

## Pysanky Party

Galyna sat quietly while the other kids talked about their Easter traditions.

“We hunt for plastic eggs with candy in them,” said Ryan.

“We go to church and wear fancy spring dresses,” said Mary Kate.

“We don’t celebrate Easter,” said Sam. “We are Jewish, so we celebrate Passover and host a Seder.”

“What about you, Galyna?” asked Ryan. Everyone turned to look at her.

“My family is from Ukraine,” she said. “We make pysanky.”

“What’s that?” asked Mary Kate. “A special dessert?”

Galyna laughed. “No, not a dessert. They are colored eggs.” She thought about how to explain them. They were not just any colored eggs, like the kind you’d dye with a grocery store kit. “They are beautiful, intricate, and delicate,” she said. “They are art.” Then she added, shyly, “I could show you if you’d like.”

The other kids were excited to learn about pysanky. On Saturday they came to Galyna’s house, ready to see what she was talking about. Galyna’s mom lifted a basket off the shelf. It was full of eggs with vibrant colors and patterns.

“They are beautiful!” said Mary Kate.

“Wow,” agreed Sam. “They are so colorful and detailed.”

“Ukrainians have been making pysanky for generations,” Galyna’s mom explained. “The patterns are taken from traditional folk art. And sometimes they represent the person who is making or receiving them.”

Galyna told her friends that they would start by using raw eggs, not hard-boiled ones. “We create the designs with a kista, which is like a pencil that holds liquid wax,” she explained.

Each kid took an egg and drew a design with the kista. “The name pysanky comes from the Ukrainian word ‘to write,’” Galyna told them. “You write your own design with the kista.”

Sam drew a Star of David. Mary Kate drew a rose. Ryan drew a geometric pattern to symbolize his love of math.

“The places with the wax will stay white,” Galyna said. “We dye the egg and then we use more wax to draw more designs. Those patterns will stay the color of the first dye. We keep repeating the process, going from light to dark dyes. Then at the end we heat the egg and wipe off the wax.”

The kids worked on their eggs. Galyna’s mother made them some snacks. It was hard work and they had to be very careful. But at the end of the day, when they wiped the final layers of wax from their eggs, it was worth it.

“Wow,” said Ryan. “They really are pieces of art.”



Galyna smiled. She was happy to have shared her family tradition with her friends. “Can we do this again next year?” asked Mary Kate.

“A pysanky party!” said Sam.

“A new tradition,” said Galyna.



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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What design did Mary Kate draw on her egg?
  - a. A geometric pattern
  - b. A Star of David
  - c. A rose
  - d. A folk art pattern
  
2. What tool did the kids use to draw on the eggs?
  - a. A kista
  - b. A pencil
  - c. A pysanky
  - d. A candle
  
3. Why do you think Galyna was quiet at first when the other kids were discussing their Easter traditions?
  - a. Because she didn't like the kids
  - b. Because her tradition was different from theirs
  - c. Because she thought the kids were allergic to eggs
  - d. Because she didn't celebrate Easter
  
4. What did Galyna's mom mean when she said, "they represent the person who is making or receiving them."
  - a. Pysanky artists only use patterns from traditional folk art
  - b. Pysanky artists draw the face of the person who will keep the egg
  - c. Pysanky artists use wax and dye to make the eggs
  - d. Pysanky artists draw patterns that are unique and meaningful to the person who will keep the egg

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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