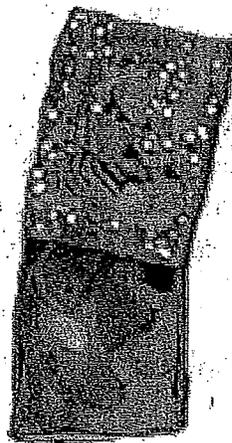
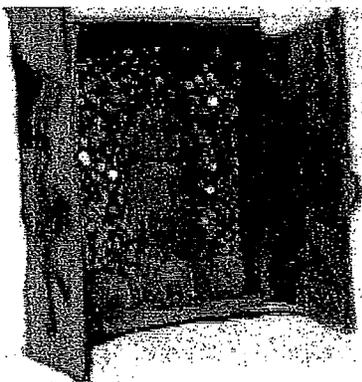


Matchbox Shrines

Throughout history many cultures around the world have maintained public and personal shrines. Shrines were often devotional to religious figures and events, but in regions such as Mexico, shrines have also been made for family members who are deceased, as well as for the living. The shrines of Mexico are often the centerpieces of a home and reflect personal beliefs and celebrate family history.

Today, shrines continue the tradition of honoring a family's heritage and spirituality, but also have extended out to celebrating popular culture and its icons. Modern shrines are created in a variety of sizes and often display colorful, artistic collages.

Matchbox shrines are a fun and easy way to create art and honor someone or something that is very special in your life. Shrines are rich with symbolism and personality. Unlike traditional shrines that are stationary, Matchbox shrines are small enough for you to carry in your pocket so that you can reflect upon it at any time and share with others easily. They are also small enough to hide in a secret spot. Traditionally, there is only one shrine in a home because of their large size, but you can make many Matchbox shrines and there will always be room for more!



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Supplies:

1 Matchbox of any size

Glue glue sticks for pictures and paper
Elmers or hot glue for 3D objects, like small toy figures and plastic gems

Pictures from magazines, photos, and stickers

Paper (colorful and/or decorated)
including tissue and wrapping paper

Anything shiny such as glitter, sequence, and plastic gems

Pens

Markers

Pencils

Toothpicks

Trinkets such as dollhouse accessories, buttons, figurines, etc

Step 1

Empty the matchbox and soak matches in water before disposing of them or store them in a safe place to reuse later. Separate the drawer of the box from the cover.

Step 2

Select a picture to be the main focus of your shrine. If you are making a treasure box select one or more pictures that represent the treasures inside.

Glue this to the front of your matchbox or inside if you are going to create a shrine with doors.

Step 3

Decorate the border of the central image using glitter, and other shiny things.

Embellish with words, stickers or other photos.

Fill or line the inside with tissue or colored paper, place a trinket inside or write a special poem or message.

Let glue dry before reassembling box and slipcover.

To create doors for your shrine cut the topside of the slipcover lengthwise. Then glue the backside of the drawer to the inside of the slipcover. Allow for glue to dry, then decorate.



Matchbox Shrine writing activities

Shrines are made from a collection of images and objects displayed in way that is reflective and meditative to the creator and honors a central figure or theme. Each object and image has an individual meaning that helps deepen the meaning of the central figure or idea of the shrine.

Tell me about it in a poem...

At the top of an index card write the name of the person, place or thing that your shrine represents.

Ex. Cooking and Eating

Describe the objects and images in your shrine. What do they look like? Is it shiny? Colorful? Soft? Give objects an active personality. Are some of your objects lost objects? Quiet objects? Odd objects? Think about using words that describe emotions or the five senses- what sounds, smells, tastes, textures, colors, relate to your objects?

Ex. White, crackled, hardworking Calavera, makes sweet bread. Bright, joyous fruit bounce about.

When you look at your matchbox shrine what do you think about? Write one or two "reminder" sentences about the objects you have just described.

Ex. These things remind me that eating is important for survival and that life, although hard, can also be sweet.

Take a piece of construction paper and fold it in half to make a tent-stand to mount your poem. Or create a card cover for your poem by gluing the poem inside of the folded construction paper.



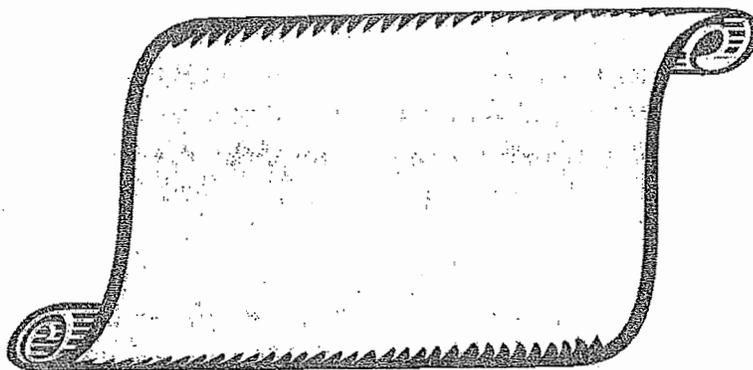
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Write a letter or petition.

Shrines that are devotional or that are created for a special family member often include personal letters and petitions, a written request for something to be done. If your shrine is dedicated to a loved one you may want to express your feelings in a letter. If your shrine is dedicated to a saint, deity or another spiritual figure you may want write a petition for their assistance in helping you reach a certain goal, such as doing well on a test, good health, or peace.

Write your letter or petition on a small piece of paper that can easily be folded or rolled up and put inside your shrine.



The following books and website were helpful in providing information for this activity.

Home Alters of Mexico/ photographs by Dana Salvo; essays by Ramon A. Gutierrez, Salvatore Scarola and William H. Beezley. University of New Mexico Press, 1997.

Living Shrines: home alters of New Mexico/ by Marie Romero Cash ; photographs by Siegfried Halus ; essay by Lucy R Lippard. Museum of New Mexico Press, 1998.

Religious Culture in Modern Mexico/ by Martin Austin Nesvig. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2007.

www.craftychica.com



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