

July 8, 2026

The History of the Piñata

Since its origins, piñatas have involved a traditional celebration. It is believed that they were born in China, where a cow-shaped piñata, full of seeds was beaten to propitiate a favorable climate for the upcoming growing season.

The tradition arrived in Europe and was associated to the Christian observance of Lent, the period of preparation before Easter. The piñata was a clay pot decorated with colored paper and ribbons and the treats inside were considered a reward for faithful believers.

When the Spanish brought piñatas to Mexico in the 16th Century, they found a similar practice among the Mayas and Aztecs: priests would decorate a clay pot with colorful feathers and beat it to reveal treasures before their god on the divinity's birthday, celebrated in December.

This was very helpful for Spanish monks, who started using piñatas for evangelism purposes, associating a star-shaped piñata with the Star of Bethlehem and having kids beat it during Christmas "Posadas". Posadas are a 9-day period ending on Christmas Eve representing the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. During this celebration, people meet at different "posadas" or "inns", which are merely friends or relatives' homes where the attendees pray, sing Christmas carols, and celebrate the upcoming birth of Jesus.

Today, thousands of designs come alive into a piñata to please kids with their favorite characters, to commemorate events, places or people or simply as a gag gift for friends!

(Excerpt taken from <https://www.pinatas.com/pages/pinatas-history>)



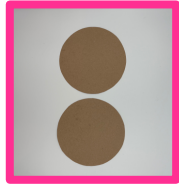
Mini Piñatas

Materials:

- cardboard
- scissors
- pencil
- tissue paper
- masking tape
- construction paper
- glue
- string

1. Open up your packet and check out all your materials.
2. Find a space to work.
3. Choose a piñata idea. The simpler the design, the easier it will be to cut out and construct.
 - a. I used a bowl to trace a circle for a donut.

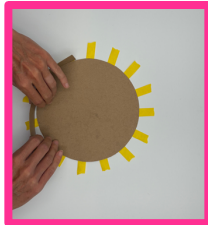




b. You can also print out a design, cut it out of paper and trace onto your cardboard.

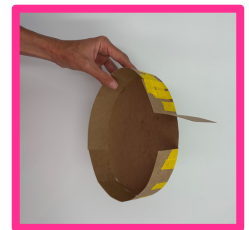
4. Put 2 pieces of your cardboard together and cut the design you traced. This ensures that the front and back of your piñata are uniform.

5. Use another piece of cardboard to cut out the side pieces. Measure 1 ½" on the short side of the cardboard so that you have long pieces for your sides.



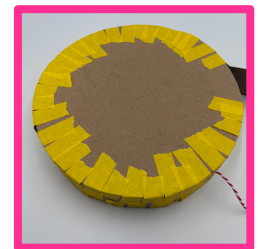
6. Use your masking tape to adhere the sides to the front of your piñata.

7. Once you get close to finishing up the sides, leave a little bit without tape. Bend the side backwards. This will be your hatch for putting in candy. Do not tape just yet.



8. Before putting the back of your piñata on, poke a small hole into the side and slide your string through. Knot the string so that it does not pull out. You can also reinforce it with tape on the inside.

9. Gently put the back on and reinforce with a ton of tape!



10. Now decorate your piñatas using your construction paper and tissue paper.

- a. Fringe can be made easily by cutting strips of your tissue paper that are equal in size.
- b. Place all of your strips on top of one another and then fold them into a smaller rectangle.
- c. Cut slits about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the paper.
- d. Unfold and you have long strips to fringe that can be used on your piñata.

11. Once the whole thing is decorated you can close up your hatch.

12. Be proud of your creation! Put your name and age on the back of your piece and bring it back to Old Town Square next Wednesday so that we can hang it up in our kiosk!

13. Don't worry, we will return your artwork after it has been displayed.

About the Art for the Heart Program

Art for the Heart is a program of the Fort Collins Downtown Development Authority and NOLA Creative Company.

All returned projects will be displayed in our outdoor kiosk located in between Coopersmith's Pub and Poolside restaurants. All projects will be returned to you the following week after they have been displayed.

Each art project returned will earn you a punch on our "Frequent Artists" punch card. Artists with consistent participation (5 punches or more) will be awarded a t-shirt at the end of the program.

You can find all of our past projects and more information about the program at <https://downtownfortcollins.org/art-for-the-heart/>

Follow us on Instagram @nola_creative_company as we will be featuring artwork from each week. We will not use full names or identify your children in any way other than using their first name in order to give credit.