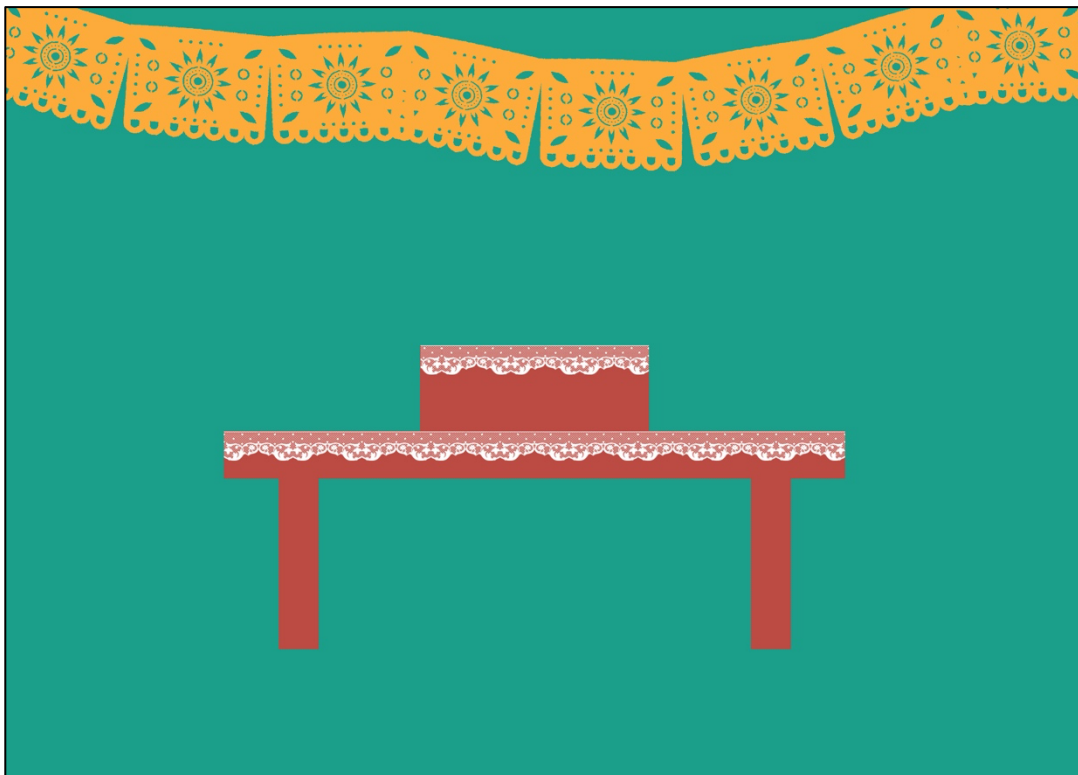




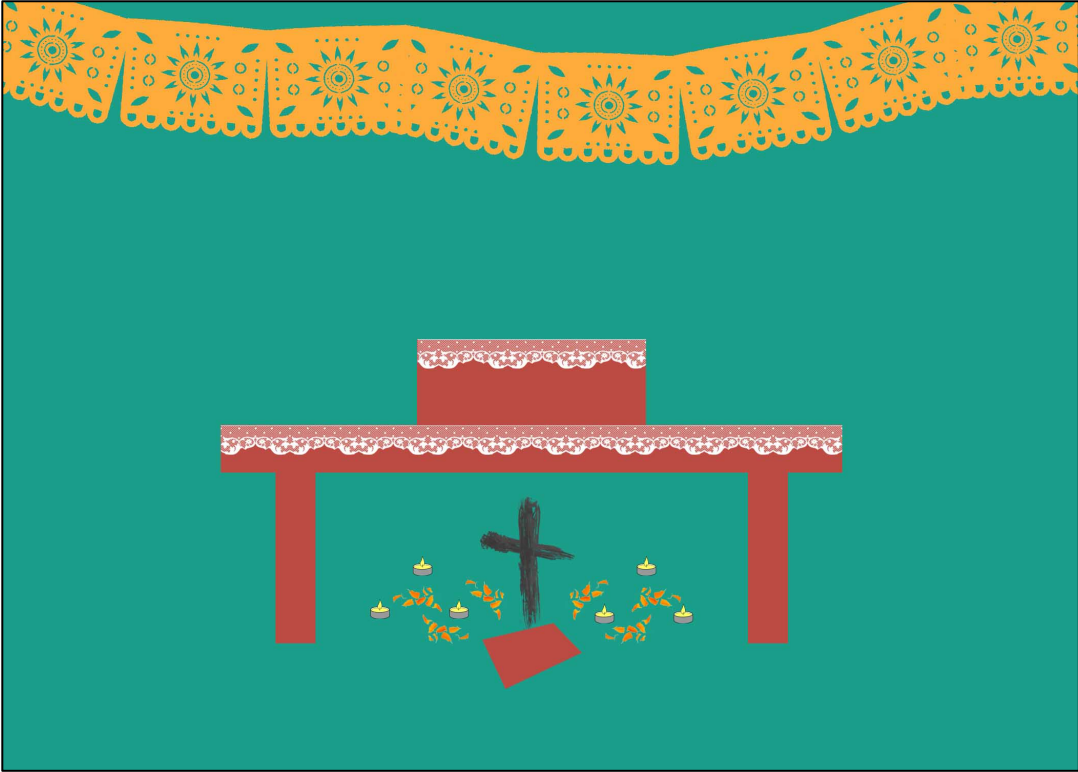
## HOW TO MAKE A DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS ALTAR

**1. First, set up a table with three different levels.** The levels will represent the underworld, the Earth, and heaven. You can set them up by placing a big, upside-down cardboard box on top of a table. The floor will be the first level, the table the second, and the box the third. Cover the table and the box with two tablecloths — one dark color to symbolize mourning, and a lacy white one, to represent purity. Hang “papel picado” above the table.



**2. Next, set up a representation of a graveyard in the lower level.** Take a bunch of ash and scatter it in the ground to make a cross. You can use a material that symbolizes ash if you don't have it. The cross shape represents a grave; the ash is a reminder that we are "ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Next, scatter a bunch of cempasúchil petals on the floor. These are the "flowers of the thousand petals," better known as orange marigolds. Also, light up some tea-light candles. These will serve to guide the soul of your dearly departed out of the grave (metaphorically). Finally, set

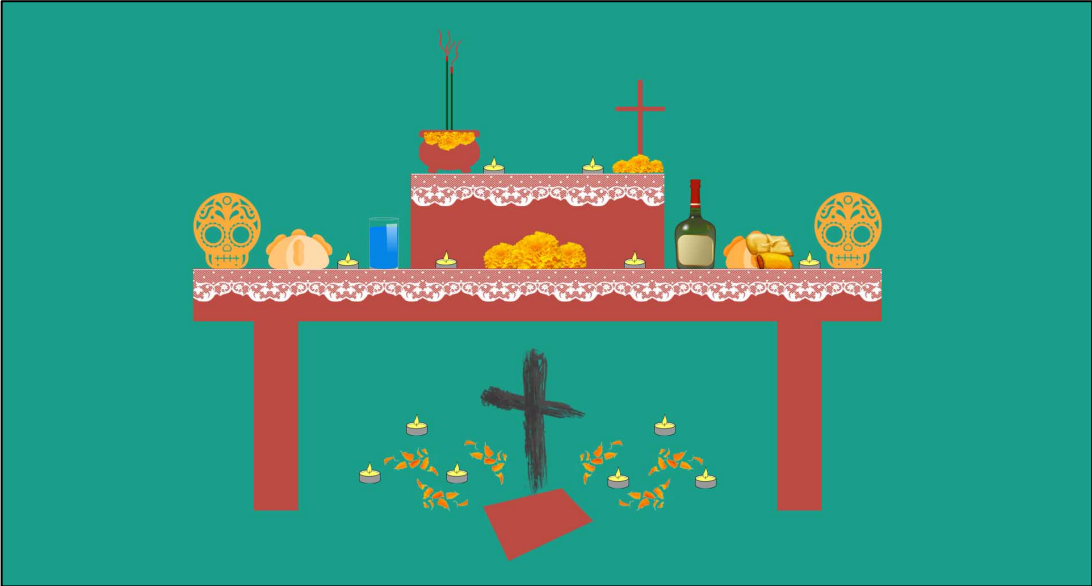
up a small mat in front of the grave so that the dead can metaphorically wipe their feet after they step out of the grave.



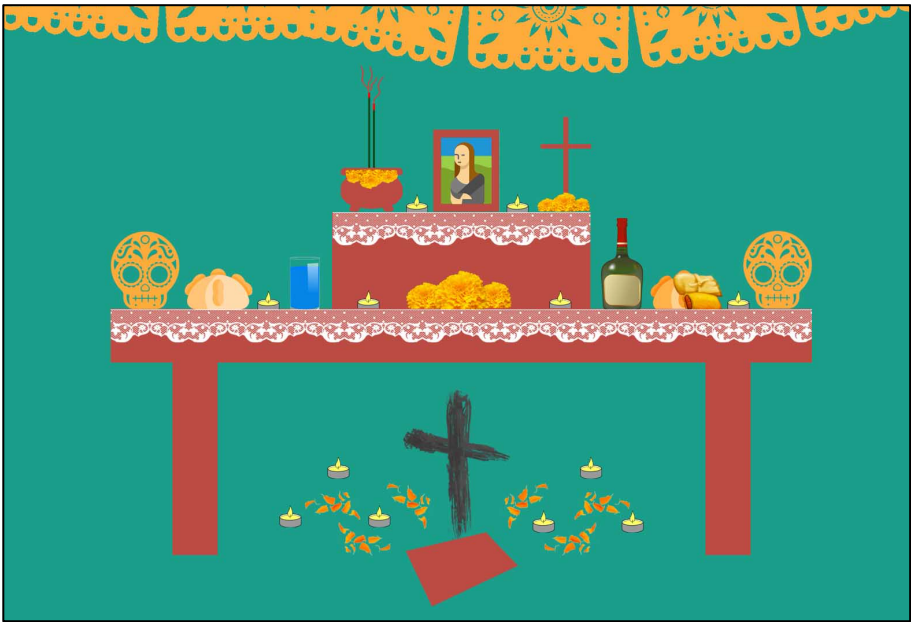
**3. Now set up food and otherworldly offerings in the middle level.** The middle level represents the realm of the living, so prepare a full feast with the bounty of the Earth! First of all, place a big glass of water on the table. The dead are going to be thirsty after climbing the millions of miles that separate them from the Earth. Then make the dead person's favorite food. It doesn't have to be Mexican. Some type of alcoholic drink is always an important part of a welcome celebration in the Mexican culture, so a symbolism of a bottle of liquor can be used. Include some sweets — pan de muerto, or dead man's bread, and calaveritas de azucar, or sugar skulls. Throw some candles in for good measure.



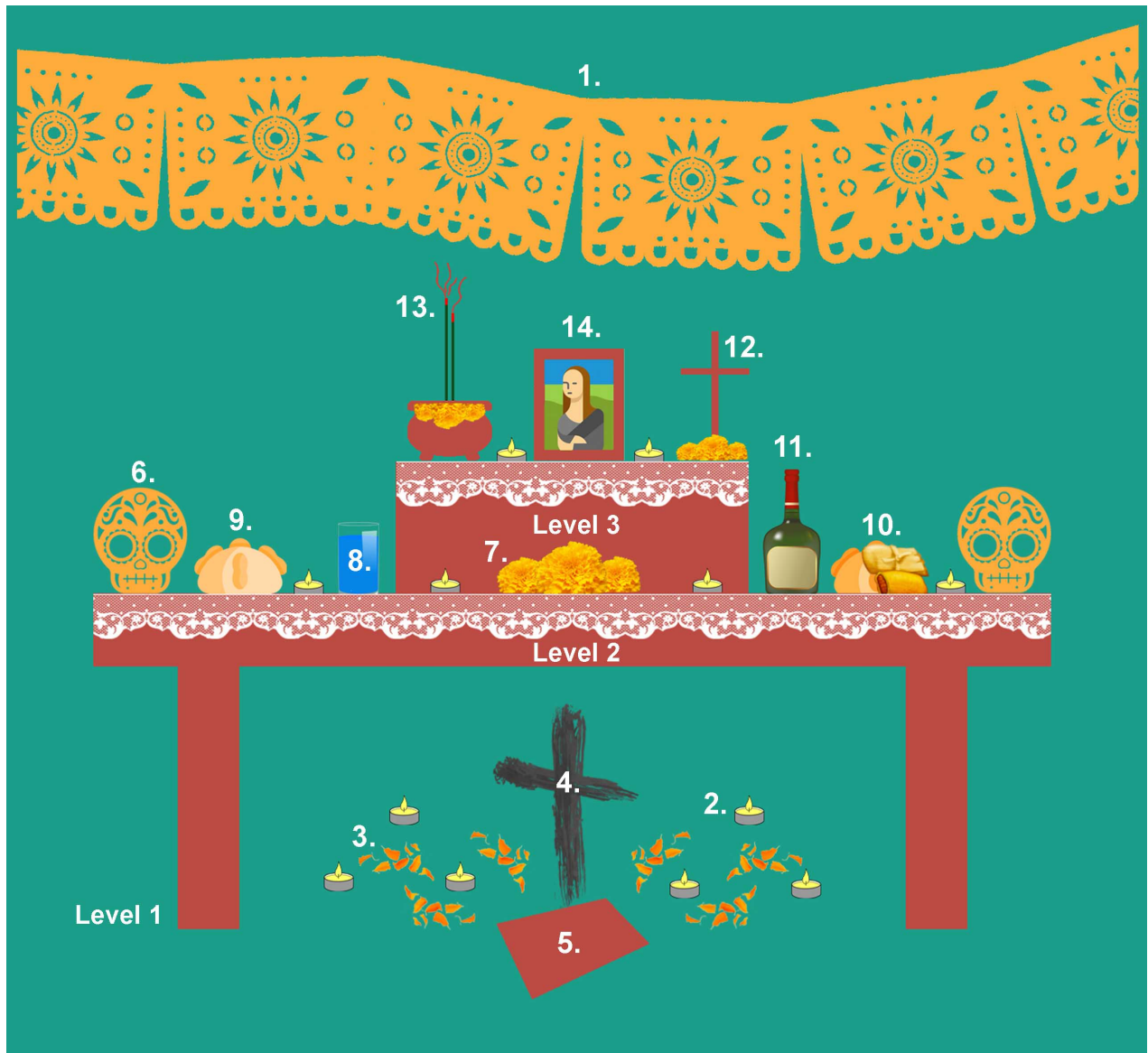
**4. Next, set up a representation of heaven in the higher level.** At the top of the altar, you can place symbolisms that represent heaven, perhaps a cross or a saint statue. Set up a big bowl of Mexican incense, or copal. Add a big bunch of orange marigolds and a few more candles.



**5. Finally, place a photograph of someone you love in the center of the altar.** This is so that the dead person you love knows they are invited. You can place more than one picture — and they don't have to be people you knew personally. Feel free to remember your favorite writer, singer, or historical figure.



# ALTAR CHEAT SHEET



- |                                     |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Papel Picado                     | 10. Food                              |
| 2. Candles                          | 11. Bottle of Liquor (or alternative) |
| 3. Marigold Pedals (or alternative) | 12. Cross                             |
| 4. Ash Cross Symbolism              | 13. Incense                           |
| 5. Foot Mat                         | 14. Picture                           |
| 6. Sugar Skulls                     |                                       |
| 7. Marigold Flowers (Cempasúchil)   |                                       |
| 8. Glass of Water                   |                                       |
| 9. Dead Man's Bread (Pan De Muerto) |                                       |