

Appreciating Art



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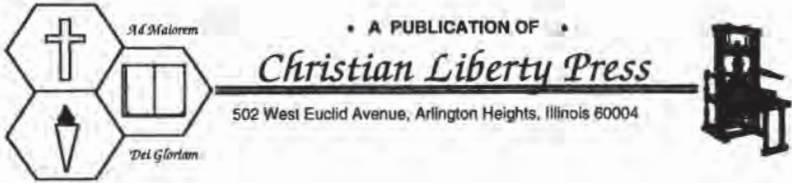


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Introduction

Art is a God-given vehicle whereby mankind can reflect the glory of the Creator by expressing some aspect of beauty, diversity or creativity. When people talk about “art”, they frequently have different ideas from the next person. One may think of art in terms of a statue or a fine painting, while another may think of a child’s crayon marks on the wall or their own arrangement of fresh flowers in a vase that catches the light just so. None of these images are any more deserving of artistic merit than another. Indeed, each idea of beauty and creativity is unique to the individual. Some may express their artistry through the mediums of paint or pen, while others may speak through wood or clay. The possible outlets for exhibiting our God-given talents are too numerous to detail here; yet, they are at your fingertips, available to be used as an extension of yourself.

Art is truly a creative, expressive and enriching part of our everyday lives. As you use the information contained within these pages, you must picture yourself as an observer rather than an instructor. Your child is giving you the opportunity to experience a bit of his world through his unleashing of creative skills. After initially providing the materials and location, exchange ideas together. Your main objective should be to create a time of sharing, fun and discovery rather than a “perfect” specimen of a craft.

Many young children and even some adults have had the joy of artistic endeavors forever robbed from them through the rigid, narrow-minded ideas of a teacher or other person who views himself as holding the answers to “the right way to do things”. In your teaching, it is imperative that you leave behind old baggage you may carry about art and begin with a fresh outlook.

It is the authors’ desire that all who use this book will take time to reflect on that which is art around them. One does not need to own a Renoir or Degas to appreciate artistic beauty and presence. To make the teaching of creativity a whole-life experience, one must go beyond

pre-designed curricula and begin to incorporate this philosophy into their daily life.

For instance, add a centerpiece to your dinner table tonight which you or your child have created. Appreciate the beauty of handmade baskets or quilts. Savor the kitchen artistry of home-baked bread or a fragrant marinara sauce. Contemplate the differences of expression in a Rembrandt, Chagall or Michelangelo. Once all of your senses have awakened to the beauty which surrounds you, it is then, you will be able to share with your child an education that far exceeds any workbook, or cut and paste session. Stretching one's mind to see past the ordinary is an important part of any person's education. Art appreciation is only the beginning. The canvas awaits; now you must pick up the brush.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

As you work, keep in mind that although the crafts are arranged under certain sections, they could very easily fit elsewhere. If it suits your purpose to rearrange them, then by all means do so.

We also recommend that you begin saving scraps of fabric, ribbon, broken strings of beads, etc., in a box set aside expressly for your child's artistic creations. Our intent is not to send you scurrying to every craft and art supply store looking for obscure items, but instead, to encourage you and your child to be resourceful by using what is easily accessible.

You will note, that at the end of each lesson there is an intensity level rating. This star system is based on a 1-4 scale, with 1 being less difficult or time consuming, progressing to 4 which should have a greater time or material allotment. This should help you in planning your schedule and level of patience on a given day.

*The drawing on the Title page was created by our son Daniel when he was eight years old.

Section I Introduction

Before beginning this section containing "Art in the Kitchen", take time to examine your ideas and attitudes surrounding the kitchen. Does your child see you experiencing the kitchen with a creative and enthusiastic outlook? Is your kitchen an organized and pleasant place in which to congregate and work? If you were able to answer those questions in the affirmative, then your child is probably already skilled in some basic kitchen tasks. If you had a negative response to those questions, here is your opportunity to approach your kitchen with a fresh outlook. Since many of a child's memories are centered around this one room, it is hard to ignore its importance. Let this be your opportunity to do some memory building with your child!

"When one has tasted watermelons, one knows what angels eat."

--Mark Twain

"The Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts, all on a summers day. The Knave of Hearts, he stole those tarts, and gave them quite away!"

--Lewis Carroll

Lesson 4

Applesauce Parfaits

PURPOSE:

In this lesson, your child will create their own layered snack or dessert using two basic ingredients.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- * Applesauce
- * Graham crackers (3 or 4 crackers for each serving)
- * Zip-top or twist-tie plastic bag
- * Two small bowls
- * Clear glass or parfait-type glasses

INSTRUCTIONS:

Place the graham crackers in the plastic bag and seal tightly. Your child must now crunch and pound the bag to make fine crumbs of the graham crackers. Once the crumbs are made, pour them into a small bowl. Pour some applesauce into the other bowl and now begin layering. Your child can begin with either ingredient for the first layer and continue alternating until the desired level is reached. Once the creation is complete all that is left is to eat and enjoy!!!

FINAL THOUGHTS:

It is best to make this treat shortly before eating, as the crumbs tend to get soggy otherwise.

For a sugar-free parfait, use fruit-juice sweetened grahams and unsweetened applesauce. If that is not your need or interest, you can try cinnamon-sugar grahams and add a little cinnamon to the applesauce for a different flavor.

If you have children of various ages, they can all join in the making of this treat. Even our 2 1/2 year old loved pounding the crackers, and the eleven year old took great care in making precise layers.

INTENSITY LEVEL: ** (Two Stars)



Section II Introduction

As you enter this section on “Art for Others”, it would be advisable to look through the various projects and decide who among your friends and family would enjoy these handmade items. Your objectives are three-fold. First, you want the gift to be appreciated. If your child has put effort into his creation, it will be a real confidence boost to him to see his gift displayed and cherished. Secondly, you want to give your child a hands-on example of considering another person’s needs and interests. For example, maybe Grandma would love the silhouette from Lesson 13; whereas Aunt Darla would enjoy the wire ornament in Lesson 11 for her Christmas tree. Encourage your child to see people’s individual preferences as another fascinating aspect of human nature. Most of all, take this time to reinforce the joy of giving from the heart.

“You have been my friend,” replied Charlotte. “That in itself is a tremendous thing. I wove my webs for you because I liked you. After all, what’s a life, anyway? We’re born, we live a little while, we die. A spider’s life can’t help being something of a mess, with all this trapping and eating flies. By helping you, perhaps I was trying to lift up my life a trifle. Heaven knows anyone’s life can stand a little of that.”

--E. B. White *Charlotte’s Web*



Lesson 15

All About YOU Collage

PURPOSE:

In this lesson, your child will create a collage of feelings and impressions about someone he cares for.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- * Large piece of paper or poster board
- * Old magazines, photographs, words clipped from newspapers, etc.
- * Glue or glue stick

INSTRUCTIONS:

Cut out and glue onto the paper anything which reminds your child of the special person they have chosen. This can include words or phrases clipped from newspapers or magazines which praise him, or sound like something the person might say. Glue them in a collage format, overlapping as much as necessary. If your child takes the time to contemplate the interests and goals of the person chosen, the collage will be a treasured gift.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

This collage can be covered with clear contact paper for durability.

It is fun to see how children view the people around them. In making a collage like this, you may be amazed to see how observant of small details your child has been. Be careful not to discourage his choice of images, because his opinion will be unique from your own.

INTENSITY LEVEL: ** (Two Stars)

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

--Longfellow



Section III Introduction

Children are very interested in making their own playthings. It isn't so much the making of the item as it is the messing around with all the raw materials. Observe children at play sometime and this will become readily apparent.

In our home, a skateboard and a sled are roped together to make a go-cart of sorts. Sticks become swords, guns, arrows, canes, etc. It is an unfettered childlike mind which is often the most inventive. Our desire is that your child will use the ideas here as a springboard toward inventions of his own.

“What makes people smart, curious, alert, observant, competent, confident, resourceful, persistent--in the broadest and best sense, intelligent--is not having access to more and more learning places, resources, and specialists, but being able in their lives to do a wide variety of interesting things that matter, things that challenge their ingenuity, skill, and judgment, and that make an obvious difference in their lives and the lives of people around them.”

--John Holt *Teach Your Own*

Lesson 18

Tin Can Lanterns

PURPOSE:

In this lesson, we will design and make a lantern from an empty can.

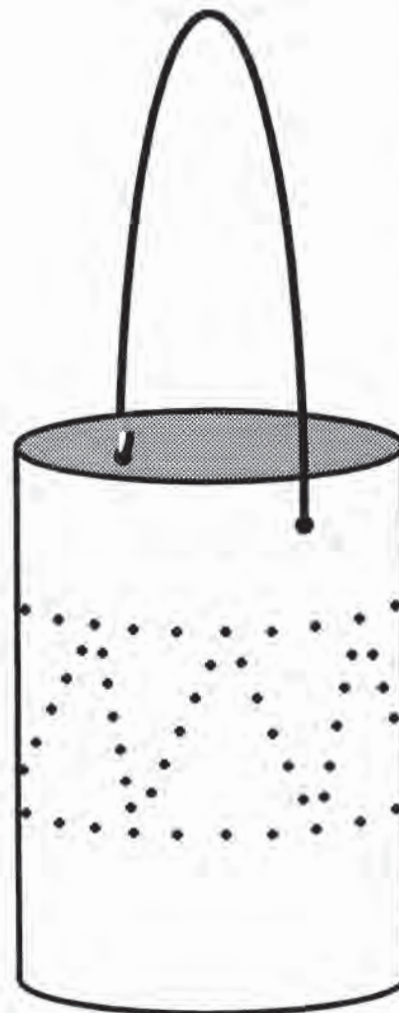
MATERIALS NEEDED:

- * Can, washed and dried (soup or small coffee can)
- * Hammer or wood block
- * Large nail
- * Pliers
- * Paper to wrap can
- * Pencil, pen or marker
- * Water
- * Freezer
- * Bath Towel
- * Candle
- * Coat hanger, or other wire

INSTRUCTIONS:

Thoroughly wash the can and remove any wrappers. Fill the can with water and freeze until solid. Remove the can from the freezer and wrap with a piece of paper. On the paper, have your child design a pattern which he will later punch out with his hammer and nail. To make the holes, simply lay the can on a bath towel and gently hammer a nail into the can. The nail should go only 1/8 of an inch into the can. If the design is complicated, the can may have to be refrozen to solidify the ice again. Once the design is completed, punch one larger hole on each side of the can, near the top, for the handle. Run hot water over the can to remove the ice.

Using a piece of coat hanger or wire, insert each end into the handle hole and crimp the edge with your pliers to hold it securely. The handle should be long enough so your child does not burn his hand when he carries the lantern. Add the candle, and the lantern is complete!



FINAL THOUGHTS:

These lanterns continue to be one of the most useful crafts our children have ever made. When the electricity goes out, they love to run and get their lanterns to add to the needed candle light. They also use the lanterns outside during evening picnics, which is great because the candle is slightly protected from the wind.

Do keep in mind that your child should not make the holes too close to the bottom of the can since melting wax may start trickling out.

INTENSITY LEVEL: * * * (Three Stars)

Let your light shine before
men in such a way that they
may see your good works,
and glorify your Father
who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:16

Section IV Introduction

In the following nature crafts, we will show your child how to create things from what is readily available around you. As often as possible, we attempt to keep away from useless craft items. Instead, we hope to spur both you and your child toward a greater appreciation of all that surrounds us.

Many times people try to excuse their lack of interest in beauty by saying they are not “talented” or “artistic”. The truth may more often be in a lack of training the mind’s eye to recognize beauty. We must work at heightening our senses to distinguish between the ordinary and the extraordinary.

Look around you; have you made your child’s environment a sensory experience? This is vital to their outlook on art. The first memories of creativity are built directly into their environment. Do they see objects displayed upon which their eye can linger? Do they smell food that has taken love and time to prepare? Are there books for the imagination and music for the ear? Begin taking the time to make you and your child aware of the many facets of art. Hopefully, you will start that journey with your child in a small way as we sample bits and pieces of the natural world around us.

“The Christian is the one whose imagination should fly beyond the stars.”

--Francis A. Schaeffer *Art and the Bible*

Lesson 32 Seed Wreath

PURPOSE:

In this lesson, your child will use various seeds and beans to create a natural looking wreath.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- * Art Pattern #12 (Page 83)
- * An assortment of dried beans and seeds
- * A strong piece of cardboard (pizza box cardboard works great!)
- * Glue
- * Scissors

INSTRUCTIONS:

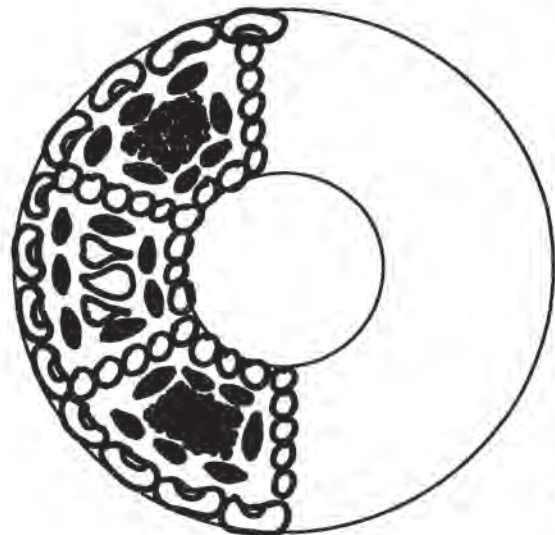
Explore with your child all the ways of obtaining seeds for this project. Perhaps there are pods and seeds outside your house which you could gather. Also, wash and dry seeds from fruits and vegetables which your family eats, (watermelon, oranges, lemons, pumpkins, squash, etc.). You can also use some dried peas and beans from the grocery store. The most fascinating wreath mosaics usually contain a variety of seeds and beans from all these sources.

Once you have a good assortment of seeds, you are ready to begin the project. Using Art Pattern #12, trace the design onto your cardboard. Cut the cardboard according to the pattern, forming a donut-shaped wreath. You may at this point, want to allow your child some quiet time to sort through his seeds and plan a pattern for the wreath. Once he is ready to begin, have him apply glue to small areas, and then, position the seeds and beans to create his pattern. Continue around the circle in this manner until it is complete. Allow the wreath to dry completely before hanging.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

You could try many different cardboard shapes for this project. These could also make a special kind of gift uniquely created by your child. If your child finds the work too tedious to complete, try saving it for the next day, or maybe working on it together.

INTENSITY LEVEL: * * * * (Four Stars)



Art Pattern #12, to be used with Lesson #32,
page 51.

