



Our Cultural Traditions
and Family Memories



Our Cultural Traditions and Family Memories

By the Para Los Niños Level 2/3
Adult English Class

This booklet is the final project of the Aprendamos Juntos* Level 2/3 Adult English Class in Burien, Washington. The class is a partnership between Latinx community organization Para Los Niños and Highline College. The class met Monday and Wednesday nights from October through December, 2021. It was special because it was the first time we could gather in person since the COVID19 pandemic started.

The stories in this book were written by adult immigrant students from Mexico and Honduras. Our writing questions was, “*What cultural tradition or family memory do you want to share with your children?*” We were also inspired by the bilingual children’s book, Family Pictures, by Carmen Lomas-Garza.

Thank you Para Los Niños for supporting this project with money and love.



* We Learn Together

The Lake House

By David

It's a hot summer day. I'm very happy because my brothers and I always wait for this day to meet with my family and some friends. My dad is making barbecue. I'm enjoying my dad's food together with my cousins. My friend is fishing. My auntie loves to wakeboard. I love to meet with my family.

We practice a lot of activities on the lake. Before playing, we take time for eating all delicious food. On this day, we are making a lot of noise with the boat and jet ski. We are running, we shout, we have a lot of energy.



Grandparents' Birthday

By Rogelio

Every year in December, we celebrated our grandparents' birthdays. When I was a child, my family and I gathered at 3:00 or 4:00 AM outside my grandparents' house. December 6th was for my grandmother and the 7th was for my grandfather. My parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins sang the *mañanita*,* and everyone gave a hug to my grandparents. My mom and aunts gave flowers. Then, my aunts prepared chocolate and food. My cousin and I played outside. I had big memories with my grandparents celebrating their birthdays.

* a special birthday song



Flowers Festival

By Abby

In my country each year in October in a small city called Siguatepeque (Honduras) where I lived all my childhood, the people are celebrating the Flowers Festival. A lot of people come for enjoying together with families and friends. This city is popular for the abundance of flowers. For this reason, they make different styles of all types of flowers. Also, this festival reminds people of the importance to care for nature. It is a very popular tradition because all families are together to take part in the event.



When the Rain Is Not Coming

By Rocio

We have a tradition in Guerrero, Mexico when the rain is not coming, and when it is time to plant seeds. In June, we put seeds in the earth. We plant corn seeds, pumpkin seeds, and bean seeds all together. But sometimes the rain is not coming, and the seeds can't grow. In this situation, we meet some place, and we have to take lunch for a trip. Once we are over there, we sing and pray for the rain to come and the seeds to grow. That always works. Rain starts coming after that afternoon. And we can have a lot of corn, pumpkins and beans at the end of September.



The Celebration of San Nicolás de Tolentino

By Analilia

In San Nicolás Quialana (Oaxaca, Mexico), we celebrate for fifteen days a year. We are praying in the night from September 1 to September 9. We are walking in a procession – all the people in town – on September 8. We are looking at the fireworks on September 9. On September 10, we celebrate mass for two hours, and the rest of the day we are dancing, drinking and eating. The people are very happy to celebrate San Nicolás de Tolentino.



Halloween

By Kristyn

My family loves Halloween. In this childhood photo, my brother and I are laughing as we are waiting to go trick-or-treating with my parents. We are dressed up like leprechauns, mythical Irish creatures. This is interesting because I just learned that Halloween comes from an ancient, Irish cultural tradition. Now, when I sew homemade costumes for my son and I, or my family throws a big pumpkin carving party in our yard, we are celebrating both our Irish and our American traditions.





Dia de los Muertos is My Family's Favorite Tradition

By Maria C.

On the Day of the Dead, or Dia de los Muertos, our family used to gather in our grandfather's house every year to honor and remember our ancestors. His house was located in a small village in Oaxaca, México surrounded by mountains, a river and many creeks. I still remember his little house made of wood and palm leaves on the roof.

A couple of days before that day, the whole family comes over from different parts of México. Aunts, uncles, cousins and even guests show up at my grandpa's house. Once everyone was there, it was time to prepare the food and the drinks for our ofrenda. We set up our altar with candles, many kinds of food, drinks, beers, marigold flowers and the most important thing: our ancestors' pictures. We celebrate and honor their lives, even if they are no longer with us.

I also remember as a child how much fun we had there. My brothers, sister and all my cousins used to play in my grandfather's back yard. We also used to swim in a creek that was close to his house. This was one of my favorite childhood memories that I will never forget. Dia de los Muertos is absolutely our favorite family tradition.



La Rama

By Luz

La Rama is a lovely tradition in December. In some cities in Mexico, for example Veracruz, Yucatan and Campeche, we celebrate La Rama. In this tradition, a group of kids and teenagers are looking for *la rama* (a branch). Together, they decorate it with balloons, lanterns and many things.

Every day, the kids go to the houses with instruments for sounds, and they are singing in each house. Everybody is waiting for the people to open the door. When the people open the door, they give money to the kids. They are happy, and they go to another house. Finally, when it is very dark at night, the kids go back home and count the money and give equally to everybody. We celebrate this tradition from December 16 to December 24.



Time Together With Family

By Margarita

In my family, always when December begins all the family is gathering in our grandparents' house and making space to celebrate "Las Posadas." We make a *corona de adviento** together and make a list of parents to help one day until December 24. On these days, the family on the list brings candles, candies, fruit, food and drinks for everybody. Together we cook *buñuelos*, *tamales*, *ponche*, *aguinaldos* to bring on December 24.

* advent crown



La Noche Buena

By Maria M.

The tradition in Mexico we celebrate is La Noche Buena and Jesus' birth on December 24. It is a special night. The whole family is gathering. Everybody helps to cook. Also, we make decorations. In the afternoon, the family is going to the mass at the church. We pray, sing and lull the baby Jesus too. Then we enjoy a party with the whole family. We are eating *tamales*, spiced chicken, and *pozole*. Also, we drink hot *ponche*. We have a good celebration on La Noche Buena. I will never forget my Mexican traditions.



My Family at Christmas

By Mirna

My family has a special tradition for Christmas. On December 24 at night, we have one party and have dinner: barbacoa, buñuelos and champurrado. Also, there is one piñata at the party. We have music and dancing.



My Tradition is Las Posadas and Noche Buena

By Paty

Las Posadas starts in Mexico on December 16 until December 23. It is a one-week celebration with different people and different houses for days. The people are very happy for Las Posadas because we have piñatas, food, atole, candy, drinks, coffee, and tamales. The kids look at the piñata. They are waiting for the time it is broken to take the candy. December 24 is the day when the people go to church. It's a special tradition.



La Noche Buena

By Maria Elena

My family sets down a Christmas tree. After that, we make a little house and decorate with a lot of decorations and lay down a baby Jesus. When all families come, we walk in the street with a baby Jesus. Everybody prays and sings *Villancicos Navideñas*.* When we arrive at home, we continue praying and singing, and one little girl is rocking a baby Jesus. After that, we eat and drink. On that day, we prepare a lot of food, like tamales, posole, tacos, quesadillas, hot chocolate and champurrado. My family loves La Noche Buena.

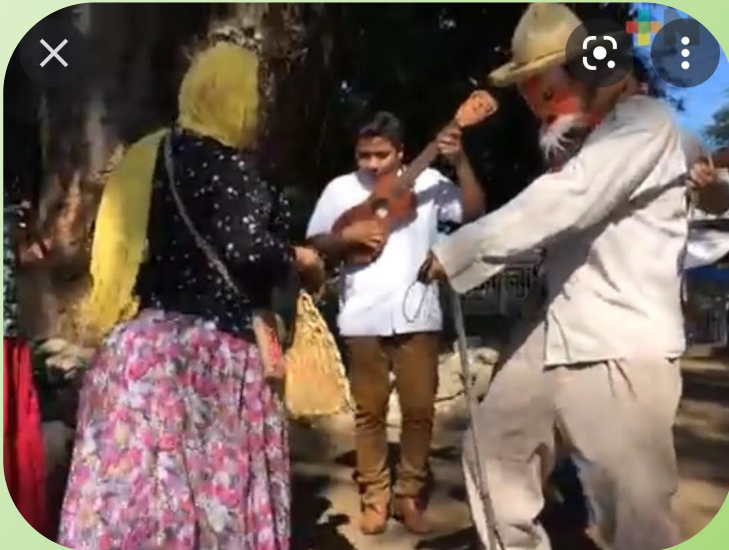
* Christmas carols

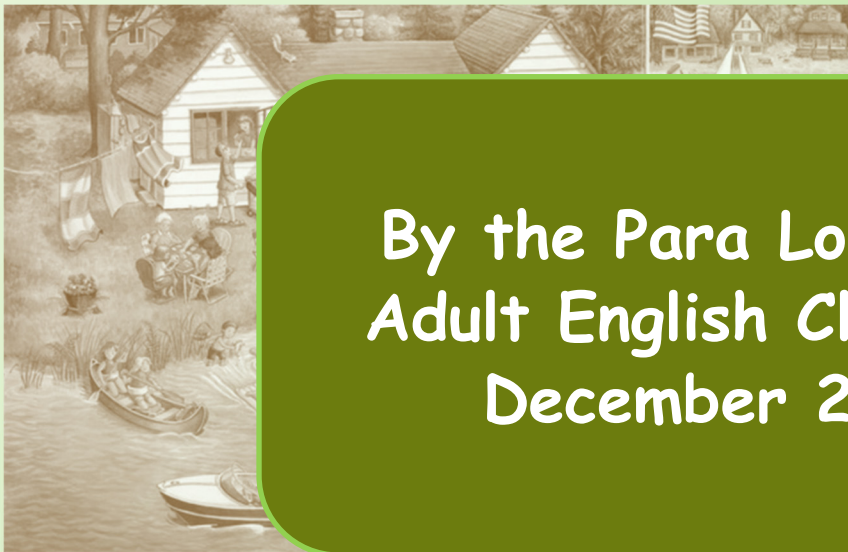
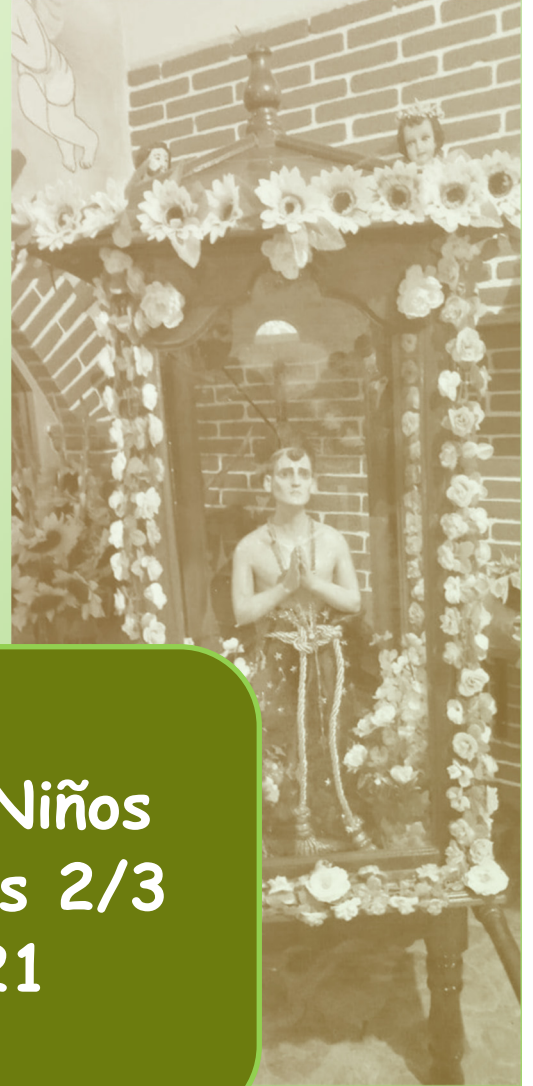


El Viejo

By Luis

December 31 is a special day in Veracruz because in the morning we make a big toy man in the street. All the neighbors collect shoes, a shirt, pants, and a hat to assemble the toy and put fireworks inside. And the rest of the day, one big group of people organizes and sings the songs of *El Viejo*. Two people put on different costumes. One person dresses like the grandmother, and the other person dresses like the grandfather. The group sings in different streets and collects the money. When the day ends, somebody counts the money and gives it equally to all groups. When the watch is at midnight, somebody lights the big toy man and says goodbye to the old year. We sing the song of *El Viejo* and receive the New Year. This is my tradition. I am missing it!





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