

# ART AND GETTING TO KNOW OUR COMMUNITY

## Making a Mural of Your Community

**B**ackground: Mural comes from the Latin word *murus*, which means wall. Some children may be familiar with murals if they live near a city or town where history scenes, large advertisements, and/or local attractions are painted on the sides of buildings. Hopefully there are some in your community, which you can show pictures of, or better yet actually point out to the children on a field trip.

A famous artist who painted murals was [Diego Rivera](#), the Mexican painter who lived from 1886 until 1957. When Diego Rivera was a little boy he drew on the walls of his home. His father had to cover the walls of his room with canvas to save the rest of the house! At the age of ten Rivera was sent to art school and later studied art in Europe where he was a friend with Pablo Picasso. He was awestruck by the fresco paintings of the churches in Italy and returned to Mexico inspired to paint murals that depicted Mexican history or common people at work Rivera wanted everyone to enjoy his art, not just the wealthy, so his murals were the way he could make art for all the people to see.

### Lesson Ideas

- Two books that may make good read-alouds to introduce the idea of mural painting are, *Diego Rivera* by Mike Venezia and *The School Mural* published by the Wright Group.
- Prepare your wall or bulletin board: Cover it with the paper the children will be painting on or stapling their creations to. If you are very fortunate, perhaps you have a parent or local artist who could come in and actually help the children draw and then paint their images on a wall!
  - Now have the children recall the places they have visited and learned about in their community. Discuss the details of the buildings and their surroundings: what colors were the buildings, what special features did they have, what was inside of them, why are they important to put in the mural, etc.
  - If you are using cut paper and making a bulletin board mural, you can have the children assemble the buildings in separate pieces, by cutting out the basic building shape and then adding paper windows, roofs, doors and so on.
  - If you are painting, have the children do a rough sketch of the building they are adding to the mural before they paint it. Painting on paper on their desks and then cutting the dried buildings out would be much easier than having the child go straight to the wall. As for streets, local backgrounds, water- you can put those in ahead of time to give the mural some organization, or let the kids lay out their community in the way they understand it. (That can prove interesting!)

-Some of your students who can write can make signs or labels for the buildings, stop signs for the roads, billboards, and other details that make your community tick.

**Materials:**

bulletin board or large paper on the wall  
paper scraps, scissors, glue, crayons, pencils, stapler or poster paints,  
brushes, sheets of white paper