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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.<sup>6</sup> As the hills cry out the praises of God,<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>*

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.<sup>9</sup>*

*I will praise You, O Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders.<sup>10</sup>*

*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.<sup>11</sup>*

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...<sup>12</sup>*

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.<sup>13</sup>*

Art can be used as a means of worship to God, as in the Tabernacle that God instructed Moses to build<sup>14</sup>, with Bezalel and Aholiab in charge of the artistry. Solomon's Temple was also built '...for the Lord God'.<sup>15</sup> 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*.<sup>16</sup>



# 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.

- The video *Let's Teach Art* has been designed to accompany this curriculum. The first section of the video is an excellent overview of art from a Christian perspective. The second section contains teaching clips for the lessons on line, tone and colour, with separate sections for age groups from 5 to 12 years. This is an almost indispensable aid for the effective use of this curriculum.



- Plan art materials and where to procure them. Organise a space to work and places for storage of materials and finished works. Specify clean up procedures.
- The teacher should do the exercise a week or so prior to teaching:
  - to discover any difficulties the child might experience;
  - to ensure the availability of materials required; and
  - to estimate the time needed to complete the lesson.
- Provide protective (or old) clothing for both the children and teacher.

- Discuss the lesson objectives with the child before, during and after the lesson, inter-relating spiritual truths to the project and/or the materials being used.
- Do not place the responsibility of learning art on the child — a good teacher will *teach art*.
- An artist is only as good as his resources allow. For example, quality of materials, reference files of pictures, etc.
- Allow children to trace pictures — they learn to draw through tracing.
- Allow the use of erasers (rubbers). There is nothing wrong in making a mistake and then making a correction.



- Do not put unreasonable pressure on children to complete their work within a limited timeframe.
- Allowing children to *do their own thing* in art class is a lazy approach by the teacher and a waste of the child's valuable time.
- Complete one lesson at a time properly and completely. Make sure the art work is pleasant, suitable and good — approved of God.<sup>28</sup>



Genesis 1:1–5  
God Created Light.

# Line

## OBJECTIVE

To develop a more concrete understanding of the meaning of the term **line**.

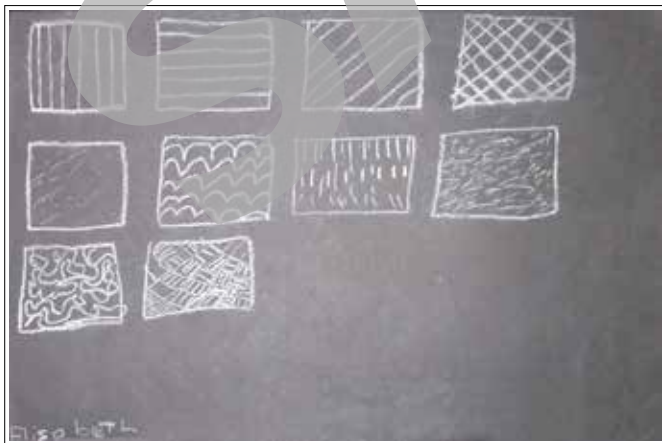
## ACTIVITY

Discuss line and introduce the idea of white line on a black background (the opposite to previous exercises).

Have the child begin with the squares (see illustration) and complete using a white pencil, crayon or chalk. This exercise will provide stimulus and understanding of this new media.

Practice line work on the black background; first draw thick and thin lines, pressing firmly then softly in exploring the new media.

Have the child draw a night scene, after discussing what can be seen at night; the moon, stars, silhouetted outlines, of houses, trees, etc. You will need to emphasise this is a line exercise and any shading should be done in line, for example, cross-hatching.



## HINT

If chalk is used care must be taken not to smudge the work. When finished the work can be 'fixed' if you wish to keep it in good condition, using fixative spray from an art shop, or with hair spray.

## LIFE APPLICATION

Psalm 19:1–4 tells of the glory of God in the heavens.

Discuss how God, our Father, created everything, including the night, which in a special way shows God's glory. Knowing that the night is God's creation will help the child not be afraid of the dark.

## MATERIALS

Sheets of black paper

White pencils, crayons, or chalk

Fixative spray if desired



Genesis 1:1–5  
God Created Light.

# Tone

## OBJECTIVE

To further explore and appreciate the many tones of grey and the interest they generate for art works.

## ACTIVITY

Have the child paint a grey scale, encouraging a detailed gradation from white to black as shown in the illustration.

Discuss black and white — find some black and white photos, or watch for black and white television images that are sometimes used in advertisements. Without colour we can more easily appreciate tonal values.

Pick a flower as the subject to be studied.

First discuss the shapes of the flower and its petals, then consider how its tonal values can be reduced to black and white.

If possible use grey paper and have the child plan the drawing of the flower lightly in pencil. Complete the picture using black and white paints only. Use a fine paint brush (#4 or #8 at largest) and concentrate on the tonal values seen in the flower.

## LIFE APPLICATION

Thank God for the tonal subtleties found in greys. Psalm 147:8 tells us that God doesn't send sunshine all the time as there is need for the land to be replenished by rain from clouds (Leviticus 26:4).

## MATERIALS

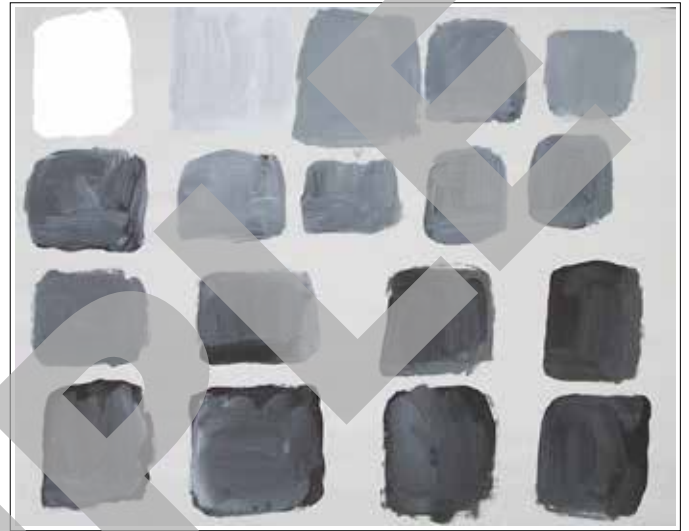
Paper — white or grey

Pencils

Eraser

Black and white paints

#4 and #8 brushes



Genesis 1:1–5

God separated the waters and began to form His world.

# Form

## OBJECTIVE

To further develop and understand the concept of three dimensional form.

## ACTIVITY

Have the child choose a favourite toy. Discuss the form of the toy as a three dimensional object, pointing out the main features.

Have the child make a model of the toy using playdough, plasticine or clay.

Observe and feel the form of both the toy and the model. Discuss how you can handle the model and view it from different angles, which is not possible with a two-dimensional drawing on paper.

### HINT

You will need to supervise the selection of a favourite toy as it will need to be an object the child is capable of modelling (for example, a doll, soft toy, car or truck).

## LIFE APPLICATION

Read Deuteronomy 32:6 which tells us that God has made and established us.

Thank God for the way He has made us and everything else in creation. Thank God for hands that can feel the form of the creation and eyes with which to see it.

As God made us and everything else, He has given us the ability to make things, too!

## MATERIALS

Board or paper to work on

Playdough, plasticine or clay

Match sticks to join sections of the model



Genesis 1:1–5

God separated the waters and began to form His world.

# Design

## OBJECTIVE

To observe the creation and and from it create a mosaic picture.

## ACTIVITY

Find a tree or a picture of a tree and examine its shape and form.

Discuss how a tree is made up of many parts, trunk, branches and leaves.

Discuss how people have for many centuries made mosaics. Show and discuss pictures in mosaic from art books or an encyclopedia.

Explain that we are going to make a picture of the tree in mosaic.

Have the child draw a picture of the tree lightly in pencil.

Then cut out small pieces of coloured paper in appropriate colours for the tree.

Sort the paper into colours for the different sections of the tree, then have the child glue the small pieces in place to complete the picture.

### HINT

Try to find suitably coloured paper to use — either coloured paper squares, or you can use coloured paper from magazines which will often have a textured rather than solid colour, thus adding extra interest.

Remember the child may have difficulty managing very small pieces of paper and, in addition, the exercise could become rather tedious if pieces are too small.

## LIFE APPLICATION

Thank God that we can create a new type of tree helping us to understand more of the diversity of God. We can also see how a large object is made up of many small parts, each of which is important.

## MATERIALS

White paper

Pencil

Eraser

Coloured paper

Scissors

Glue





Genesis 1:9–13

God created the land, plants and trees.

# Inanimate Representation



## OBJECTIVE

To observe, understand and utilise leaves in a work of art.

## ACTIVITY

Discuss shapes, colours, sizes, etc. of leaves, then go outdoors and collect a number of each of several types of leaves.

Lay the leaves out and discuss their shape, colour, etc. and how they could be arranged to make a design.

Using a coloured piece of paper as the base, have the child compose designs using the leaves and when satisfied glue the leaves to the paper to complete a leaf mural.

## LIFE APPLICATION

Thank God for beautiful leaves that God makes in abundance. Yet their lives are so short — they serve their purpose, die and fall from the tree. The next year the tree makes another abundance of leaves to serve Him and to bless us with their beauty and shade. Read and consider 1 Peter 1:24–25 and contrast it with Psalm 1:3.

Thank God that when we are joined to Him we will not fade like a leaf.

## MATERIALS

Leaves

Coloured paper

Glue

Genesis 1:24–25

God created the land creatures.

# Animal Representation



## OBJECTIVE

To observe and make larger animals, considering them in the context of Noah's Ark.



## ACTIVITY

Discuss the larger animals to be taken into the Ark — lions, tigers, elephants, giraffes, etc.

Plan and pencil sketch a number of these animals.

Model as many as time allows in modelling clay or similar and allow to dry.



## LIFE APPLICATION

Discuss the larger animals and ponder why you think God chose to make each one.

Thank God for the variety and diversity of animals. Consider too, how we can relate to each type; some can be domesticated, others are wild and dangerous to man. Some are lovely and gracious whilst others are ferocious.



## MATERIALS

Sketch paper

HB or 2B pencils

Paper to model on

Modelling clay, air drying clay or Plasticine

Genesis 1:26–31  
God created man.

# Human Representation

## OBJECTIVE

Understanding the human body through exploring the skeletal structure.

## ACTIVITY

Study the skeleton drawing on this page and observe how the body fits around the skeleton.

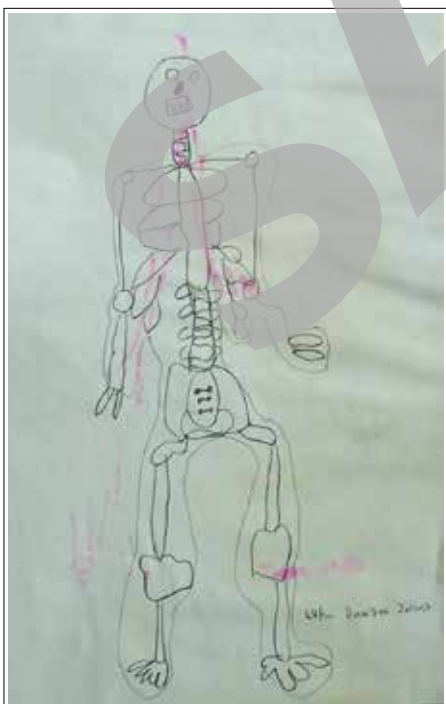
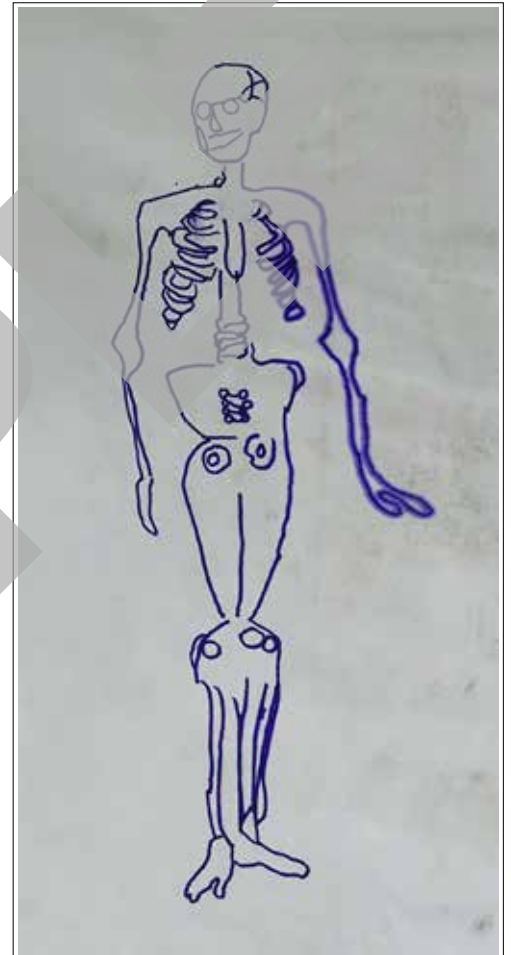
Have the child trace the drawing of the skeleton onto tracing paper.

Transfer the image to white paper and carefully outline with a fine felt pen.

You may wish to identify some of the bones and label the drawing accordingly.

### HINT

Transfer the image by rubbing over the back of the tracing with a soft pencil or chalk, then placing the tracing on a white piece of paper and going over the skeleton again with an HB pencil, thus transferring the image to the white paper.



## LIFE APPLICATION

God's word is a framework or skeleton for our lives just as our human skeleton is the framework for our bodies.

Read Psalm 139:14–15.

## MATERIALS

Tracing paper

Drawing paper

HB pencil

Soft pencil or chalk

Genesis 1:28–31

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

# Interior design

## OBJECTIVE

To develop an understanding of interior design.

## ACTIVITY

Have the child choose the most interesting corner of his bedroom. Discuss the features of that corner and how they work together considering factors such as perspective.

The outline on this page shows how the child can begin to set up a two point perspective drawing. Keep the exercise simple enough for the child to understand the basic principle.

Have the child draw a picture of the corner lightly in pencil.

Discuss with the child how he would like to change or improve that part of his room and make adjustments to the drawing accordingly.

Discuss colours, etc. and have the child complete the drawing of his newly designed room.

Use coloured pencils or crayons to encourage attention to detail.

## LIFE APPLICATION

Read Ecclesiastes 3:11 and thank God that He loves beautiful things. God has made us in His image and we love beautiful things, too. Thank God that we can work with God to make our lives and the things around us beautiful.

## MATERIALS

- Paper
- Pencils
- Eraser
- Coloured pencils or crayons

