



Tibetan Wishing Banner (art + social studies)

Tibetan wish or prayer flags traditionally are used to promote peace, compassion, strength and wisdom. Tibetans do not believe that the flags carry prayers to the gods, but rather that their messages and wishes will be blown by the wind to spread goodwill and compassion into all-pervading space. Therefore, prayer flags are believed to bring benefit to all living beings.

By hanging the flags in high places, Tibetans believe the *Lung Ta*, or “wind horse” (a common image on the flags), will carry the blessings depicted on the flags to all. As wind passes over the surface of the flags, the air is purified by the blessings. The prayers of a flag become a permanent part of the universe as the images fade through exposure to the elements. Just as life moves on and is replaced by new life, Tibetans renew their hopes for the world by mounting new flags alongside the old.

Traditionally, there are two types of prayer flags. *Lung Ta* are horizontal flags made in a square or rectangular shape and connected along their top edges by a long string. They are most often hung on a diagonal line between two objects. A *Darchor* is usually a single, large rectangular flag that is attached to a pole and planted in the ground. Color is often used symbolically, with blue representing sky/space, white representing air/wind, red representing fire, green representing water and yellow representing earth. Health and harmony are produced through the balance of the five elements.

In this project, students will use materials that are not normally brought together to make a classroom Tibetan Wishing Banner. A liquid wax resist used in ceramics will be painted onto silk rectangles and need not be removed. Vibrant color will be applied and a final embellishment will be added in gold.

Materials

Silk Scarves, 14" x 72" (63000-1072); share one among five students

Blick® Scholastic Short Handle Golden Taklon Brushes, round, size 0, (05858-1000); one per student

Amaco® Wax Resist, 16-oz jar (32936-0006); share one among class

Delta® Sobo® Craft and Fabric Glue, 8-oz (23820-1008); share one among class

Jacquard® Dye-Na-Flow® Fabric Colors, 2.25-oz, assorted colors (01218-); share 10 jars among class

Sargent® Metallic Acrylics, 8-oz, Aztec Gold (00730-9035); share one among class

Jacquard® Silk Salt, 10-oz jar (01233-1010); share one among class

Hippie Hemp™, 48-lb, 2mm, 300-ft spool (61532-8222)





Step 1: Using water-thinned wax resist, paint outlines of the image as solidly as possible.



Step 2: Apply washes of Dye-Na-Flow® onto the silk, allowing the paint to flow up to the edges of the wax.



Step 3: Sprinkle silk salt into the paint while it is still wet to achieve halos of color and starburst effects.

Grade Levels 2-12

Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 25 students. Adjust them as needed.

Preparation

1. Cut silk scarves into 12" x 14" rectangles; you will need one for each student. One scarf will make five rectangles.
2. Thin Amaco® Wax Resist with water.

Process

1. Give each student a silk rectangle. Raw edges from cutting can be left as-is or rolled over onto a thin line of Sobo® Fabric Glue.
2. Using water-thinned wax resist and a brush, each student should paint an image of his or her wish on the silk rectangle. The wax resist should be used to outline areas. Any breaks in the lines will allow paint to seep through, so the lines should be as solid as possible. When finished, thoroughly wash the brushes with soap and hot water.
3. Let the silk dry overnight.
4. Place a piece of waxed paper beneath the silk rectangle and pin both to a piece of cardboard. Apply washes of Dye-na-Flow® onto the silk with a brush. Dilute the paint with water, allowing it to flow up to the edges of the wax.
5. Sprinkle silk salt into the paint while it is still wet to achieve halos of color and starburst effects. Let the salt sit on the paint until it is completely dry, then brush it off.
6. When the painting is dry, add golden embellishments with Sargent's® Metallic Acrylics. Using fabric glue and hemp cord, create a class Wishing Banner. Lay the individual banners across a table and glue the cord along the top edge. Hang the banner in a high place.



Step 4: Glue individual banners to hemp to create a class Wishing Banner.

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes.

K-4 Students use different media, techniques and processes to communicate ideas, experiences and stories.

5-8 Students select media, techniques and processes; analyze what makes them effective or not effective in communicating ideas; and reflect upon the effectiveness of their choices and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.

9-12 Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques and processes they use.

Content Standard #3 — Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.

K-4 Students select and use subject matter, symbols and ideas to communicate meaning.

5-8 Students use subjects, themes and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks.

9-12 Students reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture.

Content Standard #4 — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

K-4 Students demonstrate how history, culture and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art.

5-8 Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures.

9-12 Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times and places.

