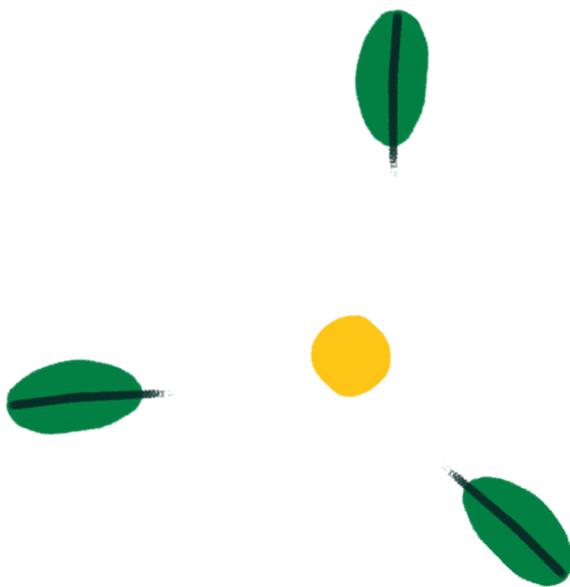


Mandalas

- Year 3 – Mathematics; The Arts
Year 4 – Mathematics; The Arts
Year 5 – Mathematics; The Arts
Year 6 – Mathematics; The Arts



(The Arts; Yr 3, ACMMG066)
Identify symmetry in the environment

(The Arts; Yr 3&4, ACAVAM110)
Explore ideas and artworks from different cultures and times, including artwork by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to use as inspiration for their own representations

(The Arts; Yr 3&4, ACAVAM111)
Use materials, techniques and processes to explore visual conventions when making artworks

(The Arts; Yr 5&6, ACAVAM114)
Explore ideas and practices used by artists, including practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to represent different views, beliefs and opinions

(The Arts; Yr 5&6, ACAVAM116)
Plan the display of artworks to enhance their meaning for an audience

Cross-curriculum priority

Sustainability

Mandalas

Exploring meaning in mathematics and Mother Nature, as inspiration for making art

A mandala is a repetitive geometric pattern.

In several cultures mandalas are a meditation on the infinite and a reflection of sacred ideas such as the natural cycle of life. Mandala patterns observe radial symmetry. Shapes are often ordered in groups of 4, 6 or 8, although odd numbers such as 5 or 7 and larger numbers such as 10 can be used too.

Equipment:

Natural materials for students to make mandalas. This activity works best if materials are confined to natural items such as: seed heads, gumnuts and other seed pods, flowers, twigs, leaves, pebbles, shells, vegetables, fruits and/or berries, bark, sand and coloured soil

Provide a few art materials including glue, string and scissors

A whiteboard or device with access to the internet to share images of mandalas

Digital camera/s to take images of artworks

Duration:

45 minutes

Location:

The classroom or out of doors

Notes:

Mandala maths

- Have a look at some of the mandala art created by Kathy Klein: <https://mymodernmet.com/kathy-klein-danmala/>
- Explain radial symmetry and how each of the images can be split into segments, like the sections of a pie or the segments of a sliced orange.
- Go through Kathy Klein's work again and find examples of mandalas based on units of 6, 8 and 10. Can students find any radial symmetry based on a unit of 5?

Mandalas in nature

Watch **The One with the Mandala**



- Together with students, look at any of Kathy Klein's mandalas that are photographed in their natural setting (e.g. in place in the forest or on the beach).
- Discuss what materials she uses, and if students think she has deliberately excluded certain materials.
 - ◊ For example, if she found a chip packet on the beach, do they think she would use it? Why or why not?
 - ◊ What message or idea might she be trying to convey about the beach?

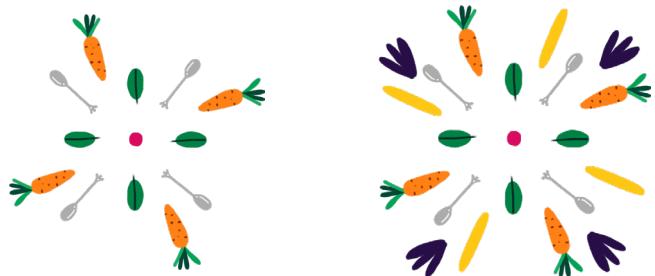
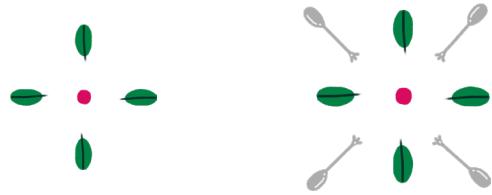
- Look at the images and discuss the artworks' locations.
 - ◊ Do students think these are special places? In what ways?
 - ◊ Why do they think she refrains from making her art in a gallery or museum?
 - ◊ Do they think the mandala would still be the same tomorrow or next week? Why or why not?
- Discuss the question: why would we make an artwork that we leave out in nature and let the wind, birds and tide destroy it?
 - ◊ Kathy Klein's message seems to be about how life is fragile and temporary; that nature is powerful and will wash away the marks made by humans.
- Ask students why they think she chose a mandala to help express her ideas about nature. She could have painted pictures of the natural spaces but she didn't. What do they think about how artists make choices? How do these choices relate to meaning in their art?

✍ Mandala meanings

- With older students, or as an extension project, explore why and how mandalas are related to meditation and ritual. Students can prepare a report or presentation as well as creating their own mandalas.

Resources

- BBC – Religions – Sacred Mandala:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/customs/mandala.shtml>
- Huffpost – The Mandala: Why do monks destroy it? https://www.huffingtonpost.com/sister-joan-chittister-osb/mandala-why-destroy-it_b_970479.html
- Tibetan Buddhist Mandalas:
<http://www.mandala-painting.com/>



✍ Making mandalas

- Provide students with a variety of natural materials with which they can make their own mandalas.
- Show students how to draw a circle (in soil or with chalk on concrete this can be done with a piece of string, a centre point such as a rock, and a scribe such as chalk or a pointed stick).
- Show students how to divide their circle into 4, 6 or 8 – or 5, 7 or 9.
- Lucy chose to make her mandala of Alice out of fresh vegetables. Why might this be?

- Before they start making their mandalas, have students write a sentence or two describing what they want their mandala to be about. This helps them select their materials and make choices just like artists do, to create meaning. For example:
 - 'My mandala shows the beauty of the trees in the school grounds.' So the mandala is constructed entirely of leaves, gumnuts, seedpods, twigs and tree materials.
 - 'My mandala shows how rubbish is a problem.' Mandala made of bottle tops, ice cream paddle sticks and pieces cut from food wrappers.
 - 'My mandala shows how much I love the garden.' Mandala made of seeds, flower heads and buds, leaves and seed pods.
- Make mandalas.
- Take photos of all of the students' artworks, and have a tour with each artist explaining the decisions he or she made to create their mandala.

✍ Mega mandala

One class, after making their own mandalas, decided to celebrate their kitchen garden by arranging all of the garden implements (forks, trowels, etc) into a mandala, with watering cans and bright pieces of fabric as decoration. They then arranged the students inside the mandala (it was large!) and the teacher went up some steps and took a photo from above. The result was stunning. They entered an art competition with their creation – and won!

Here it is before the students added themselves to the mandala. Reproduced with thanks to Winters Flat Primary School.

Resources

- ◊ Art Club Blog – How to make a chalk mandala: <https://artclubblog.com/2013/09/09/chalk-mandalas/>
- ◊ Radial symmetry – a slide show for primary schools: <https://www.slideshare.net/nwalkup/radial-symmetry>
- ◊ BBC – Religions – Sacred Mandala: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/customs/mandala.shtml>
- ◊ Huffpost – The Mandala: Why do monks destroy it? https://www.huffingtonpost.com/sister-joan-chittister-osb/mandala-why-destroy-it_b_970479.html
- ◊ Tibetan Buddhist Mandalas: <http://www.mandala-painting.com/>
- ◊ Tuberman hovering meditation: <https://youtu.be/2IAeZWWB0f0>

