

TITLE: Chinese Dragon Puppet

Grades: K-5

TIME REQUIRED: 15- 20 Minutes

CONCEPT STATEMENT:

The student will create a Chinese dragon puppet that emulates the traditional dragon puppets of China.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Learn about the importance of the dragon in Chinese culture in order to understand why dragon puppets were used at various festivals and other important events.
2. Explore the tradition of the Chinese Dragon Dance.

STANDARDS OF LEARNING CORRELATIONS:

Visual Arts

K.5 The student will create a work of art that depicts a specific animal or plant.

2.15 The student will identify art from other cultures, including Ancient Egypt, Ancient China, and American Indians (First Americans).

3.17 The student will identify how works of art reflect times, places, and cultures.

5.9 The student will demonstrate an understanding of symbolic meanings by incorporating symbols in a work of art.

Dance Arts

DM.2 The student will demonstrate correct alignment while performing basic locomotor sequences, including walking, running, hopping, jumping, leaping, galloping, skipping, and sliding.

DM.6 The student will develop personal movement invention using improvisational skills, including imitation, mirroring, and shadowing.

DM.14 The student will identify dance as a form of expression, communication, ceremony, and entertainment.

MATERIALS:

1. Assorted papers: patterned craft paper, various colors of construction paper, plain drawing paper
2. Scissors
3. Markers/Crayons/Pencils
4. Glue

5. Popsicle sticks. Alternative: bamboo skewers with the sharp ends trimmed off
6. Tape

VOCABULARY:

Chinese dragon - a mythical creature generally represented as a huge, winged reptile.

divine - godlike; characteristic of or befitting a deity: heavenly, celestial.

myth - a traditional or legendary story, usually concerning some being or hero or event, with or without a determinable basis of fact or a natural explanation, especially one that is concerned with deities or demigods and explains some practice, rite, or phenomenon of nature.

harvest - the season when ripened crops are gathered.

puppet - an artificial figure representing a human being or an animal, manipulated by the hand, rods, wires, etc.

OVERVIEW:

The Chinese Dragon is often seen as the symbol of divine protection and vigilance. They are generally depicted with with crested head and enormous claws and teeth, and often spouting fire. In China, it is regarded as the supreme being amongst all creatures. It has the ability to live in the seas, fly up the heavens and coil up in the land in the form of mountains. As a divine and mythical animal, the dragon can ward off wandering evil spirits, protect the innocent and bestow safety to all that hold his emblem. The Chinese Dragon is looked upon as the ultimate symbol of good fortune.

In Chinese mythology there are nine major kinds of dragon:

1. Horned Dragon, or Lung - the most powerful of Chinese dragons; can produce rain and is totally deaf.
2. Winged Dragon - the only Chinese dragons with wings
3. Celestial Dragon - supports and protects the mansions of the gods.
4. Spiritual Dragon - generates wind and rain for the benefit of mankind.
5. Dragon of Hidden Treasures - keeps guard over concealed wealth.
6. Coiling Dragon - lives in water.
7. Yellow Dragon - emerged from water and presented the legendary Emperor Fu Shi with the elements of writing
8. Homeless Dragon (2 kinds) - li: lives in the ocean; chiao: scale-covered and inhabits both marshes and mountains.
9. Dragon King, or Lung - consists of four separate dragons, each of which rules over one of the four seas, those of the east, south, west, and north.

The Dragon Dance was started by the Chinese who had a great respect for the dragon. The dance is believed to have begun as part of the farming and harvest culture. The Dragon Dance is also considered a method of healing and preventing sickness. The puppets used today in the dance are huge, often requiring as many as 50 people to support the puppet and bring it to life through movement and dance!(The above information is quoted from:http://www.thewhitegoddess.co.uk/articles/mythology_folklore/chinese_dragons.asp)

VMFA Enrichment Activities:

Seek and find at the VMFA!

How many dragons can you find in the museum? Here are some Chinese dragons to look for:

1. Chariot Fitting with Dragon Design, Object No. 2000.6, East Asian Galleries, Level 2
2. Inkstone with Dragon Design, Object No. 2008.150.1–2a-b, East Asian Galleries, Level 2 (<http://vmfa.museum/collections/art/inkstone-dragon-design/>)
3. Dragon-Shaped Pendant, Object No. 59.21.12, East Asian Galleries, Level 2

Download a VMFA gallery map here:

<http://vmfa.museum/visit/plan-ahead/gallery-maps/>

Literature/Media in the VMFA Library Collections:

1. Allen, Tony. Land of the Dragon : Chinese Myth. Amsterdam: Time-Life Books BV, 1999.
2. Hayes, L. Newton. The Chinese Dragon. Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1922.
3. Hugh, Donna. Art lessons for children. Vol. 3, More fun with watercolors (in 4 lessons, Lesson 2: The Chinese Dragon) [videorecording]. Fallbrook, CA: Coyote Creek Productions, 2007.

Other Enrichment Resources:

Website/s:

Get acquainted with the Chinese Dragon Dance: <http://www.china-family-adventure.com/dragon-dance.html>

What about dragons from other cultures? Discover dragons in Greek Mythology:

<http://www.theoi.com/greek-mythology/dragons.html>

Literature:

Michaelson, Carol ed. *Ancient China*. NSW, Australia: Time-Life Books, 1996.

Williams, Brian. *See Through History: Ancient China*. New York: Reed Educational and Professional Publishing, Ltd., 1996.

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS:**Lesson Procedure:**

1. Brainstorm what your dragon might look like.
2. On plain drawing paper, draw a picture of your dragon's head in pencil outline only and carefully cut it out.
3. On plain drawing paper, draw a picture of your dragon's tail in pencil outline only and carefully cut it out.
4. Decorate your dragon's head and tail with markers and crayons.
5. Tape a popsicle stick to the back of your dragon's head and also to the back of your dragon's tail.
6. Select a sheet of patterned craft paper or colored construction paper. Fold it in half lengthwise and again. Unfold the paper and cut off one of the four folded sections, following the fold line.
7. With the help of an adult or teacher, fold your patterned paper or construction paper in an accordian fold.
8. Glue the accordian paper to the back of your dragon's head and tail over the top of the popsicle stick.
9. Add feet if you like, using any kind of paper. Does your dragon have spikes or ridges on his back?
10. Allow the glue to dry completely before handling your dragon puppet.

Closure:

Once the puppet is dry, demonstrate for the student how the dragon comes to life when the popsicle sticks are gently moved in unison or in alternating directions. Encourage the student to participate in their own version of the Chinese Dragon Dance using their puppet. What might their dragon represent? What special characteristics or powers might their dragon possess?