

# The Stone of the Sun

I have always felt that the art history and culture of other people/countries was very enlightening and educational. A multicultural perspective enhances a student's understanding and respect for other cultures as well as his or her own.

With that in mind, I introduced the Aztec Indians, who lived in Mexico from about 1300–1500 AD, to a class of fourth graders. They learned that the Aztecs worshipped many gods but believed the Sun God was the most important. The Aztecs felt it was important to have rituals for the Sun God, otherwise the sun would not rise and the earth would come to an end.

## The Sun Stone

The Aztecs carved a huge stone disk, three-foot thick and almost twelve-feet in diameter, known now as the Sun Stone or the Aztec Calendar. When Hernando Cortés and his Conquistadores arrived, they buried it after unsuccessful attempts to destroy it. In 1760 the radially symmetrical

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disk was found buried in the Zócalo (main square) of Mexico City. The stone is now the centerpiece of the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.

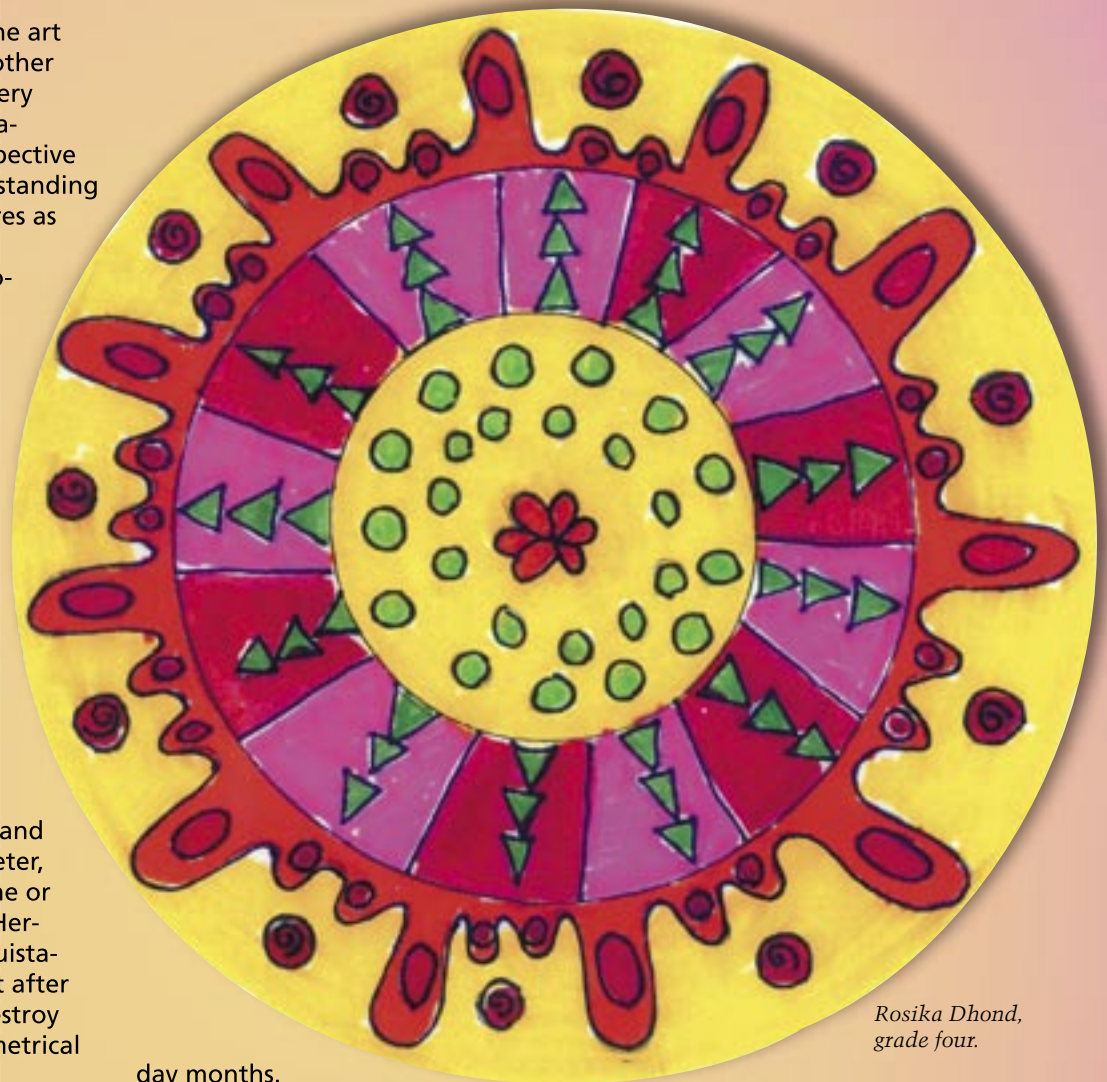
The detailed carving tells how the Aztecs believed the world went through four creations and destructions. The Aztec Sun Stone represents a complex calendar system, in part, based on eighteen, twenty-

day months.

The Sun God's face is in the middle of the calendar, surrounded by four other gods. These are ringed by several concentric circles, each filled with symbols for the months.

## Student Interpretation

After learning about the Aztec Indians and the Stone of the Sun, students created their own radially symmetrical designs. They drew them first in pencil, then added media of their choice: pencil, colored pencil, crayon, or felt-tip marker. Emphasis was placed on expressing their feelings and emotions and effectively using the elements of design. 🎨



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grade four.

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## NATIONAL STANDARD

Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art.

## WEB LINK

[www.crystalinks.com/aztecalendar.html](http://www.crystalinks.com/aztecalendar.html)

[www.mna.inah.gob.mx](http://www.mna.inah.gob.mx)