Bilingual Piñata Workshop

Yakima Central Library

Tweens (10-12)

|

Teens

|

Young Adult

|

Adults

Bilingual Piñata Workshop

Mar 6, 2025

$1-50

$
Byline

Ary Esparza, Youth Services Coordinator (Teens), Yakima (Wash.) Central Library

This educational program, meant for teens and adults, is presented in English and Spanish. Attendees learn about the piñata's history, see a demonstration on how to make a piñata and then get time to assemble and decorate it! The piñata design depends on the time of year and can be tailored to meet whatever theme.

Advanced Planning

My goal was to share a craft with the community that also included an educational component to attract older teens and adults to library programming. I grew up making piñatas with my family, and they have always been part of my life, so I wanted to teach others how to make their own, just as I did.

I love history, and when I looked into the piñata's history, it was fascinating. I also wanted to present this information to my patrons so they could learn something new and keep that in mind while creating their own piñata. Since we have a large Spanish-speaking population in our community, I wanted to make this program bilingual to be inclusive and attract more people from different communities to participate.

I started planning the program about one month in advance as it took time to research the piñata's history and then create a presentation to go with it and accurately translate. It also took some time to precut my cardboard designs for the number of participants I was anticipating. I also needed time to advertise this program to the community. I was the only person involved in planning this program as I created both the presentation and the craft. I had staff help the day of the event for crowd control, setting up tables and chairs and passing out materials.

The steps that I took were as follows:

- Create a bilingual presentation on the history of the piñata (this is only done once and reused for every program afterward).
- Choose a piñata theme (sugar skulls for the Day of the Dead, conversation hearts for Valentine's, etc.).
- Create a flyer and advertise. It's up to you whether or not to do registration. I tried registration my first time, and though registration filled up quickly, only 3 of the 25 registered people showed up. Luckily, I found patrons around the

library who wanted to participate, and I got 20 people. The second time around, I didn't do registration and instead did first-come-first-serve. This went great, and I had 44 people participate.

- Prepare materials. I made a template for the pinata shape, traced it on recycled cardboard boxes and cut them out. For every one piñata, you need two matching sides and one long rectangular piece to cover the circumference of your piñata. The rectangular piece was about 2.5 inches in width, and the length depends. The materials used were cardboard, scissors, tape, Elmer's glue and crepe streamers.
- Set up and host the program. On the day of, I needed 30 minutes to set up my tables and craft materials and an additional 30 minutes for cleaning up. The presentation should only take about 10 minutes, preceded by a demonstration on how to assemble your box and fringe, then finally, everyone is given the time to decorate their own. I found that often, people need more time to demonstrate how to fringe the crepe paper and the best way to decorate, which is from the bottom up.

Marketing

I started promoting the event one month before the start of the program. Events were created on our Facebook page, and we were able to gauge interest this way. We also promoted the program on Instagram and sent out reminders to people who shared they were interested in our Facebook event.

The week leading up to the program, the library that hosted it had a flyer and a sample piñata at the front desk, which also gathered more interest. I included the age group it was intended for on the top of the flyer and we make sure to emphasize this on our social media posts too. According to our social media page, we had over 250 people interested in this program (the second round), and we ended up with 44 participants on the day. It was successful because we did have people from all age groups, primarily adults and older teens. Having an example already made before promoting the flyer worked great because it allowed people to see what they could potentially create.

Budgeting

I've hosted this program twice, and the first time, I did not spend any money. I utilized materials that were already available at my library. We had a really big stockpile of different colored crepe streamers that I used and did not have to spend money for. Each piñata is small enough that one crepe streamer will last for several programs. Crepe streamers cost about $1 each from stores like Walmart, and they're found in the party section.

To make the piñata boxes, I took cardboard boxes from the recycle bin and used a box cutter to cut out the designs. Our library also had basic craft supplies like scissors, crafter tape, and Elmer glue, which were necessary for the program.

For the sugar skull piñatas, I also brought out other available supplies, like glitter and stickers. I have a Cricut available and used that to cut out a skull design. I did not use it for my second program and instead purchased some red alphabet stickers from the craft store. I spent a total of $12 on stickers for the conversation heart pinatas. I would suggest using whatever is available to you to decorate the pinatas.

Day-of-event Activity

The day of, I had to arrange the tables and seating for the total number of participants I was expecting. In this case, it was 35 people. I had to set up a projector and screen for my presentation. About a total of four staff members were there to help primarily when it came to the crafting portion.

During my presentation, one staff member helped latecomers find their seats, and another one helped change the slides. During the crafting section, I had staff help me show others how to fringe/cut their paper and how to glue it on their box. I made it optional for patrons to make a hole on their box to add candy or to hang it, so I had staff help patrons with that as well.

In the end, I had everyone's help, and we did need to vacuum because there were a lot of small pieces of paper and glitter on the floor. The unexpected challenges included having a lot of younger children there and some frustration with parents who then had to do all the work for them or didn't have time to finish their own. The

second time around I tried to emphasize the age group and the reasoning behind it and there were less toddlers that time. Giving people more time to decorate was one thing I learned, too. As someone who has been making piñatas for years, I can make one in 30 minutes, but first-timers will need more time to adjust as they try something new.

Program Execution

My first program had 20 people attend and the second time we had 44. The first program had registration, but it just did not work for our library, so the second time around, we decided to make it a first-come-first-serve program, and that worked better. We did see people of all ages and backgrounds attend this workshop.

The first program did have a lot more young children and parents left earlier or didn't complete their craft because it was meant for teens and adults. Parents of the young children wanted more time and expressed how difficult it was for their child, but I did remind them we had a recommended age group for that reason. The second time around, we saw an older audience, and they expressed that they really liked the presentation before the craft. The first session, since we did it by registration only, had a lot of interest on social media, and we had patrons asking when we'd repeat the workshop again.

Advice

Spend a little more time demonstrating how to decorate the piñata and tips to do less work. For example, the crepe paper is meant to be cut into a fringe and then glued onto the piñata. Some patrons will cut a long piece of crepe paper and then cut fringe from one end to the other. A pro-tip is to fold up the piece of crepe paper until it's about 4 inches long and then cut the fringe on that, so you save time cutting.

I recommend having staff help out once you get to the crafting and cleaning up portion as that is the most time consuming and patrons will ask questions and be most active during this time.

Since Programming Librarian published this article, our readers have tried the program at their own libraries! Here’s what they have to say:

Feedback
I am providing feedback for a program I hosted for Hispanic Heritage Month in 2025. It was a huge success! I utilized a PowerPoint presentation shared by a creator in a librarian Facebook group; I was pleasantly surprised by how engaging the slides were for both the audience and myself, particularly the section on the history and origins of piñatas. I have made sure to credit the original creator who posted these materials in the group.

To prepare, I pre-made several piñata shapes, including pineapples, avocados, cacti, and hamburgers. For the upcoming year, I look forward to replicating this program with a Día de los Muertos theme. Furthermore, since my community has a large Spanish-speaking population, I plan to develop bilingual PowerPoints for future programs to ensure they are accessible and inclusive for all attendees.
— Lesley Lema, Children Program Coordinator, Danbury Public Library, Connecticut

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Document
Conversation Heart Pinata Workshop (Real Estate Flyer) (4)_0.pdf
Document
Conversation Heart Pinata Workshop (Real Estate Flyer) (5)_0.pdf
Document
Conversation Heart Pinata Workshop (Real Estate Flyer).pdf
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Intergenerational+ | $$
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Audiences:

Intergenerational
Nov 14, 2019
Children (9 and under)+ | $
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Día de los Muertos Celebration

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)