

## Honoring the departed with color, celebration

Written by By Sean Wells Contributing artist  
Friday, 12 November 2021 05:47

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Día de Muertos, or “Day of the Dead,” is a 3000 year old Mexican holiday celebrated annually on November 1st by thousands of New Mexicans. It is a day of remembrance for loved ones passed, recalled in both memory and spirit through beautifully designed table displays referred to as altars.

The sugar skull is a representation of those passed. Historically, altars had actual skulls placed on them. But, as the Spanish missionaries imposed their beliefs on the indigenous people of Mexico, they would assimilate some local customs, merging with existing Catholic traditions. The use of creating shaped sugar treats with icing accents was learned by the missionaries in Europe, creating sugar lambs and the like during Easter. The missionaries shared these same techniques to create skulls with the same candy methods, replacing the actual skulls with symbolic ones.

In the end, all people face death and loss. It is a universal theme that unites us. Originally designed to create a bridge between the living and deceased, the tradition is undeniably an important part of connecting the living with the grief of loss and helps to process those complicated and difficult feelings.

Whatever your beliefs, I hope this allows you an opening to create space for fond memories of loved ones passed and helps you to move forward with peace and love. Know that you will share the experience of enduring grief with every other living brother and sister on this planet.

Please enjoy coloring the image of the sugar skull.

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