



# IT'S A SMALL WORLD: GUATEMALA

**Project Skills:**

- Youth will explore the differences and similarities between Guatemalan culture and their own, as they explore the Spanish language and make a Guatemalan “Worry Doll.”

**Life Skills:**

- Accepting differences

**Academic Standards:**

- Social Studies E.4.13 Investigate and explain similarities and differences in ways that cultures meet human needs.

**Grade Level:** 3

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Supplies Needed:**

Say Hola Activity

- *Say Hola to Spanish* by Susan Middleton Elya and Loretta Lopez

Make Worry Dolls Activity

- Old-fashioned clothespins
- Toothpicks or craft picks (optional)
- Embroidery floss in a variety of colors
- Felt and material scraps
- Tacky glue
- Scissors
- Beads, etc. (optional)

Enhance/Simplify

- Markers

**BACKGROUND**

The Republic of Guatemala is located south of Mexico on the Pacific Coast. The country is very mountainous. People in Guatemala speak Spanish. Many of the people of Guatemala are farmers. Their crops include bananas, coffee and sugar. More than half of Guatemalans are descendants of indigenous Mayan nations.

Part of any peoples’ culture is their customs. One of the customs in Guatemala has to do with an old legend from the Highland Indians. That legend, which is told to the children of the country, is that when you tell your worries to a Worry Doll, the worries will be gone. The way to do this, according to the old story, is to tell one worry to each doll and then place it under your pillow.



**WHAT TO DO**

**Activity: Read *Say Hola to Spanish***

Before you begin reading the book, share the background material about Guatemala with the youth and ask them to listen for Spanish words that sound like English words.

After reading the book, reflect with the youth on the similarities and differences between Spanish and English words.

- Which words were almost the same in Spanish as they were in English?

Read the book a second time, having the youth listen for new Spanish words.

- Did you learn any new Spanish words today? What helped you remember them?

**Activity: Make Worry Dolls**

These Worry Dolls are much larger than the traditional Guatemalan dolls – and easier to make! Before the youth begin making the dolls, share with the learners the worry doll custom of Guatemala. Explain to them that they will be making a worry doll of their own.

Procedure for making Worry Dolls:

1. Wrap the upper part of a clothespin in material or floss (do not separate the strings if you are using floss) – stopping at the “waist” area if you are making a floss blouse or shirt, continuing on for a dress.
2. To make arms, cut a toothpick to suitable length and wrap with the same color or pattern as shirt. Glue arms to shirt and secure with a couple of additional rounds of embroidery thread.
3. For the lower body, if you choose to use floss, begin at the waist and wrap the lower portion of the body with floss. To make pants, wrap body, then one leg, and then the next. For a skirt, simply wrap the floss to the length you want. A tiny dot of glue will help secure any loose edges of floss. Material scraps can be used to create different types of skirts or dresses for the doll.
4. Long hair can be made for the doll by looping floss around two or three fingers, tying in the middle and cutting the opposite end. Glue to doll’s head. Short hair is made in a similar fashion. Make the hair longer than you think necessary – it’s easy to give your doll a haircut!

**Sources:**

- Created by Paula Rogers Huff, 4-H Youth Development Agent, UW-Extension, Oconto County
- “Irish Couple” Worry Dolls designed by Lisa Devine Barribeau, Youth Futures Coordinator, UW-Extension, Oconto County

5. Get creative with accessories. String a bead on a strand of floss for a necklace. Make a hat by cutting a felt circle with an “X” in the top, or by sewing a tuck in a circle of material. Tie floss around the ends of the clothespins for shoes/boots. String punched “dots” for a Hawaiian lei.

**TALK IT OVER****Reflect:**

- Give each child who wishes to do so time to share their worry doll with the
- Discuss how some Spanish and English words are similar and some are very different.

**Apply:**

- Review Spanish words that were learned from the book. Invite youth to share how they will remember those words.
- Ask the youth how they could use what they know about the similarities and differences in English and Spanish to help someone learn a new language.
- Remind the group that Worry Dolls are part of the culture of Guatemala. Discuss how the custom of Worry Dolls might have begun.
- Invite individuals to share how they handle their worries. Discuss whether or not any cultures in the United States have customs to deal with worries.

**ENHANCE/SIMPLIFY****Enhance for Older Children:**

- Try using fabrics in combination with embroidery floss, or alone, to create unique costumes.
- Make Worry Dolls with a theme such as “Dolls from Around the World,” “Storybook Dolls,” “Superhero Dolls” or “Literature Dolls.”



*“Irish Couple” Worry Dolls*

**Simplify for Younger Children:**

- Use markers to draw face, clothes and hair on the wooden clothespins. Omit arms.

**HELPFUL HINTS**

- If they are comfortable doing so, Spanish-speaking youth might help in the presenting of the book.
- Enlist the youth who are skilled at some aspect of the doll-making as helpers and/or to demonstrate to others.

***Reviewed by Wisconsin 4-H Afterschool Team: September 2004.***