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Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, Library Director
Elizabeth Skinner, Associate Library Director

Speak no Evil

by Uzodinma Iweala

ON THE
SAME PAGE
2019





Niru seems to have it all. He's popular, athletic and the pride of his Nigerian-born parents. He's a senior at a prestigious prep school in Washington D.C. and is headed to Harvard University. But Niru has a secret. He's gay.

When his conservative parents discover his texts to another gay teen, the fallout is brutal. Niru's best friend Meredith, a popular white student at his school, urges him to "speak his truth," advice that leads to a twist of fate neither could have foreseen.

Uzodinma Iweala's "Speak No Evil" confronts some of the most complex issues our culture

faces, including that basic question - How do we discuss our differences in healthy ways? In a little over 200 pages, this taut gem of a book looks at identity and sexual orientation, black and white, Americans and Africans - and the stereotypes that can divide and destroy us. Too often, like the hero of the book, we would rather not talk about them.

"Read boldly and discuss thoughtfully"

Our On the Same Page community read program, now in its 18th year, urges us to read boldly and discuss thoughtfully, with a goal of making our community a better place.

We hope that you will embrace this book and explore the issues it presents this fall. There are book club discussions, movies and programs about Nigeria, where part of the book is set. We'll look at relations between local law enforcement and the African American community as well as hear from young people who identify as LGBTQ. Local high school students will also discuss interracial friendships.

Our finale event will wrap it all up with a celebration of the rich culture of Nigeria through food and music.

Sylvia Sprinkle Hamlin

Forsyth County Public Library Director

Recommended Reading

For Adults

- Aciman, Andre. "Call Me By Your Name" (2017).
Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. "Americanah" (2013).
Cleave, Chris. "Little Bee" (2010).
Erian, Alicia. "Towelhead" (2005).
Hamid, Mohsin. "The Reluctant Fundamentalist" (2007).
Harris, E. Lynn. "If This World Were Mine" (1997).
Hosseini, Khaled. "And the Mountains Echoed" (2013).
Iromuanya, Julie. "Mr. and Mrs. Doctor" (2015).
Iweala, Uzadinma. "Beasts of No Nation" (2005).
Ko, Lisa. "The Leavers" (2017).
Makkai, Rebecca. "The Great Believers" (2018).
Ndibe, Okey. "Foreign Gods, Inc." (2014).
Umrigar, Thrity N. "Everybody's Son" (2017).
Urrea, Luis Alberto. "Into the Beautiful North" (2009).
Yanagihara, Hanya. "A Little Life" (2015).

Young Adults and Teens

- Albertalli, Becky. "Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda" (2015).
Elmendorf, Dana. "South of Sunshine" (2016).
Federle, Tim. "The Great American Whatever" (2016).
Gonsalves, Florence. "Love & Other Carnivorous Plants" (2018).
Khan, Sabina. "The Love and Lies of Rukhsana Ali" (2019).
Nwaubani, Adaobi Tricia. "Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree" (2018).
Okorafor, Nnedi. "Akata Witch" (2011).
Williams-Garcia, Rita. "No Laughter Here" (2004).

Young Readers

- Achebe, Chinua. "Chike and the River" (2011).
Atinuke. "Baby Goes to Market" (2017).
Dayrell, Elphinstone. "Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky: an African Folktale" (1968).
Fadipe, Sade. "A Visit to Grandad" (2019).
Myers, Walter Dean. "At Her Majesty's Request: an African Princess in Victorian England" (1999).
Okorafor, Nnedi. "Chicken in the Kitchen" (2017).
Olaleye, Isaac. "Bikes for Rent" (2001).
Onyefulu, Ifeoma. "Chidi Only Likes Blue" (1997).
Saint-Lot, Katia Novet. "Amadi's Snowman" (2008).

“Speak No Evil” Discussion Questions

1. What do you think is the significance of the novel’s title? Meredith encourages Niru to be his “true self” without understanding the full implication of his situation. Is her advice that he “speak his truth” so to speak, an expression of the privilege that she experiences?
2. Meredith is, in her mind, attempting to act as an ally to Niru, both as a queer youth, and to a lesser extent, in the all-white space of their elite school environment. It could be argued that the author is attempting to demonstrate a similar ally status, as a straight man writing the sympathetic narrative of a gay young man. Does he do this successfully? Do you think that the sexual orientation of the author makes a significant difference in the telling of this story?
3. A recent review referred to this book’s narrative as an example of “queer suffering.” Matters of representation are important for all underrepresented and marginalized groups. Does showing tragedy and pain as principle aspects of belonging to the LGBTQ community limit how we view LGBTQ people’s lives? Is it equally important to celebrate the joys, triumphs and strength of young, queer people of color?
4. Niru is a somewhat meek, Harvard-bound, star athlete from a wealthy and privileged immigrant family. However, none of this is evident to the officer he encounters. The officer observes a large, agitated black man in a heated argument with a young white girl. To what degree do you think that the outcome is dependent on Niru being a real and present danger, and how much were stereotypes surrounding black men and the protection of the sanctity of white womanhood to blame?
5. This book is sometimes (incorrectly) referred to as a “coming out” tale. In fact, Niru never does come out. He is inadvertently outed. Rather than view this as a book about coming out, how might we view it as a tale about being prematurely forced to reveal certain truths about our identity before we are ready to do so?
6. Meredith at some point says, “I am always someone’s accessory, someone’s afterthought, the supporting actress in another person’s drama.” The latter portion of the novel is told from her perspective, but she still seems like an unfinished character. Do you think this was an intentional choice on the author’s part? What purpose do you think it serves?
7. This is a brief, and engaging novel that can be read rather quickly and intensely. Despite its readability, this is certainly not an easy read. Certain stylistic choices such as the elimination of most traditional forms of punctuation may challenge many readers, but it also may allow the reader a less interrupted, more flowing reading experience. What did you think of the author’s choice to present the novel in this fashion?
8. At two points in the novel, Niru emits a silent scream. Why do you think that Iweala chose to deny this character a voice even in his most intensely felt emotional moments?
9. How do you feel that Niru’s trajectory might have been different had he been more willing to be receptive to Damien’s advances and experiences?
10. Did the book change your opinion or perspective about anything? Do you feel different now than you did before you read it?
11. Finally, what else struck you about the book as good or bad? What did you like or dislike about it that we haven’t discussed already? Were you glad you read this book? Would you recommend it to a friend? Did this book make you want to read more work by this author?

Questions written by Diarra Leggett, with the Forsyth County Public Library.

Author Biography



Dr. Uzodinma Iweala

Uzodinma Iweala is an award-winning writer, filmmaker and medical doctor. He is the CEO of The African Center in New York, promoting a new narrative about Africa and its diaspora through a focus on culture, policy and business. Uzodinma is the co-founder of Ventures Africa magazine, a publication that covers business, policy, culture and innovation spaces in Africa. He has written three books: “Beasts of No Nation” (2005), a novel that was also adapted into a major motion picture; “Our Kind of People” (2012), a nonfiction account of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria and “Speak No Evil” (2018), a novel about coming-of-age in Washington D.C. Instagram: @uiweala.

On The Same Page Kickoff Events with Dr. Uzodinma Iweala

Speaking Your Truth

Meet Dr. Uzodinma Iweala

Thursday, Sept. 5

4-5 p.m.

Winston-Salem State University

The power, perils and potential for young African Americans in 21st century America.

A Q & A and book signing will follow the talk.

Write What You Want to Know

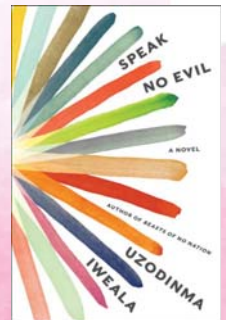
Dr. Uzodinma Iweala on writing “Speak No Evil”

Friday, Sept. 6

Noon-1:30 p.m.

Central Library Auditorium

Uzodinma Iweala talks about building realistic characters, venturing outside his experiences and showing his hometown of Washington D.C. as a living city in “Speak No Evil.” A Q & A will follow the talk.



Featured Programs

“Speak No Evil” at Bookmarks Festival of Authors on Saturday, Sept. 7 in Downtown Winston-Salem

Do You See Me? The Importance of Inclusive Characters
Saturday, Sept. 7
4-4:45 p.m.

Hanesbrands Theatre

A conversation about the need for LGBTQ inclusiveness in literature with two bestselling authors who regularly include such characters. Becky Chambers is the author of “The Wayfarers” trilogy and Amber Smith is the author of “Something Like Gravity.” Meet Amber Smith at the library’s information booth from 2:30-3 p.m.

Presented with support from Bookmarks Festival.

Reading Between the Lines

Angela Mazaris

Monday, Sept. 9

6-8 p.m.

Central Library Auditorium

How do historians document historical and contemporary LGBTQ stories in the United States? Angela Mazaris, founding director of the Wake Forest University LGBTQ Center and affiliate faculty in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, will discuss the Winston-Salem LGBTQ Oral History Project, and facilitate audience discussion and Q&A on local LGBTQ history.

“Moonlight”

Tuesday, Sept. 17

6-8 p.m.

Central Library Auditorium

The tender, heartbreaking story of a young man’s struggle to find himself, told across three defining chapters in his life as he experiences the ecstasy, pain and beauty of falling in love, while grappling with his own sexuality. “Moonlight” received the 2016 Academy Award for best picture. This film is rated R. Minors must be accompanied by an adult.

When We Become Them

Tuesday, Sept. 24

6-8 p.m.

Malloy Jordan/East Winston Heritage Center

As African American Americans move into positions of power in law enforcement, what are the challenges and opportunities in reversing the long-standing distrust between law enforcement and minority communities? A panel discussion followed by Q & A with local community leaders and law enforcement, moderated by Diarra Leggett, with the Forsyth County Public Library.



“Speak No Evil” Book Discussions

Book discussions are the heart of On the Same Page. They offer a chance to get together with other readers, exchange ideas and share your love of reading. All discussions are free and open to the community.

Tuesday, Sept. 3 at 2 p.m. Tuesdays at Two Book Club, Lewisville Branch Library, 6490 Shallowford Rd., Lewisville, N.C.

Tuesday, Sept. 3 at 6:30 p.m. Rural Hall Branch Library, 7125 Broad St., Rural Hall, N.C.

Friday, Sept. 6 at 3 p.m. Homestead Hills Book Club, Homestead Hills Retirement Community, 3250 Homestead Club Dr, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Monday, Sept. 9 at 6 p.m. Southside Branch Book Club, 3185 Buchanan St., Winston-Salem, N.C.

Wednesday, Sept. 9 at 6:30 p.m. Book Lovers' Club Clemmons Branch Library, 3554 Clemmons Rd., Clemmons, N.C.

Tuesday, Sept. 10 at 6 p.m. Senergy Book Club, Carver School Road Branch Library, 4915 Lansing Dr., Winston-Salem, N.C.

Wednesday, Sept. 11 at noon. Books for Dudes, Central Library, 660 W. Fifth St. Winston-Salem, N.C.

Monday, Sept. 16 at 6 p.m. Community discussion, Rural Hall Branch Library, 7125 Broad St., Rural Hall, N.C.

Wednesday, Sept. 18, at noon. Brown bag lunch discussion at Malloy/Jordan East Winston Heritage Center, 1110 E. Seventh St., Winston-Salem, N.C.

Wednesday, Sept. 18 at 2 p.m. Reynolda Manor Branch Library, 2839 Fairlawn Dr., Winston-Salem, N.C.

Wednesday, Sept. 18 at 6 p.m. Community discussion, Central Library, 660 W. Fifth St., Winston-Salem, N.C.

Tuesday, Sept. 24 at 6:30 p.m. Lewisville Friends Book Club. Lewisville Branch Library, 6490 Shallowford Rd., Lewisville, N.C.

Thursday, Oct. 3 at noon. The Friends of the Library Noon Book Club, Paddison Memorial Branch, 248 Harmon Lane, Kernersville, N.C.

Thursday, Oct. 10 at 11 a.m. Afterthoughts Book Club, Walkertown Branch Library, 2969 Main St., Walkertown, N.C.

Chat with Cops

Monday, Sept. 23 at 3:30 p.m.

Kernersville police officers will discuss their role in our community and answer your questions while we make them thank-you cards. Ages 5-11.

Feature Film Night: "Boy Erased"

Tuesday, Sept. 24 at 6 p.m.

The son of a Baptist preacher is forced to participate in a church-supported gay conversion program after being forcibly outed to his parents. Rated R. Minors must be accompanied by adults.

Reynolda Manor Branch Library

**2839 Fairlawn Dr., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27106
(336)-703-2960**

Yearning to be Free

Thursday, Sept. 19 at 10:30 a.m.

Featuring stories about immigration and immigrants.

Gender and Sexual Fluidity in West Africa

Monday, Sept. 23 at 6 p.m.

Learn how gender and sexuality are defined by different cultures in West Africa from an expert with the Museum of Anthropology.

Rural Hall Branch Library

**7125 Broad St., Rural Hall, N.C. 27045
(336)-703-2970**

The Ruler's Crown

Monday, Sept. 9 at 4 p.m.

Using objects from the Museum of Anthropology's collection, children will learn about the culture and beautiful beaded crowns of the Yoruba people in West Africa and then create and decorate their own crowns.

Family and Kinship in West Africa

Monday, Sept. 16 at 3 p.m.

Are family and kinship the same thing? In this lecture presented by the Museum of Anthropology, learn how different cultures in West Africa define family and what is meant by kinship.

African Folklore Storytime

Thursday, Sept. 19 at 11 a.m.

A special storytime to celebrate OTSP with stories and songs from different countries in Africa. Children ages birth-5.

Teen Nigerian Cultural Celebration

Friday, Sept. 27 at 4 p.m.

Taste samples of popular Nigerian foods with other teens, including pounded yam, jollof rice, tuwo shinkafa, and adalu. Ages 12-17. Space is limited, so call to register at 336-703-2970.

Southside Branch Library

**3185 Buchanan St., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27127
(336)-703-2980**

Short Story Society: "Books and Roses"

Thursday, Sept. 12 at 4 p.m.

Two young women from different backgrounds, both bearing mysterious keys, are drawn to each other in this magical tale by Nigerian author, Helen Oyeyemi, from "What Is Not Yours Is Not Yours." Call 336-703-2985 for a copy of the story.

After-Hours Film Screening: "Boy Erased"

Thursday, Sept. 19 at 7 p.m.

A young man (Lucas Hedges) is sent to gay conversion camp by his staunchly religious parents (Nicole Kidman and Russell Crowe) after a traumatic event leads him to be outed. This film is rated R. Minors must be accompanied by adults.

Cookbook Club: West African Cuisine Potluck

Wednesday, Oct. 2 at 1 p.m.

Choose recipes from "Zoe's Ghana Kitchen" by Zoe Adjonyoh and "Hibiscus" by Lopè Ariyo. Fair warning: You must bring a dish in order to attend the potluck.

Walkertown Branch Library

**2969 Main St., Walkertown, N.C., 27051
(336)-703-2990**

African Folklore Storytime

Tuesday, Oct. 8 at 10:30 a.m.

Children ages birth-5 years are invited to explore African folklore.

High School Race Relations Panel

Friends Not Foes: Forging Interracial Friendships

Wednesday, Sept. 25

6-8 p.m.

Central Library Auditorium

Panel discussion among local high school students on the challenges and opportunities of interracial friendships in bridging America's racial divide.

Sponsored by the City of Winston-Salem Human Relations Commission.



LGBTQIA: The Next Generation

Nyles Claire Suer

Monday, Sept. 30

6-8 p.m.

Central Library Auditorium

What is it like to be young and identify as LGBTQ in Winston-Salem? A panel moderated by Nyles Claire Suer, director of the North Star LGBTQ Community Center in Winston-Salem.

Wazobia - On The Same Page Finale

Saturday, Oct. 5

6-8 p.m.

Central Library Auditorium

A celebration of the food and music of Nigeria.

Branch Library Programs

Carver School Road Branch Library

**4915 Lansing Dr., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27105
(336)-703-2910**

Film Screening: "Pariah"

Monday, Sept. 16 at 6 p.m.

A black teenager (Adepero Oduye) living in

Brooklyn embraces her identity as a lesbian, but struggles with how much she can confide in her parents (Kim Wayans, Charles Parnell). This film is rated R. Minors must be accompanied by adults.

A Discussion on Nigerian Culture: Faith, Family, and Food

Tuesday, Sept. 10 at 6:30 p.m.

Come prepared to learn about some of the differences and similarities between Nigerian and American cultures.

Nigerian Storytime with Take - Home Craft

Friday, Sept. 27 at 10 a.m.

We'll be reading several Nigerian folktales, as well as a modern Nigerian girl's account of life in her town. A take-home craft will follow.

Nigerian Fashion and Culture - A Presentation for Teens

Wednesday, Sept. 11 at 4 p.m.

September is Fashion Month and we're celebrating the fashion and culture of Nigeria, with its mix of familiar traditions and new ideas.

Central Library

**660 W. Fifth St., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101
(336)-703-3030**

Kola Nuts, Anyone?

Wednesday, Sept. 11 at 4:30 p.m.

What are kola nuts? Why are they important in Igbo culture? Teens will learn the answers as they handle objects from the Museum of Anthropology's collections.

Want to Wrestle?

Monday, Sept. 16 at 4:30 p.m.

Why is wrestling so important to the Igbo people of Nigeria? Teens will learn why as they handle objects from the Museum of Anthropology's collection.

Making a Tuareg Bag

Wednesday, Sept. 18 at 4 p.m.

The Tuaregs of West Africa use decorative bags to carry their possessions. Children will learn more about the Tuaregs as they handle objects from the Museum of Anthropology's collection and make their own pouches.

Gender and Sexual Fluidity in West Africa

Wednesday, Oct. 2 at 6 p.m.

Learn how gender and sexuality are defined by different cultures in West Africa from an expert with the Museum of Anthropology.

Clemmons Branch Library

**3554 Clemmons Rd., Clemmons, N.C. 27012
(336)-703-2920**

Wave Your Flag

Wednesday, Sept. 11 at 4 p.m.

Learn about the symbolism behind different flags then create your own flag to represent you or your family. All materials will be provided. For children ages 5-10, but all are welcome.

Kola Nuts, Anyone?

Thursday, Sept. 12 at 4 p.m.

What are kola nuts? Why are they important in Igbo culture? Teens will learn the answers as they handle objects from the Museum of Anthropology's collections.

Clemmons Cookin' Club: A Taste of Africa Potluck

Wednesday, Sept. 18 at 12:30 p.m.

Come by before Sept. 18 to choose a recipe and we'll make a copy for you. You must bring your dish in order to attend the potluck. Recipes for all dishes will be available.

Who Are The Igbo?

Thursday, Sept. 19 at 2 p.m.

Who are the Igbo? This lecture is an introduction to the culture of the Igbo people in Nigeria. Presented by the Museum of Anthropology.

Tween and Teen Chef: Nigeria and West Africa

Wednesday, Sept. 25 at 4 p.m.

Make a traditional Nigerian dish and try snacks from West Africa. For ages 10-17. Waivers and registration are required to participate. Please call 336-703-2920 or visit the Clemmons Branch Library to register.

The Ruler's Crown

Thursday, Sept. 26 at 4 p.m.

Using objects from the Museum of Anthropology's collection, children will learn about the culture and beautiful beaded crowns of the Yoruba people in West Africa, and then create and decorate their own crowns.

Lewisville Branch Library

**6490 Shallowford Rd., Lewisville, N.C. 27023
(336)-703-2940**

Kola Nuts, Anyone?

Friday, Sept. 6 at 4:30 p.m.

What are kola nuts? Why are they important in Igbo culture? Teens will learn the answers as they handle objects from the Museum of Anthropology's collections.

The Ruler's Crown

Tuesday, Sept. 10 at 4:30 p.m.

Using objects from the Museum of Anthropology's collection, children will learn about the culture and beautiful beaded crowns of the Yoruba people in West Africa, and then create and decorate their own crowns.

Who Are The Igbo?

Thursday, Sept. 19 at 4 p.m.

Who are the Igbo? Where do they live? This lecture is an introduction to the culture of the Igbo people in Nigeria. Presented by the Museum of Anthropology.

"To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar"

Monday, Sept. 23 at 5 p.m.

Three drag queens (Wesley Snipes, Patrick Swayze, and John Leguizamo) travel cross-country until their car breaks down, leaving them stranded in a small Southern town. Produced by Universal Studios. Rated PG-13.

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Information Table

Thursday, Sept. 26 from 2-5 p.m.

PFLAG is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people through support, education, and advocacy. PFLAG's Winston-Salem chapter serves Forsyth and the surrounding North Carolina counties.

Flavors of Africa

Friday, Sept. 27 at 4:30 p.m.

Children and teens will bring food from various countries to share. For children from birth-17 years old. A parent will need to sign a permission form available at the front desk in order for participants to eat. To participate in the presentations, sign up at the front desk. For information, call 336-703-2940.

Preschool Storytime - Self-Esteem Theme

Tuesday, Oct. 1 at 10:15 a.m.

Stories, rhymes, songs, and activities to promote self-esteem and to embrace diversity. Recommended for children aged 3-5 years and their caregivers, but all ages are welcome.

Teen Advisory Board Meeting at Bookmarks

**Bookstore (634 W. Fourth St., #110,
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101)**

Monday, Oct. 7 at 4:30 p.m.

Lewisville Branch Library's Teen Advisory Board will meet at Bookmarks Bookstore to choose young adult books with LGBTQIA themes to add to the library's collection. For information about joining the Teen Advisory Board, please call 336-703-2942.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Lewisville Branch Library.

Malloy/Jordan East Winston Heritage Center

**1110 E. Seventh St., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101
(336)-703-2950**

The Malloy/Jordan Cookbook Club

Tuesday, Sept. 10 at 6 p.m.

Participants are encouraged to bring a West African dish and discuss their favorite West African recipes. Adults.

North African Beading

Thursday, Sept. 12 at 3 p.m.

Learn how to make beautiful bracelets and chokers inspired by West African traditions. All ages welcome.

Family and Kinship in West Africa

Monday, Sept. 16 at 6 p.m.

Are family and kinship the same thing? In this lecture presented by the Museum of Anthropology, learn how different cultures in West Africa define family and what is meant by kinship.

"Nollywood" Movie Series Begins

Tuesday, Sept. 17 at 6 p.m.

Featuring a recent release from the Nigerian film industry. Adults.

African Folk Tale Storytime

Friday, Sept. 20, at 10 a.m.

Listen to West African folk tales and make a craft.

LGBTQ Representation in Pop Culture

Saturday, Sept. 28 at noon

A discussion on the representation of LGBTQ characters in popular TV and cartoon shows. Ages 13 and over.

Rainbows-in-a-Jar

Wednesday, Oct. 2 at 5:30 p.m.

Celebrate your individuality by putting together a collage-in-a-jar using paint, tissue paper, glitter and lights. Children and teens.

West African Kora

Thursday, Oct. 3 at 3 p.m.

In celebration of the African heritage reflected in "Speak No Evil," we will be making the traditional African string instrument, the Kora. All ages are welcome.

Paddison Memorial Branch Library

**248 Harmon Lane., Kernersville, N.C. 27284
(336)-703-2930**

Paper Craft DIY Compliment Cards

Tuesday, Sept. 10 at 10 a.m.

Make cards with encouraging messages and place them in library books for others to find.

Tweens: Kindness Rocks

Monday, Sept. 16 at 4 p.m.

Help us spread kindness in the library. Paint rocks with encouraging words and hide them in the library for people to find and take home. Grades 3-5.

Teens: Kindness Rocks

Tuesday, Sept. 17 at 4 p.m.

Help us spread kindness in the library. Paint rocks with encouraging words and hide them in the library for people to find and take home. For grades 6-12.

Implicit Bias: It's In All Of Us

Wednesday, Sept. 18 at 4 p.m.

Learn about, explore and confront unconscious biases. Discover how they impact our lives through activities and discussion.

The Ruler's Crown

Friday, Sept. 20 at 4 p.m.

Using objects from the Museum of Anthropology's collection, children will learn about the culture and beautiful beaded crowns of the Yoruba people in West Africa and then will create and decorate their own crowns.