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A Definition of Art

Human art is, at best, a reflection of God's creation. It is a result of being *made in His image* — man has been given the ability to *create* with the creation. All creation is an integrated unity which man, for convenience, has divided into separate areas, or disciplines, for study. Our Lord is the Lord of science, mathematics, history and all other disciplines, including aesthetics. He is God of aesthetics — of colours, tones, shapes and perspective in infinite variety.

All creation shows God's eternal power and divine nature.⁶ As the hills cry out the praises of God,⁷ so too, man can praise and glorify our Lord as artisans and craftsmen working with the materials that God has created and provided.

David said of man,

You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet.⁸

So,

...let the Christian artist look to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the renewal of his life in Christ, not only to acknowledge the source of the gift he has but also in order to have the love and freedom that will enable him to create the good and the beautiful himself.⁹

I will praise You, O Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders.¹⁰

Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.¹¹

6 Romans 1:20, Isaiah 6:3

7 Psalm 98:4–9

8 Psalm 8:6

9 *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture*. H. R. Rookmaaker, Intersarsity Press, 1978, p. 244–245

10 Psalm 9:1

11 Philippians 4:8

12 *Art Needs No Justification*, H. R. Rookmaaker, Intersarsity Press, 1978, p. 34

13 Romans 14:23b

14 Romans 1:21–23, Exodus 34:17, Isaiah 37:19

15 Exodus 35:10

16 Op. Cit. Chapter 9

Such sentiments become motivation for art works. This does not mean that the works of a Christian artist will be weak, insipid or sentimental.

The Christian's art must be Christian in a deep sense, showing the fruits of the Spirit in a positive mentality, and excitement for the greatness of the life we were given...¹²

Art, like the rest of creation, will be as varied as there are individuals and individual ways of praise and worship to our Lord and Father.

Art can be used to glorify God, or become idolatry. It can be used to portray evil and even to be a god in itself.¹³

Art can be used as a means of worship to God, as in the Tabernacle that God instructed Moses to build¹⁴, with Bezalel and Aholiab in charge of the artistry. Solomon's Temple was also built '...for the Lord God'.¹⁵ From a Christian point of view, therefore, our motives and attitudes need to be in unity with God's word.

Art is human representation of God's creation in both its physical and metaphysical realms. Let us commit our art works to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and worship Him, not our art.

For further reading see *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture*.¹⁶



The Curriculum

This is a spiral curriculum, revisiting and broadening the concepts through the years. Each year level is divided into stages, or days, based on the account of creation in Genesis 1.

DAY 1 Genesis 1:3–5 Light

- Light and dark, line
- Tonal Values
- Light is Colour — there are three primary colours Colours are symbolic; eg red/blood, life, redemption. Rainbow/God’s mercy covenant

DAY 2 Genesis 1:6–8 Sky, water, heavens

- The use of space in composition
- Design (abstract and formal)
- Form, perspective, two and three dimensions

DAY 3 Genesis 1:9–13 Oceans, Dry Land, Hills, Trees

- Inanimate representation
- Simple drawing, first elements in observation and drawing

DAY 4 Genesis 1:14–19 Sun, Moon Seasons

- Communication of feelings
- Movement in lines
- Symbolism in the line
- Tonal symbolism
- Emotional effects of colours
- Colour symbolism

DAY 5 Genesis 1:20–23 Fish, Birds

- Animate representation
- Progressive development of Day 3 activities, into more complicated forms: moving creatures in the sky and water

DAY 6 Genesis 1:24–31 Other Animals, Man

- Animate representation
- Progressive development in learning to draw and paint animals and human beings

DAY 7 Genesis 1:31

God saw that all He created was very good.

- Critiquing works of art
- Art appreciation and its history

Although each lesson teaches particular skills and understanding for the child, the following skills are common to all lessons:

- **Psycho-Motor coordination** — the refining of hand coordination through development and practice;
- **Creativity** — which flows from the Creator and is orderly, planned and pleasing;
- **Observation skills** — learning to actually ‘see’ what an object looks like (a most important discipline);
- **Perception** — the skill an artist develops to represent objects for the perception of others; and
- **Orderliness** — to reflect the order of God’s creation.

This art curriculum will help take the mystery out of teaching art by giving the teacher a knowledge of art principles that can be understood by children at the various levels.

The curriculum does not exclude other activities the teacher may want to do in class in the area of arts or craft (a separate fun lesson with finger painting, for example).

The ‘Life Applications’ listed are suggestions to use, develop or change. The teacher may want to inter-relate truths from another lesson with the art lesson — remain open to God’s guidance and inspiration.

The curriculum has been carefully planned, enabling children to experience various media like pencils, crayons, paint, etc. An endeavour has been made to keep the list of materials as simple and practical as possible without inhibiting the children’s work.

Materials

Some of the materials required can be found around the home, others will be available at the local newsagent and a few will need to be acquired at an art supply store. It is seldom necessary or advisable to purchase very expensive items for children at this level.

If an art supply store is inaccessible, mail order materials are generally available online.

PAPER¹⁹

Copy paper: bond paper, usually 80 gsm. Have supplies of regular A4 and some A3.

Cartridge paper: A3 and A2 sheets (cartridge is a heavier paper and is much more suitable for most art work, particularly painting).

Coloured paper: to be used for cutting out, etc. Have several larger sheets for special projects and for mounting art work.

Matt paper squares (Brenex squares) and glossy (flint) paper: available from art stores.

PENCILS AND MARKERS

The standard hardness pencil is the HB. In addition, purchase 2B and 4B pencils (the higher number with B indicates a softer lead).

Set of **felt tipped markers** (pointed ones are best).

Set of **crayons** (it is good to have a set of **oil pastels** as well, as they are softer).



¹⁹ International standard (ISO) paper sizes

Genesis 1:1–5

God created light.

Line



OBJECTIVE

Reinforce or introduce the terms **black, white** and **line**.



ACTIVITY

Use a fine felt pen or HB pencil and fill the page with a random pattern.

Call the exercise ‘Going for a walk with a line’ (see children’s exercises on this page).

Now try and find objects in the squiggles by turning your page around and using your imagination. Colour in the objects found using coloured pencils.

AND/OR

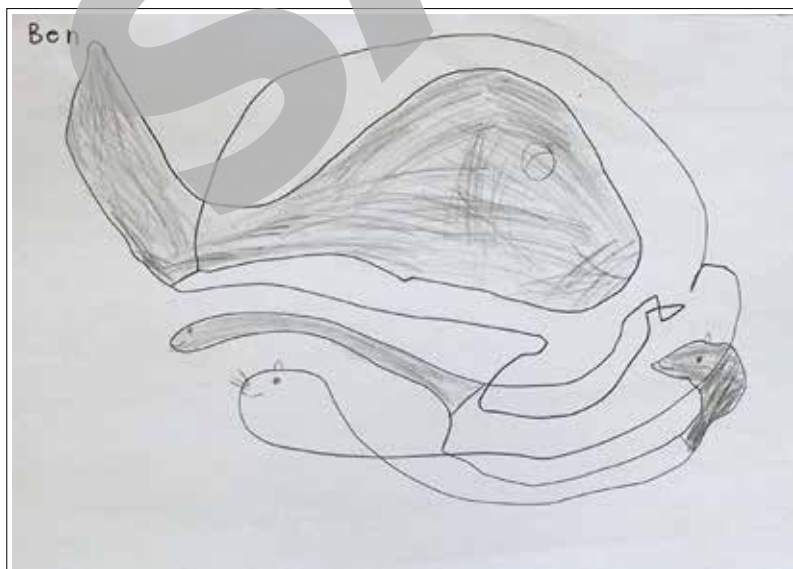
Observe lines God has created, e.g. in sea shells or pine cones. See the example on this page or find some additional examples from real life or book illustrations to inspire your child’s drawing. Ensure the child notes and appreciates the design in the object.



LIFE APPLICATION

Take the child outside to look for lines. Spend time thinking and giving thanks for the creation of lines.

Discuss the idea that lines also suggest boundaries (as in the outline of an object) and that boundaries indicate the difference between right and wrong in our lives. This is often understood through the idea of not crossing a *line* in the sand. Read Lamentations 2:8 where Jeremiah suggests the drawing of a line or a cord to mark out a division for God’s judgement.



MATERIALS

White paper

Fine point felt pen or HB pencil

Coloured pencils

Genesis 1:1–5
God created light.

Tone

OBJECTIVE

To further develop the understanding that grey is a combination of black and white by observation and practical experimentation.

ACTIVITY

Experiment mixing black and white to produce a tonal progression of greys. Remember to begin with white paint and add *very small* amounts of black, progressively building to darker grey.

Talk about a stormy day, mentioning the grey clouds, some darker than others, the wind blowing the trees, the rain falling, etc.

Have the child plan a picture in light pencil and then paint the picture of the stormy day, using black and white paints only.

LIFE APPLICATION

Give thanks to the Lord for the grey clouds and the storm that brings the rain that provides people and animals water for drinking and washing.

God can change our black lives of sin, not into a shade of grey, but into pure white, through Jesus' shed blood on the cross. If there is time you may like to use Isaiah 1:18 as motivation for a picture.



MATERIALS

- Newsprint for colour mixing exercises
- #8 or #10 paint brush
- A3 cartridge paper
- HB pencil to sketch drawing
- Black and white paint
- Paint containers for mixing paint



Genesis 1:1–5
God created light.

Colour



LIFE APPLICATION

Thank God that the three primary colours remind us of God the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You may wish to expand on how many things have three basic parts: a tree has a trunk, branches and leaves, an animal has a head, body and limbs, a house has foundation, walls and roof, etc. Each of these illustrates God as the three-in-one.

MATERIALS

A3 white paper
HB pencil for initial preparation
Red, yellow and blue paints
#8 and #10 paint brushes

OBJECTIVE

To further develop an understanding of the three primary colours: red, yellow and blue.

ACTIVITY

Prepare the first activity by drawing three triangles, in pencil, for the child (see above).

Have the child colour each triangle with one of the primary colours and write the name of each colour underneath.

Paint a picture of a three-coloured rainbow using these three colours on an A3 sheet of paper. As time allows he could add his house, yard, etc. to the picture.



Genesis 1:9-13

God created the land, plants and trees.

Inanimate Representation

OBJECTIVE

Learning to observe and model God's mountain landscapes, endeavouring to capture something of the grandeur of God's creation.

ACTIVITY

Find a picture of a mountain landscape, preferably with snow-capped mountains and streams, etc.

Discuss the form of the landscape, the shape of the mountains, the effect of perspective, the colours, the foreground of the scene, etc.

Make a model of the mountains in play dough or clay. This will require quite a large amount of play dough, but keep the model fairly small, perhaps to fit on an A4 sized base.

Encourage the child to include detail in the landscape.

Allow to dry for a week.

In Lesson 12 discuss the colour scheme observed in the picture. Paint the landscape using that colour scheme.

LIFE APPLICATION

Thank God for the beauty of the mountains — for the peaks, valleys, streams and rocks. Appreciate the peace and grandeur of this part of the creation.

Read Psalm 36:5-6.

MATERIALS

Play dough or clay

Piece of cardboard or hardboard

Vinyl paint

#8 brush



Genesis 1:9–13

God created the land, plants and trees.

Inanimate Representation

OBJECTIVE

To develop understanding and appreciation of God's shapes and colour in fruit through drawing a still life of fruit.

Read Isaiah 4:2. Fruit is not only beautiful to the eye, it is also one of the very best foods we can eat — especially designed by God for humans to be well nourished. Enjoy the fruit together when the lesson is complete.

ACTIVITY

Collect several pieces of different types of fruit (not more than four) and arrange them on a cloth or in a shallow bowl.

Examine the display together discussing the shapes of the fruit (handling the fruit is an important aspect of assessing the shape). Discuss and demonstrate how we could go about drawing the fruit and how the colours of the fruit change with the fall of the light.

Have the child draw the fruit in pencil, allowing correction with eraser.

Use oil pastels or crayons to complete the picture, seeking to capture something of the colour changes with the fall of the light.

LIFE APPLICATION

Thank God for fruit as it represents the end product of a process in creation. The Bible often speaks of fruit in this regard, such as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23, meaning the product of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

MATERIALS

Paper
HB pencil
Eraser
Oil pastels/crayons



Genesis 1:26–31
God created man.

Human Representation

OBJECTIVE

To develop a basic understanding of human form through tracing and examining.

ACTIVITY

Discuss the shape and proportions of a human being using very basic concepts.

Lay some large sheets of newsprint on the floor (preferably a hard floor) and lie on them.

Have the child trace around you using a black felt pen.

At home you may trace several members of the family or in the classroom one or two classmates.

Using the tracings explore the shapes and proportions, for example, how big is the head compared to the whole length, how long are the arms and how far down the leg do they extend, how long are the legs compared to the whole body, etc.

Take care not to make this analysis too complex and confuse the child — at this stage a general idea of proportions is adequate.

As time allows have the child practice drawing a person using the knowledge they have gained.

HINT

Often end rolls of newspaper are available from your local newspaper, or use large sheets of newsprint (butcher's paper) taped together. If all else fails, use old newspapers (in this case use a thick felt pen for drawing the outline).

LIFE APPLICATION

Genesis 1:27 tells us 'God created man in His own image', so as we draw people we are drawing something very important to God. Man is a special part of God's creation — nothing in all creation is anything like man, because he is in God's image. The Bible also says that man is 'fearfully and wonderfully made'.

MATERIALS

Large sheets of newsprint

Black felt pen

Drawing paper

2B pencil

Eraser



Genesis 1:28–31, 2:15

God reviewed His creation telling men to subdue, work and care for it.

Architecture

OBJECTIVE

To observe and appreciate houses and then to draw and paint them.

ACTIVITY

Take a backing board and chair and choose a suitable view of a house. Take several pieces of paper, pencils and eraser.

Discuss the characteristics of houses — walls, windows, roof, etc. Talk about the relative sizes and locations of the various components of the house and emphasising the line quality in most building materials.

Have the child make a pencil sketch of the house.

Return to the desk and draw the house using a black felt pen on a coloured sheet of paper. Reinforce to the child that he is drawing the house in *line*.

LIFE APPLICATION

Thank God for providing all the resources needed to be able to build a comfortable house. Thank Him for making us in His image so that we can use those resources to make other materials like bricks, tiles, glass, cement, etc.

MATERIALS

Backing board

Paper, pencils, eraser

Large sheet of coloured paper

Black felt pens

