

Cesar Chavez Quilt Stories

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Title – Cesar Chavez Quilt Stories

By – Sara Holcomb

Primary Subject – Social Studies

Secondary Subjects – Art, Language Arts

Grade Level – 3-6

Time: one day: about 50min

OR two days: (day 1): pre, and Activity 1

(Day 2): activity 2, 3 and post

Materials:

String (any color)

Black think tip pens

Pastels (can use other coloring material if needed)

Paper squares: drawing paper

Goal: Students share knowledge of Cesar Chavez through a visual representation.

Objectives:

1. Students will design a quilt square.
2. Students will use concepts of color, pattern, symmetry/asymmetry, repetition, etc in their square.
3. Students will create unity in the class by making a quilt.
4. Students will gain greater understanding of who Cesar Chavez is.
5. Students will understand how Cesar Chavez affected their life.

Background Information:

Who is Cesar Chavez: Cesar Chavez is a “heroic figure” that helped migrant farm workers gain equal rights, fair wages, and form a strong union. His non-violent protests, strikes, and fasts are said to be similar to those of Rev. Martin Luther King. Cesar Chavez dedicated his life to the United Farm Workers Association and to helping the people who work in the fields to gain better lives and better rights.

His Youth: Cesar was born in Yuma, Arizona on March 31, 1927. At age 10, life began as a migrant farm worker (a person who moves to different areas to work/pick crops as they come in season) when his father lost the land during the Depression. Going to school was not easy for the children of the migrant workers, since they were always on the move. Cesar and his siblings attended more than thirty schools.

His movement: Cesar Chavez organized meetings for migrant farm works to tell them of their rights, such as equal pay, good housing, and more. It was very difficult to persuade the workers to fight for their rights, because they were afraid of losing their jobs. In 1962, Cesar could no longer stand to see the workers being taken advantage of, watching as they worked long hours for low pay. After a long time he got 300 members to join the National Farm Workers Union. At that first meeting, they agreed to non-violent protests they approved their flag, a red background with a black eagle in a white circle in the center. “La Causa” (The Cause) was born! With a strong leader to represent them, the workers began to demand their rights for fair pay and better working conditions. Without these rights, no one would work in the fields. 1965 the grape growers (people who owned the farms) did not listen to the union’s demands, and the farm works wanted a strike

Why the strike: Cesar Chavez one said to the workers, “this strike is good men standing side by side and telling the growers we will no longer work for low wages! We want a union contract that will guarantee us our jobs. We must be strong if we are to win decent wages and decent living conditions and a better life for our wives and children. We do the work and you make most of the money. We are showing our unity in our strike. Our strike is stopping the work in the fields, stopping ships that would carry grapes, and stopping the trucks that would carry the grapes. We are

making this sacrifice because we know our only hope is in a strong union.”

Why are Non-Violent Protest: Cesar Chavez believed that a non-violent protest is the best way to teach people about the struggles that the farm workers are living with. It also is a good way to gain support for social change (changing the way we think about other people and the effects this new change has on all of us). Non-violent protests are protests that do not hurt other people physically or purposefully cause harm to their property or possessions. Cesar Chavez did strikes, boycotts (not buying certain things), fasts (not eating food for a long time), marches (large group of people walk together for a cause), and much much more.

The End of a legacy: Cesar Chavez passed away on April 23, 1993, at the age of 66. On Cesar's birthday, March 31st, 1994, the UFW marched 343 miles from Delano to Sacramento, echoing Cesar's historic 1966 march.

Pre-knowledge:

Students are to do this project after they have studied or in the process of studying about Cesar Chavez.

Pre-Activity: Discussion (3-8 min)

The teacher needs to lead a discussion about the elements of visual arts seen in quilts. (ex: color, repetition) Place all the terms that the class comes up with on the chalkboard so all can see. Explain that each student needs to incorporate a min of 3 concepts into their quilt square. If pastels have not been used in class before, a mini lesson may be needed in blending and how to use them.

Activity 1: Making quilts (20-35 min)

Set-up:

- a. Each child needs a piece of sturdy drawing paper (choose dimensions)
- b. Place a solid line at bottom to provide space to write a few lines.
- c. Punch 2 holes on each side: to connect at end
- d. Place a box of pastels at each table (groups of 2-4 can share)

Explanation: Tell the children that they need to design a piece of the class quilt, which will be put together when we have finished.

1. Each child needs to split their picture in half whichever way they choose (do not fold!!)
2. One half of their square deals with Cesar Chavez, his life and movement.
3. On the other half, they are to show how this Cesar Chavez has affected their life.
4. Use the pastels to create the quilt.
5. Hairspray finished product so that the pastels will not smudge

Activity 2: Writing the story (10-20 min)

Set-up: Hand out thick black pens.

Explanation: Tell students they need to write about what their pictures are about.

1. On a separate piece of paper, write about Cesar Chavez picture
2. On same paper, write about how their picture about how Cesar Chavez has affected their life.
3. Proofread and transfer onto bottom of each square.

Activity 3: Unity: putting it together. (5-8min)

1. Each child receives 4 pieces of string (any color will work)
2. In pairs tie together (places string through 2 holes-side by side and tie.)
3. Depending on size of class: have pairs find new pairs (keep in mind it should be square or rectangle shaped).
4. If extra squares are needed, class can title it, color 2 pictures, put names, etc.
5. Hang for all to see.

Post activity: discussion (5 min)

Lead a discussion about what the children learned. Bring up key terms such as unity, and working together for a common goal.

Assessment:

Checklist:

- Does child have 3 concepts of art?
- Can the child tell you what they are?
- Can child tell you how they are seen in their square?
- Is writing logical?
- Are the misspellings?
- Does it address both parts of the square?

E-Mail Sara Holcomb!

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