 - d. scissors
3. **Prior Knowledge for Student**
 - a. Mayan and Aztec cultures
 - b. Knowledge of Spanish conquistador - Hernan Cortes
4. **Key Vocabulary**
 - a. heritage - traditions and beliefs passed down by previous generations
 - b. conquistador - Spanish conqueror of the Americas
 - c. Amate paper - paper made from bark of Amate tree. Used in ancient art from pre-Conquest time.

5. **Procedures/Activities**
 - a. Review Mayan civilization - use of zero in mathematics, hieroglyphics, calendars, and pyramids
 - b. Review Aztec civilization - had powerful armies; built spectacular city, Tenochtitlan, with floating gardens; were skilled artisans and mathematicians; importance of religion
 - c. Discuss Hernan Cortes - the Spanish conquistador who looked for gold and silver, and fought the Aztecs
 - d. Discuss how these civilizations have influenced architecture, art, music, religion, and language in Mexico
 - e. Show examples of Amate Paper Paintings (an ancient Indian art). Then children create own bark paintings.
 - (1) Round corners on rectangular sheet of brown paper.
 - (2) Crumple thoroughly in hands (iron it out between wax paper - optional).
 - (3) Children draw fanciful designs in pencil.
 - (4) Outline design in black marker.
 - (5) Fill in figures with bright tempera paint.
6. **Evaluation/Assessment:** Save Amate Paper Paintings for future use

C. Lesson Three: Mexico City

1. **Objective/Goal:**
 - a. To learn that Mexico City is a mixture of old and new, rich and poor
 - b. To recognize the Aztec and Spanish influence on Mexico City
 - c. To learn about points of interest in the capital city
 - d. To learn about Diego Rivera (a modern muralist)
2. **Materials**
 - a. large paper
 - b. drawing paper
 - c. markers, pencils and crayons
 - d. scissors and glue
 - e. *Diego* by Jonah Winter or information on Diego Rivera
3. **Prior Knowledge for Student**
 - a. Has knowledge of building Aztec city Tenochtitlan
 - b. Has knowledge of Hernan Cortes, a Spanish explorer conquering Mexico
4. **Key Vocabulary**
 - a. cathedral - important church
 - b. slum - run-down part of city populated by poor
 - c. mural - picture usually painted on wall
 - d. plaza - public square in city, shopping area
5. **Procedures/Activities**
 - a. Use resource books to show pictures of Mexico City.
 - b. Review the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, and how the Spanish colonists changed it to Mexico City.
 - c. Discuss with children the contrasts:
 - (1) Plaza of the Three Cultures - remains of Aztec temples and pyramids, old Spanish churches and very modern tall buildings
 - (2) People and homes - rich and poor, tall apartment buildings, nice homes around central courtyard, slums

- d. Read *Diego* by Jonah Winter or discuss Diego Rivera
- e. Children create mural of the Plaza of the Three Cultures.
 - (1) Discuss what children would like to put in their mural.
 - (2) Using drawing paper, each child draws and colors a section of the mural; should be outlined in black.
 - (3) Cut and glue to bulletin board paper to create mural.
- 6. **Evaluation/Assessment:** Save mural for Tour of Mexico City

D. Lesson Four: Spanish Language

- 1. **Objective/Goal:** To learn familiar Spanish words and their meanings
- 2. **Materials**
 - a. A chart with Spanish words and English translation to display in room
 - b. Copy of Senor/Senorita page for each student (Appendix B and C)
 - c. pencils and crayons
- 3. **Key vocabulary**
 - a. adios - good-by
 - b. amigo - friend
 - c. buenos dias - good day
 - d. fiesta - festival or holiday
 - e. hasta la vista - good-by
 - f. gracias - thank you
muchas gracias - thank you very much
 - g. muchacho - boy
muchacha - girl
 - h. numero - number
 - i. pinata - hanging pot filled with treats
 - j. pueblo - village
 - k. Senora - Mrs.
Senorita - Miss
Senor - Mr.
 - l. zocalo - public square
- 4. **Procedures/Activities**
 - a. Discuss familiar Spanish vocabulary and English translations - use chart.
 - b. Introduce new Spanish words - days of week, color words.
 - c. As Mexican unit progresses, introduce new Spanish vocabulary and add to chart.
 - d. Give a copy of Senor page (Appendix B) to boys and a copy of Senorita page (Appendix C) to girls. Have them add a self-portrait to page. Students can write a greeting in Spanish using their name. (Ex. Buenos Dias Senor _____.)
- 5. **Evaluation/Assessment:** At end of unit, evaluate students knowledge of Spanish language by playing Tic Tac Toe. Use Spanish vocabulary and ask for English translation.

E. Lesson Five: Counting in Spanish

- 1. **Objective/Goal:** To learn to count from one to ten in Spanish
- 2. **Materials**
 - a. *Cuenta con Gato Galano* by Donald Charles
 - b. Cards with Spanish number words
 - c. Copy of song Diez Ninitos (Ten Little Indians - Appendix D)
 - d. Copy of simple worksheet with math problems for each child (Appendix E)

3. Key Vocabulary

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| uno - one | seis - six |
| dos - two | siete - seven |
| tres - three | ocho - eight |
| cuatro - four | nueve - nine |
| cinco - five | diez - ten |

4. Procedures/Activities

- a. Read *Cuenta con Gato Galano* by Donald Charles.
- b. Using cards, introduce Spanish number words to students.
- c. Teach and sing song "Diez Ninitos"; distribute number word cards to hold up when singing.
- d. Children can complete Math Worksheet (Appendix E) after teacher has done some examples on board.

- 5. Evaluation/Assessment:** Play Hopscotch "bebeleche" - student must recall Spanish number word where their stone lands

F. Lesson Six: Maize

1. Objective/Goal:

- a. To learn about the importance of maize (corn) in Mexico
- b. To learn about other Mexican foods

2. Materials

- a. Recipe and ingredients for Mexican Cornbread (Appendix F) (optional)
- b. Recipe and ingredients for Cacahel, Mexican hot chocolate (Appendix F) (optional)

- 3. Prior Knowledge for Student:** Has knowledge of the importance of maize to the Aztecs

4. Key Words

- a. maize - corn
- b. chiles - pungent pod of a red pepper
- c. tortillas - flat corn cakes
- d. frijoles - beans
- e. desayuno - breakfast
- f. comida - large lunch
- g. cena - light supper
- h. siesta - afternoon nap
- i. cacahel - Mexican hot chocolate
- j. polvorones - Mexican sugar cookies

5. Procedure/Activities

- a. Discuss the importance of maize as a crop and source of food dating back to the Aztecs.
- b. Discuss Mexican food - flavorful mix of Spanish and Native cooking.
- c. Discuss Mexican foods familiar to children and those not so familiar.
- d. Make Mexican cornbread and cacahel with students or bring in other familiar Mexican foods.

- 6. Evaluation/Assessment:** Eat and enjoy

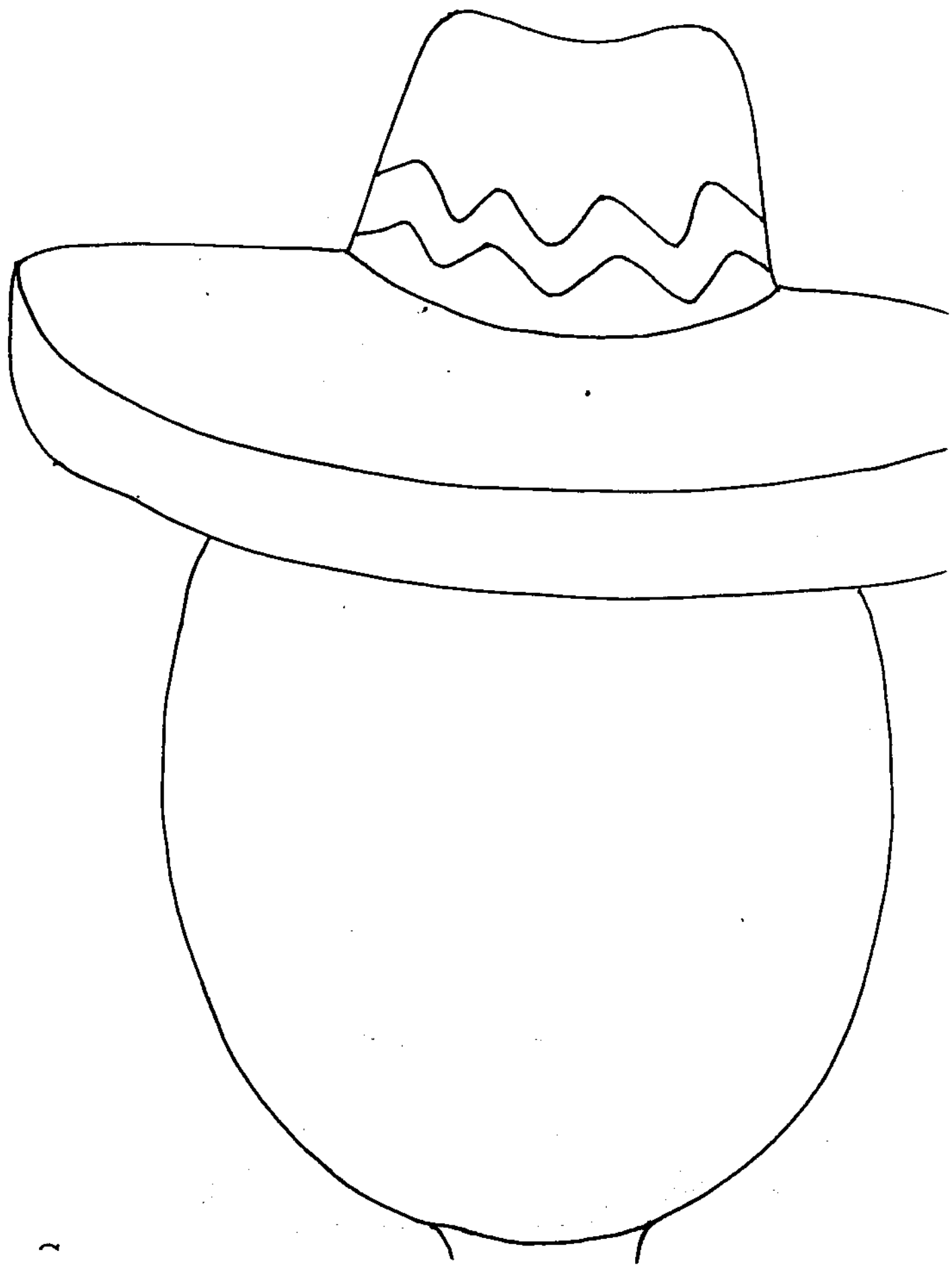
G. Lesson Seven: A Mexican Marketplace

- 1. Objective/Goal:** To understand the importance of the marketplace or plaza from the time of the Aztecs to present day

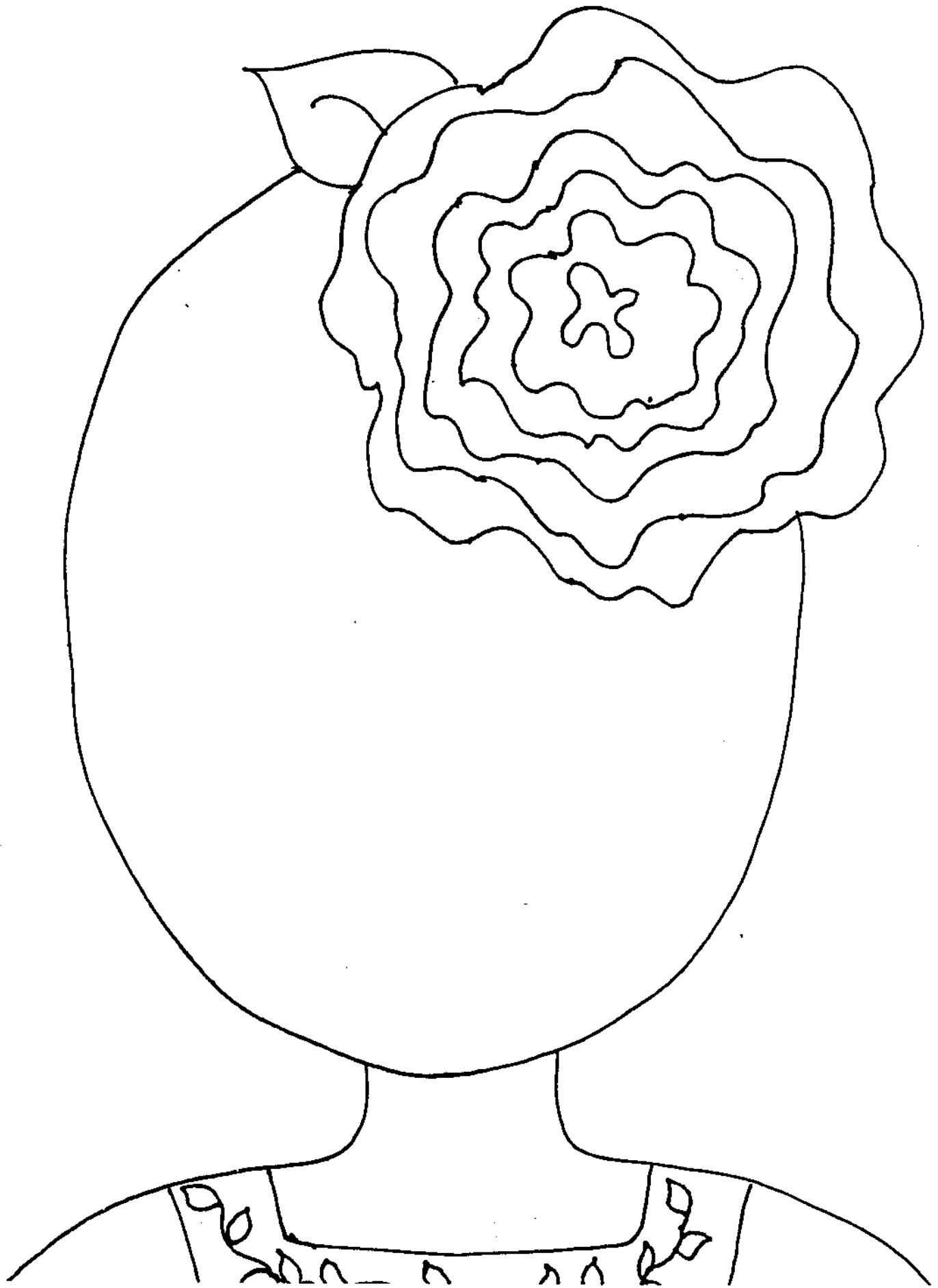
Appendix A



Appendix B



Senorita



Appendix D

Diez ninitos **To the tune of "Ten Little Indians"**

1. Uno, dos y tres ninitos,
Cuatro, cinco y seis ninitos,
Siete, ocho y nueve ninitos,
Diez ninitos son.
2. Diez, nueve y ocho ninitos,
Siete, seis y cinco ninitos,
Cuatro, tres y dos ninitos,
Un ninito es.

Appendix E

Numeros

1. dos + ocho = _____
2. tres + cuatro = _____
3. nueve - cinco = _____
4. seis + seis = _____
5. ocho - tres = _____
6. diez - cuatro = _____
7. siete - dos = _____
8. ocho + tres = _____
9. cinco + cuatro = _____
10. nueve - seis = _____

Appendix F

Mexican Corn Bread

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 cup yellow corn meal | 1/2 tsp. salt |
| 1 cup all purpose flour | 1/4 cup canned chopped green chilies |
| 1 tbsp. baking powder | 1 cup milk |
| 2 tbsp. sugar | 1/4 cup butter, melted |
| 1 tsp. ground cumin | 1 egg |
| 1/2 tsp. garlic powder | Additional chili powder |
| 1/2 tsp. chili powder | |

Preheat oven to 425° F. Lightly grease an 8x8-inch pan. Combine first 8 ingredients, and then, add chilies. Stir in milk, butter, and egg. Pour into pan. Sprinkle with chili powder. Bake for 20 minutes. Serves 9.

Hot Chocolate Mexican-Style

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| 2 (1-ounce) squares unsweetened chocolate | 2 cups milk |
| 1/2 tsp. vanilla | 2 egg yolks |
| 1 tsp. ground cinnamon | 2 tbsp. sugar |
| 4 tbsp. heavy cream | 4 cinnamon sticks |

Combine chocolate, vanilla, cinnamon, and cream in saucepan. Place over very low heat, and stir until chocolate is melted. Add milk slowly to chocolate mixture, and then, mix well. Warm over very low heat. Do not allow mixture to boil.

Beat egg yolks and sugar until foamy. Slowly pour part of chocolate mixture into egg yolks, beating well. Pour egg-yolk mixture into saucepan. Beat until mixture is frothy.

Serve hot chocolate immediately in small cups with cinnamon sticks as stirrers. Serves 4.