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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

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

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, Intervarsity Press, 1978, p. 244–245

10 Psalm 9:1

11 Philippians 4:8

12 *Art Needs No Justification*, H. R. Rookmaaker, Intervarsity 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



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 Lesson

According to Hebrew teachers and rabbis of all generations, the greatest art is not that of self-expression, but that of self control.²⁷

The author penned this sentence to explain why the Jewish people have not pursued the arts since the Tabernacle was built. But the truth for everyone is that the greatest art is the fruit of self-control.

Art is a discipline and art lessons are to be structured learning experiences, rather than undirected drawing or painting exercises, which by their very nature preclude any significant self-control.

More important than a finished piece of art work is the ongoing development of Christian character in the child. Nevertheless, one will find that the development of Christian character will result in superior art work.

Remember, the quality of the lesson, and the resultant art work, is not as dependent on the curriculum as it is on the quality of the teacher.

Practics

It is suggested that 1–2 hours per week (either as one or two sessions) be allocated to art, typically in the afternoon. Be aware that some lessons may require less time, others more. This curriculum book contains 40 weekly lessons for a full year's work.

Allow children adequate time to complete their work — there is no rigid time frame to which the teacher must adhere.

In a class setting, go only as fast as the slowest child, whilst encouraging others to spend time on further exploration of principles they have learnt.

Do not feel pressured to finish a unit in one lesson. If the children are enjoying the lesson and they are working on an involved piece it can easily be put away and taken up again later. Sometimes a child will not be able to do all the exercises presented whilst on other occasions he will have time to explore further ideas. Objects or ideas from earlier lessons can also be incorporated into the current lesson.



Lesson Preparation Guidelines

- The teacher should plan *their own* programme. This curriculum is designed as a foundation and guide.
- Read and absorb this introductory section.
- This curriculum has been specifically designed to include many examples of children's art work. The examples will not only inspire children, but will also enable the teacher to see what other children of the same age have done. Often parents and teachers will expect children to produce works of art that are simply beyond them.

²⁷ *Jesus in Exodus*, Logos International, Michael Esses, 1977, p. 262

²⁸ Cf. Genesis 1:1–31

Genesis 1:1–5
God Created Light.

Line

OBJECTIVE

To appreciate the significance of line and explore variety in lines.

ACTIVITY

Have the child use a pencil to draw eight boxes and experiment with lines as shown in the example below.

These line patterns can be used in pictures to create pattern, texture and tone.

Have the child draw a cityscape, either from memory or from a picture, and complete using some of the patterns from the experimental boxes, plus some new ones the child can create.

If available, use black paper and a white marker/ crayon/pencil for drawing.

Begin the Art Journal (see page 13).

LIFE APPLICATION

We have learned how a picture can be built using lines. Each line is a small part of the whole.

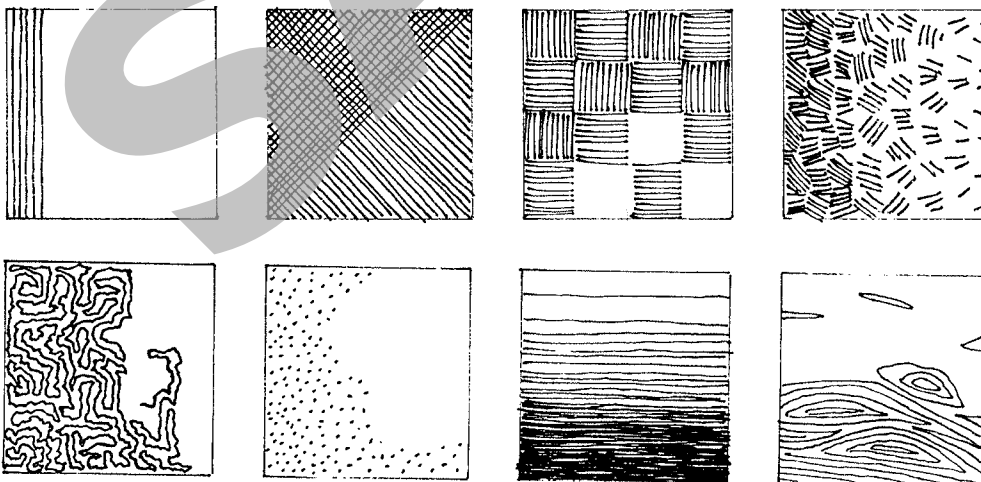
Isaiah 28:10 says that our learning is built 'line upon line, line upon line'. Life's picture is built line upon line and the pictures we draw are also built line upon line. This understanding builds significance to every line drawn as it is a part of the whole.

MATERIALS

Sheets of black paper (if unavailable use white)

Pencils or fine felt markers

Erasers



Genesis 1:1–5
God Created Light.

Tone



OBJECTIVE

To discover the subtleties in patterns using grey tones.



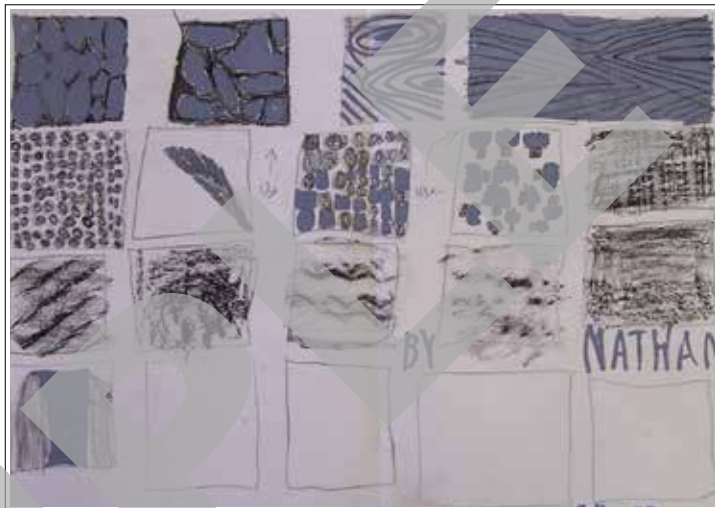
ACTIVITY

Discuss greys and remind the child how grey is a mixture of black and white.

Using a light pencil line on white or grey paper, plan a random mosaic similar to the illustration and sample on video (show examples of mosaic from an art book).

Have the child carefully fill in each of the shapes with a grey felt-tipped marker. Then line in the outline and spaces with a black Chinagraph pencil or black crayon.

As time allows, repeat using a wood grain and/or brick pattern.



LIFE APPLICATION

God's creation is made up of small parts which join together to make a whole. It takes thousands of leaves to make a tree, millions of molecules to make an object, or many bricks to make a house. Find a picture showing an example of one of these and give thanks to God for the ability to create a picture that reflects the way God created His world.



MATERIALS

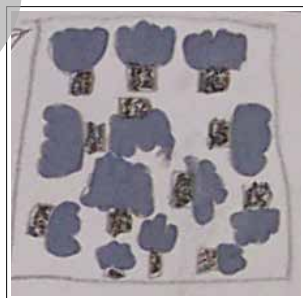
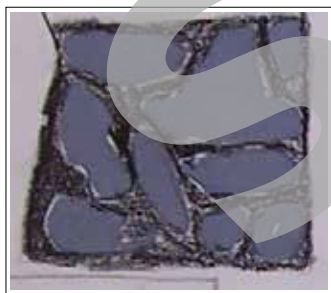
White or grey paper

Pencil

Eraser

Grey felt-tipped marker

Chinagraph pencil or black crayon



Genesis 1:1–5
God Created Light.

Colour



OBJECTIVE

To reinforce the understanding of the three primary and three secondary colours.



ACTIVITY

Review last year's lesson and colour wheel (if not available make another colour wheel to provide a teaching tool for the lesson).

Yellow + Red = Orange

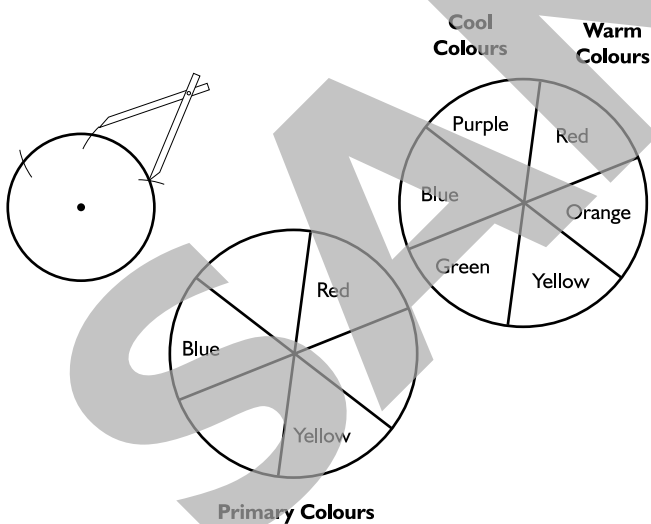
Yellow + Blue = Green

Blue + Red = Purple

The colours can be divided to form two groups.

Warm colours: red, orange and yellow

Cool colours: purple, blue and green



Find some pictures of butterflies, which the child can copy. Then have the child use paints to create a warm or cool butterfly.

HINT

As butterflies are symmetrical, you may need to help the child with his drawing. Folding the paper in halves, drawing one half and then cutting out the shape will help solve the symmetry problem.



LIFE APPLICATION

The colours God has created for us to enjoy are beautiful. Consider the abundant planning of God in creating a butterfly that lives such a short time (around 2½ weeks). Find some pictures of butterflies in an encyclopedia and rejoice and marvel at the greatness of our Creator expressed through the shapes and colours. Read Matthew 6:25–30.



MATERIALS

White paper

Pencil

Paints

Brushes

Containers/palette



Genesis 1:4
God saw that it was good.

History of Art

OBJECTIVE

To explore the biblical Tabernacle and the unique instructions God gave to Moses.

ACTIVITY

Select appropriate sections of Exodus 35 to 40 to read and discuss with the child. In particular, Exodus 35:31: 'See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri...and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship'.

Read together Exodus 39:24–26 and discuss the priest's robe. Have the child draw the pattern of pomegranates interspersed with bells, then colour with crayons in the scheme the scripture instructs. Paint a wash over the design to complete.

If time allows the child may wish to draw the priest in his robe.

HINT

Any aspect of the artistic work for the Tabernacle could be chosen for this exercise. We have as an example chosen the decoration on the hem of the priests robe (Exodus 39:24–26).



www.miskamministries.org

Use a Bible dictionary or other reference book to find pictures of pomegranates and bells, as well as the priest in his robe.

NOTE

Whilst it is unusual to see a section on the Tabernacle in Art History books it does not negate the importance of the Tabernacle in the history of art.

LIFE APPLICATION

Thank God for the Tabernacle and its design that reflects so many truths about God. The building of the Tabernacle reminds us that God uses men to do His work on earth. As we develop our skills in art and other subjects we are equipping ourselves to be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Read Colossians 1:10.

MATERIALS

Paper
Pencil
Eraser
Crayons
Paint
Brush

AIDS

Pictures of
pomegranates
and bells
Pictures of
priests in robes



webtu.messiah.edu

Genesis 1:9-13

God created the land, plants and trees.

Inanimate Representation

OBJECTIVE

To capture the beauty of flowers in a piece of art work.

ACTIVITY

We will create a picture of flowers, using a crayon resist with Indian ink. It may be an arrangement of flowers, or two or so pot plants with flowers. If you do not have access to the above, find a picture of flowers that can be copied.

Choose a sheet of thick paper or light card and have the child lightly draw the arrangement, taking particular note of the shapes and their sizes, noting how the shapes of the picture overlap one another. Take time with this sketch, making sure it is complete before moving to the next phase.

Have the child colour the picture with wax crayons, being sure to press firmly. When it is complete, paint over the whole picture with Indian ink. Leave for a short time until parts begin to dry, then take the piece and lightly hose down with water to remove the excess black ink until you are satisfied with the picture. Final touching up can be made with a sharp instrument to scratch away any particular areas of ink you wish to remove.

HINT

Be sure to practice this exercise prior to the lesson so that you are familiar with the technique.

Two lessons have been allowed for this exercise as we want the child to take extra care and effort to produce a satisfying result.

LIFE APPLICATION

Thank God that we can use the beauty of flowers to create a beautiful picture in our art work. Read James 4:7 together, pointing out how our lovely picture was covered over by the black and seemed to be spoiled, just as the devil comes to spoil our lives. When the water came, however, it washed away some of the black, leaving behind an even more beautiful picture of flowers.

MATERIALS

Thick paper or light card

Pencil

Eraser

Crayons

Indian ink

Brush

AIDS

Flower arrangements or pot plants

Photographs of flowers



Genesis 1:26–31
God created man.

Human Representation



OBJECTIVE

To enjoy some creativity in building a model of a person.



ACTIVITY

Review the last lesson on the shapes of the human figure.

As you are discussing the shapes think of items (such as pipe cleaners, pop and kebab sticks, toilet rolls, balls, etc.) that could be used to build a person in three dimensions. Collect a range of possible ‘body parts’ and explore their suitability—shape, size, strength, etc.

Discuss the pose (walking, running, sitting, reaching, etc.) and how the ‘body’ could be assembled. Proceed to build the person and paint if desired.



LIFE APPLICATION

Thank God for helping us understand how the shapes of our bodies are made from basic shapes that we see around us every day. Discuss the different poses and reflect on the many different things the human body is able to do. We can walk from one place to another, we can reach to get something down from a high place, we can jump across a puddle, etc.

Consider some of the thoughts of King David as he ponders man in the first ten verses of Psalm 139.



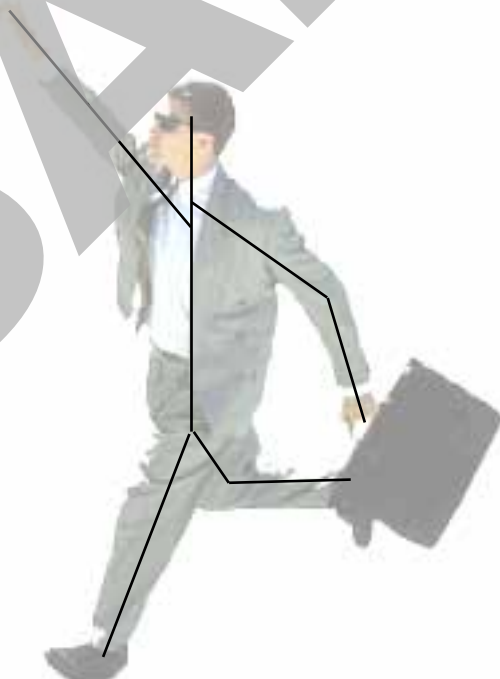
MATERIALS

‘Body parts’ (such as pipe cleaners, pop and kebab sticks, toilet roll centres, balls, etc.)

Paint

Brushes

Glue



Genesis 1:28–31, 2:15

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

Industrial and Domestic Design

OBJECTIVE

To study and then design a door.

ACTIVITY

Discuss the various types of doors — doors in houses, mansions, castles, dungeons, churches, sheds, stables, etc.

Further discuss and show examples of different types of doors, paying particular attention to the materials from which the door is built (this provides character and design features). Doors are often designed to communicate something about what is on the other side. For example, castle or dungeon doors provide security and are designed to communicate strength. The front door of our home, however, communicates warmth, welcoming and friendliness.

Have the child choose a door he would like to make.

HINT

Some ideas for doors:

1. Make a stained glass front door from heavy card by cutting the shapes of the design out of a piece of the card. Paint the door to suit and fix pieces of different coloured cellophane paper behind each cut out shape.
2. Make a castle door out of pop sticks or similar objects and paint a suitable colour.



www.fcbuilders.com

LIFE APPLICATION

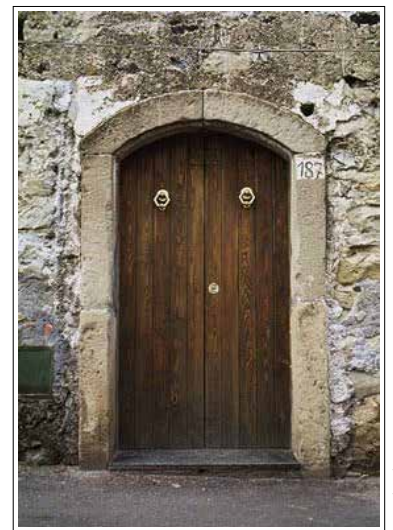
Doors provide an entrance into something and they themselves tell us something about what is behind them. Jesus told us that He is the door in John 10:9. Discuss what you think Jesus could have meant by saying He is the door.

MATERIALS

Drawing paper
Cardboard
Cutting knife (take care to instruct in use)
Pencil
Eraser
Cellophane paper
Glue
Paint
Brushes

AIDS

Pictures of doors



www.aku-aku.com



www.grageborsinc.com



LIFE APPLICATION

Thank God that He created all men in His image and gave them remarkable talents. Even though the people of Mesopotamia were not Christian, God still allowed them to use skills He had given them to make beautiful pieces of sculpture. We read about Sargon in Isaiah 20:1. If time permits, explore other Assyrian kings and their exploits in the Bible.



MATERIALS

Paper

Pencil

Eraser

Thick cardboard or plywood

Newspaper

Paper towel

Wall paper glue or similar

or

Clay, air drying clay or Plasticine

Modelling tools

Paint

Brushes

AIDS

Photographs of Mesopotamian relief sculpture

