DRAGON TWILERS

Class: Art
Grade Level: Primary/Elementary
Duration: 30-60 mins
Tags: Losar, Lunar New Year, Art, Crafts, Dragon, kinetic

Summary
This is a fun, kinetic craft project with wow factor great for the lunar new year (Tib. Losar). When we hung all 11 of our students’ dragons, they transformed the classroom with festive movement. Creating the dragons requires scissor skills and some patience. Using the dragon imagery, we can learn about the power of symbolism and how other cultures use the symbol of dragons.

Preparation
Make one complete sample to show students. Some students will need help with the cutting. Printouts can be precut for younger students.

Materials Needed
- Scissors
- TEMPLATES: See below or download here. You can also draw your own if inspired.
- Paper plates (one per child)
- Coloring materials
- String (desired hanging length)
- Glue stick
- Stapler
- Embellishments such as glitter, beads, broken jewelry, stickers, tissue paper/pipe cleaner (optional)
- Print a copy of all the Zodiac animals for them to familiarize. Chinese Zodiac: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_zodiac
Lesson Objectives: Students will...

**Know**
At the end of the lesson, all students should know...

(Adjust to age and interest level)

- That there is something called a Chinese Zodiac with 12 signs and that Dragons are born in 2012 and 2000. It’s the 5th animal in the Chinese/Tibetan zodiac.
- What their lunar calendar animal sign is.
- The dragon is one of the Tibetan Buddhist Four Dignities that bring confidence to every day life. The tiger, snow lion, garuda and dragon, symbolize power and awakening through compassion.
- In Zen Buddhism, dragons symbolize power of clarity and enlightenment.
- In Chinese culture, the dragon is a symbol of good luck, strength, prosperity, power and in common with many East Asian cultures, associated with wet weather and storms.
- Dragons have been part of Chinese culture for at least 7,000 years. In China, dragons have long symbolized power, creativity, heaven, and good fortune. They are thought to have authority over bodies of water, rain, floods, and storms.
- The story of Yeh Kung-tzu ([LINK](#)).
- The word Naga is another way to say dragon.

**Understand**
Animals can be representations of human experiences.

ACTIVITY

1. Hand out paper plates and have art supplies set out
2. Children color both sides of paper plate *before cutting*
3. Color in printable dragon head, tail and feet (see templates or make your own)
4. Children cut out the head tail and feet once colored in
5. Children cut a spiral into the paper plate. Some children will need the spiral to be drawn on the plate for them, others will also need help cutting (a thinner spiral will create a longer dragon)
6. Create a hole into the end of the spiral in the center of the plate
7. Tie a piece of string through it
8. Glue cutout tail in half over string
9. Fold dragon cutout head in half and glue nose tips together and bottom flaps
10. Glue head onto plate outer spiral end
11. Glue legs onto body
12. Use tissue paper or pipe cleaner to create tongue (optional)
13. Embellish body (optional)
14. Hang!
INTRODUCTION/PRE-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:
What do they know about dragons?
What are dragon characteristics?
Are any of them dragons (born in 2012)? Discuss animal years? (see chart below)

The dragon is one of the Four Dignities of Tibetan Buddhism symbolizing power and awakening through compassion. In Zen Buddhism, it symbolizes power of clarity and enlightenment. In Chinese culture, the dragon is a symbol of good luck, strength, prosperity, power and in common with many East Asian cultures, associated with wet weather and storms. The dragon is also the 5th animal in the Chinese/Tibetan zodiac. Ask: What colors do you think are associated with each of these adjectives?

RESOURCES
Human
Perhaps there is a local Zen monastery nearby with a teacher who can come talk about the dragon. Or a Tibetan to talk about the four dignities.

Audio, video, links and other resources:
How to video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0gfPJITZFw (WATCH THIS IF NOTHING ELSE!)
How to website: https://www.redtedart.com/paper-plate-dragon-twirler/
Chinese Zodiac
Show the Dragon Dance
Dragon Facts for Kids

For Teachers Background to better understand the subject
https://www.lionsroar.com/the-true-dragon/

Books
The Hobbit
My Father’s Dragon
Dragons Love Tacos
Elmer and the Dragon
Where the Mountain Meets the Moon
The Paper Bag Princess
Dragon Dance: A Chinese New Year Lift-the-Flap Book
D is for Dragon Dance

Cross Content Connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sciences</th>
<th>Amphibian study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moon cycle study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Chinese culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tibetan culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bhutan is the land of the Thunder Dragon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Stories of dragons, the word dragon in different languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are many other dragon art projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embodiment</td>
<td>Sing Puff the Magic Dragon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dragon dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemplative/Dharma</td>
<td>Read about the symbolism of dragons in Buddhism (see links above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal</td>
<td>Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>