

Dear Educator,

Congratulations! The Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS) team is happy to present you with an aluminum targeting plate from the SDSS telescope at Apache Point Observatory in New Mexico, USA. On the night that your plate was mounted to the back of the telescope, it captured spectra from a three-degree diameter area of the sky – an area that’s equivalent to the width of two fingers held at arm’s length. While that is indeed a sweeping field of view for a research telescope, your plate – and your place in the SDSS sky – is truly unique.

We have included a poster-sized print of the SDSS image data from your plate’s location on the sky. Many of the objects in the poster are in the SDSS database, one for each of the thousand holes in the plate. You can line up the plate and the poster by aligning the plate’s tab with the matching tab drawn on the poster, we recommend placing the plate in a window so light shines through each hole. But this is just the beginning. Visit the SDSS Voyages website for guided access to the database and suggestions for using this special resource:

http://voyages.sdss.org/my_plate

Each plate that we distribute through the Plate Packet program comes courtesy of an SDSS Institution. Teams of scientists, engineers, computer programmers, technicians, and educators like yourself, have worked together to build instruments, capture images and spectra, display and distribute data, and share results. Please take advantage of this enormous, diverse resource for exploring science and engineering topics.

As you work with your plate and the support materials on the SDSS Voyages website, we are eager to help. Please email us at voyages@sdss.org. We look forward to adding your experiences and expertise to the resources we offer through the Voyages website: <http://voyages.sdss.org/>

Best wishes,

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