

Peaceful Pastels

Unit Four



Art Appreciation

Objectives:

- To practice some art appreciation skills.
- To be familiar with the terms *foreground*, *background*, *midground*, *focal point*, *contrast*, *shape*, and *texture*.
- To use the sense of smell to stimulate memory.
- To strengthen the memory by increasing observation skills.

Materials:

- CHOOSE ART STUDENT BOOKLET **page 1**
- 2 or 3 paintings from *The Picnic* from last unit
- at least 3 small jars each containing a different smelly substance
- piece of newsprint or white paper for each child

Advance Preparation:

- Prepare at least 3 smelly jars using substances such as vanilla, chocolate, soap, cloves, charcoal from a fireplace, or another substance that you think might be associated with a memory for the children. Be sure to avoid using toxic substances. Number the jars “1”, “2”, “3”, and so on. Make a duplicate set in a class over twelve children.
- Select 2 or 3 paintings of *The Picnic* completed in the last unit. Choose paintings with strong focal points and several elements that are easy to identify such as repeating shapes, texture, and a definite foreground and background. Read *The Elements of Art* under *B. Academic Content* in Part 2 of *Getting Started*. Then study the following definitions.

Focal point: the focus of a picture; the most important part of the picture; the main attraction. The focal point should be the strongest part of the composition: a large, opened mouth in a portrait of a tiger’s head or, perhaps, the pitcher throwing a ball at a baseball game. It should attract the attention of the viewer. Many techniques can be used to draw attention to the focal point. Some of these might include using more detail, contrasting the object against the background by way of color, using line to point toward the focal point, making the focal point larger, closer to the front or nearer the center.

Foreground: The part of the picture nearest the front, that appears to be nearest the viewer of the picture.

Background: The part of the picture that appears farthest away from the viewer.

Midground: The part of the picture between the foreground and the background.

Method:

STEP 1: Scripture talk

Read the scripture on **page 1** of the CHOOSE ART STUDENT BOOKLET. (Peter is focusing on the goodness of God while he is working.). Introduce the scripture according to the **TEACHING SUGGESTIONS FOR INTRODUCING THE SCRIPTURAL THEME** on *pages 95 and 96 of this unit.*

STEP 2: Art appreciation

Explain that the students will be examining several of their own paintings during this class. In doing so, they might pretend that they own an art gallery and that they are choosing paintings to put on exhibit in the gallery. Or they could pretend, instead, that they are looking for a painting to buy. It's important that they learn how to examine a painting so that we can make good decisions about what to buy or exhibit.

We will use a two-part method to examine the paintings: **naming the parts** and **discussing the elements**. Naming all of the objects in the picture will acquaint everyone with the work. Discussing the elements of art will increase the students' awareness of the formal side of a composition. List the following elements of art on the board: *line, shape, color, texture* and *space*.

A. Naming the Parts: Display one of the paintings you selected of *The Picnic*, and have the children take turns naming an object in the picture until all objects are named.

B. Discussing the Elements: Have the children begin to identify and discuss the following elements of art that appear in the painting. Include a discussion of the *focal point*.

1. Line: Ask the children, "Do you see lines in the picture?" Because the objects in this painting were outlined in black felt marker, the children should point out the lines outlining objects. Notice how the lines make the objects stand out against the background. Are there other lines? Do any of the lines serve a purpose such as leading the eye toward the focal point?

2. Shape: Review the definition of *shape* as *that which is formed when a line completely closes in a space*, such as a circle, square, rectangle, triangle and other geometric shapes, as well as abstract shapes, etc. Identify a few shapes in the painting. If you see *repeating shapes* in the picture, ask the children to name them. Look for repeating rectangles forming the trunks of trees, repeating ovals or circles (perhaps in the foods at the picnic), triangles, etc. If applicable, you may mention how a number of repeating shapes in a row (like tree trunks) causes your eye to follow them, moving from one to another.

3. Color: Does the scene appear bright and sunny or dark and gloomy? Why? Would a lighter blue sky have made the picture look sunnier? Where applicable, discuss how brighter colors like red, orange or yellow stand out and attract our attention when painted against a dull background. Use the word *contrast* to describe the difference between dark and light or dull and bright.

4. Texture: Locate areas of texture, where present. Review the definition of *texture* as *the way something feels when we touch it*. Point out that in a painting, however, we cannot really feel the texture. Therefore, in a painting, *texture* refers to *making something look as though it were bumpy or rough or prickly*.

5. Space: Wherever applicable, identify the *background, foreground* and *midground* of the painting. Ask questions about distance in space, why one object has been painted larger or lower on the page than another. Draw attention to *overlapping* as it pertains to space.

6. Focal Point: Define *focal point* as *the focus of the picture, the most important part of the painting*. Try to identify a focal point in each painting. After doing so, ask the child who painted the picture if the object(s) you chose as the focal point was what was intended. If your choice disagrees with the artist's intent, then ask for suggestions about ways the artist could have made the focal point more noticeable.

Keep the art appreciation session lively and uplifting. And make an effort to keep the information clear and simple, discussing only those elements that are easy to identify in each painting. This exercise can be very stimulating for the students and rewarding for the teacher. But monitor the students' interest level and do not drag the session on longer than is beneficial. Involve everyone by asking simple questions as well as more challenging ones. Above all, do not use this time as an opportunity to criticize students' work in front of the children. Be careful to keep all comments, both your own and the students', positive and objective.

STEP 3: Memory games

Game 1: Using one of the paintings you have just examined with the students, tell the students to study all the objects in the painting for about five seconds. Then cover a section of the painting and have the students write or draw what is hidden there. They will do this on a sheet of newsprint or plain white paper. Ask a volunteer to share his or her answer.

Game 2: Smelling Jars - Pass around the smelling jars (and the second set, dividing the group in half, if the group is larger than 12). Ask each student to smell the contents of each jar to see if it reminds them of anything. After the children are finished with all three jars, ask them to choose one of the smells and to think about an experience it reminds them of - what they

were doing and where they were when they remember smelling that smell. Before asking a few to share their experience, identify the contents of jars 1, 2 and 3.

- the pattern on the plates at supper
- the pattern on the linoleum in the kitchen

Game 3: *Imagine* - Tell the children they are going to play a game in which they will have to use both their memories and their imaginations. You will name familiar objects and ask them to imagine that object, recalling as many details as they can about its appearance.

Use the list below or compose a list of your own. After naming an item, give the children about 20 seconds to imagine it. Encourage them to recall every detail by asking questions while they are visualizing the object: Can you see the door handles? Is there a design on the cupboard doors?

Be sure to keep the items general enough so everyone can relate to each of them. Such an exercise usually renews our interest in the details of everyday objects around us and deepens our observation skills. We will probably all go home and take a closer look at the kitchen cupboards.

- the kitchen cupboards at home
- the family vehicle
- the front of the set of drawers or dresser in their bedroom
- the backyard fence
- the bathroom counter at Grandma's house